

World of Wonders

Teaching Respectful and Nice Language at Home

It is developmentally appropriate for children to experiment with language and “bad” words at home. Depending on the age, this should always be addressed in some way to build respectful communication skills. For children under the age of 3, we recommend ignoring the bad words, or giving a gentle reminder not to use bad language. Follow these tips for children aged 3 and older.

Model Calm and Respectful Language

Children learn from what they hear. Make sure you are speaking calmly and avoid using harsh and negative language.

Make sure you are moderating your child’s media content, as they will also learn from these sources.

Explain Why Language Matters

Sit down with your child in a quiet and calm environment. Talk to them about how words make people feel safe or unsafe, happy or hurt.

Help them understand that using negative language will not help solve their problems.

Teach Feeling Words or Alternative Phrases

Give your child words that they can use to express big emotions, such as “I am upset” or “I feel really mad.”

Try role-playing situations where they may use these phrases.

Address Inappropriate Language Calmly and Directly

If your child uses inappropriate language, stay calm. Explain why those words are not acceptable and can make people feel unsafe or hurt their feelings.

Help them come up with alternative words to help them in these situations.

Teach and Practice Self-Calming Techniques

Help your child learn ways to calm down like taking deep breaths, counting to ten, or squeezing a soft toy.

Be Consistent

Gently remind your child each time they use inappropriate language and practice alternatives. Make sure you praise your child for having respectful and kind interactions.