

Choose your words carefully if you want to motivate your child

Sometimes the words you use can send a message to your child that's quite different from the one you intended.

For instance, suppose your child is doing a chore around your house. It's taking much longer than it would take you. Finally, you say, "Here, let me do that."

You may think you just simply finished a task for your child. But what you really communicated was, "I don't think you can handle that."

Sometimes, the words parents say to motivate their children actually turn out to have the opposite effect.

Here are some things you might say to your child that will motivate him to keep trying, or to do his best.

When you say:

* "Why don't you give this a try?" your child will hear, "I think you can do this by yourself."

* "What would happen if you added more water?" your child will hear, "You can solve problems." But if you say, "That's too dry," your child will hear, "You aren't doing it right."

* "I never thought of trying it that way," your child will hear, "You made a good decision." But if you say, "I don't do it that way," your child will hear, "You are doing it wrong."

Use this approach when your child is doing school work. If he's stuck on a tough math problem, ask, "Have you ever solved a problem like this before? How did you solve it then?"

Keep focusing on the things your child can do. The more you encourage your child, the more likely he is to stay motivated.

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