

# Things You Should Never Say to Your Kids... And What You Should Say Instead

<b>DON'T say: (because it means . . . )</b>	<b>DO say: (because it means . . . )</b>
<p><b>How many times do I have to tell you?</b> <i>(You have a lousy memory and a bad attitude. I have to nag you.)</i></p>	<p><b>I should only have to tell you one time.</b> <i>(You have a good memory and can follow directions. You are a responsible kid.)</i></p>
<p><b>WHY did you do that?</b> <i>(That was pre-meditated misbehavior and your purpose was to do something wrong.)</i></p>	<p><b>How are you going to solve this problem?</b> <i>(We all make mistakes, but we also have the ability to make things right)</i></p>
<p><b>. . . and I mean it!</b> <i>(THIS time, But I didn't really mean it earlier, and feel free to ignore me next time.)</i></p>	<p><b>Say what you have to say - ONCE.</b> <i>(I mean what I say to you the first time I say it.)</i></p>
<p><b>Okay?</b> <i>(Raise voice at end, accent 2nd syllable) (You don 't really have to listen to me. Unless you want to. Is that OK with you?)</i></p>	<p><b>Thank you.</b> <i>(Lower voice at end, accent 1st syllable) (I expect you to do as I ask, without either arguing or resistance.)</i></p>
<p><b>What is the matter with you?</b> <i>(There is something wrong with you, but even I can't tell you what it is.)</i></p>	<p><b>You've broken a rule. The consequence is ...</b> <i>(You know the right way to act and you've chosen to misbehave. You are responsible.)</i></p>
<p><b>Why can't you kids ever get along? I can't leave you alone for a minute!</b> <i>(You don't have the ability to get along, and I don't expect it of you. You need me to solve your problems.)</i></p>	<p><b>The two of you can sit on the sofa until you have a plan. I know you can solve this.</b> <i>(You are capable of coming up with a solution that you both can live with. You don't need me to solve your problems.)</i></p>
<p><b>Don't talk to me that way!</b> <i>(I can't control you, but I sure can whine about it)</i></p>	<p><b>What I'd like to hear you say is " . . . . "</b> <i>(I am your teacher and your coach. I'll model for you the polite way to communicate.)</i></p>
<p><b>The underlying message to these statements is:</b> You are a bad kid. You're not responsible for changing your behavior.</p> <p><b>Your child's typical response is:</b> To become defensive, tune you out, continue misbehaving.</p>	<p><b>The underlying message to these statements is:</b> You are a good kid. You are capable of improving your behavior.</p> <p><b>Your child's typical response is:</b> To cooperate with a positive attitude.</p>