



Words of Encouragement for Children and Teens

By Homer Kiracofe, therapist and pastor

YOU DO A GOOD JOB OF... children should be encouraged when they do not expect it, when they are not asking for it.

YOU HAVE IMPROVED IN... Growth and development is something we should expect from all children. They may not be where we would like them to be, but if there is progress, there is less chance for discouragement. Children will usually continue to try if they can see some improvement.

WE LIKE (ENJOY) YOU, BUT WE DON'T LIKE WHAT YOU DO...

It is important to distinguish between the child and his behavior, between the act and the actor.

YOU CAN HELP ME (US, THE OTHERS, ETC.)... A child's self-esteem is built through usefulness. The more useful he feels to himself, the better he feels about himself.

LET'S TRY IT TOGETHER....Children who think they have to do things perfectly often are afraid to attempt something new for fear of making a mistake or failing.

SO YOU MAKE A MISTAKE: NOW WHAT CAN YOU LEARN FROM THE MISTAKE?...Mistakes are for learning. There is a great deal a child will learn if he is taught not to feel embarrassed about making a mistake or missing the mark in some way.

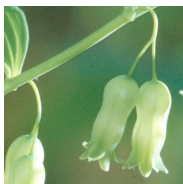
YOU WOULD LIKE US TO THINK YOU CAN'T, BUT WE THINK YOU CAN... This can be used when the child conveys that something is too difficult for him and he hesitates to even so much as try. If he tries and fails, he has at least had the courage to try.

KEEP TRYING. DON'T GIVE UP. When a child is trying but not meeting much success, a comment like this might be helpful.

I'M SURE YOU CAN STRAIGHTEN THIS OUT (SOLVE THIS PROBLEM, ETC.) BUT IF YOU NEED ANY HELP, YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND ME. Expresses confidence in child's ability.

I CAN UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL (NOT SYMPATHY, BUT EMPATHY), BUT I'M SURE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT. Pity seldom helps, but understanding his situation and believing in the child's ability to adjust to it is of much greater help to him.

Remember, no words are magic in themselves. The intent and spirit of speech precede it.



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