



"Hands are for helping, Not hurting"



How to Say What You Really Mean

By the time your child is a toddler, she's verbal enough to understand what you say. But she may not hear exactly what you mean. By using the right words, you can help her succeed. When your children are older, they still do not always understand what we want them to do, or they choose not to listen.

What you say	What your child hears	What to say instead
You have to learn to share with David	<i>I'm taking this toy away from you and giving it to David</i>	You've been playing with this toy for a long time. Let's let David have a turn now, and then you can play with it again.
Bad Girl! Don't ever hit someone else like that!	<i>You're a bad girl! Mommy doesn't like you.</i>	I don't want you to hit because it hurts people. Tell Sara you're angry.
Here, let me help you.	<i>You're incapable of doing this. I'll do it for you.</i>	That looks tough. Do you see any other way to do that? Let me know if you need help.
You can't wear that outfit! It doesn't match	<i>You can't make good choices</i>	I think you'd look great in those Red pants. What other shirt would look good with those?
Turn the television off; we're eating dinner now.	<i>I don't care what you want to do, I want you to eat</i>	Susie, we are all eating dinner now. We can watch videos after dinner.