

For children, parents are their safety and their source of love. Children look to their parents for *everything*, including their acceptance and sense of belonging. A parent's words are incredibly important to their children because a parent is incredibly important to a child. Words are **POWERFUL** and deeply impact our kids just like they do us. Words can build confidence and self-esteem, empower, inspire, and help our kids feel loved and cared for. Or, in one heated moment, they can tear them down.

## The Power of Words

Each day I make sure I use my words to:

- **Praise something they *do* well (behavior).** Praising your child for something they do well will boost their self esteem.
- **Praise something *about* them (character).** Appreciate your child for who they are.
- **Show them love without a *reason* (unconditional).** Use your words to express love that doesn't have a "because". Simply saying, "I love you" will help your child feel secure.

It is important to use your words for positive affirmation. Your child will soak up the praise and love, and it will help them succeed later in life.

## The Dark Side

As with the positive power of words, there are three rules you should follow to avoid hurting your child. These are simple too—but they can make a huge difference in your child's life:

- **Avoid shaming words.** Shame is when our words go beyond addressing their behavior and attack the character of a child.
- **Avoid shaming tones.** Tone is important when communicating with kids. Raise your voice sparingly. Be in control and aim for a firm, authoritative tone instead of a loud or scary one.
- **Apologize when you need to.** When we mess up and use shaming words or tones, we can undo some of the damage by apologizing to our kids.

Work on doing these daily, and you will help your child grow to be a confident and successful adult. It may seem tough, but give yourself the grace to grow and learn and start trying today.

### Resources include:

1. Foley M. Child Development Institute. How to Build Your Child's Confidence and Self-Esteem. Found at <https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/development/how-to-build-your-childs-confidence-and-self-esteem/#.X00LjchKhPY>, accessed 5/20/2019.
2. Self-esteem. Definition of self-esteem in English. Oxford Living Dictionary. Found at <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/self-esteem>, accessed 5/20/2019.
3. Foley M. Child Development Institute. Everyday Practices to Make Your Child Feel Loved. Found at <https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/family-building/everyday-practices-to-make-your-child-feel-loved/#.X00NfchKhPY>, accessed 5/20/2019.
4. Lansbury J. No bad kids: Toddler discipline without shame. Janet Lansbury; 2014 Sep 17.
5. Markham L. Peaceful parent, happy kids: How to stop yelling and start connecting. TarcherPerigee; 2012.
6. Arky, B. Child Mind institute, Calm Voices, Calmer Kids. Found at <https://childmind.org/article/calm-voices-calmer-kids/>, accessed 5-20-2019.
7. American Academy of Pediatricians. A Perfect Parent. Found at <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/A-Perfect-Parent.aspx>, accessed 5/20/2019.
8. American Academy of Pediatricians. Normal Functioning Family. Found at <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Normal-Family-Functioning.aspx>, accessed 5/20/2019.
9. Markham L. How to Break the Cycle of Shame with Your Child. Found at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/peaceful-parents-happy-kids/201704/how-break-the-cycle-shame-your-child>, accessed 5/20/2019.
10. Williams, Glenda, MD. Pediatrician -- Interview.