



4-H School-Age Child Care  
University of California Cooperative Extension

# PARENT STYLES

## Tips for Busy Parents

### WORDS DO HURT

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***Are You Stupid?***

***Shame on You!  
Don't You Know  
Any Better?***

***Can't You Do  
Anything  
Right?***

***Shut Up! You  
Make Me Sick.***

Although many times comments like these are said when parents, teachers, older brothers or sisters are trying to discipline and are at the "breaking point", WORDS CAN and DO HURT!

These words communicate guilt and can lead to low self-esteem. Young children tend to believe what parents, teachers and other adults say.

Although all parents make mistakes and utter unkind words to their children, it is important to recognize that talking in this manner can be habit forming and harmful.

Most people who hurt with words consistently have been spoken to in that manner. It's very difficult to stop a pattern we've heard all our lives. But, we must, because we are teaching children that this is a way to hurt others.

Young people who are continually bombarded with hurtful words can become self-destructive, overly dependent, afraid to try new things and unrealistic in setting goals for themselves.

### How Can I Say Things Differently?

**Instead of:**

Don't you have any brains?

You're always so slow.

Can't you do anything right?

Why can't you be more like your brother?

That's not right.

You're worthless.

**Say:**

You can do it.

I know you can go faster.

Everyone makes mistakes. Sometimes we have to be more careful.

I know you can do it better than that.

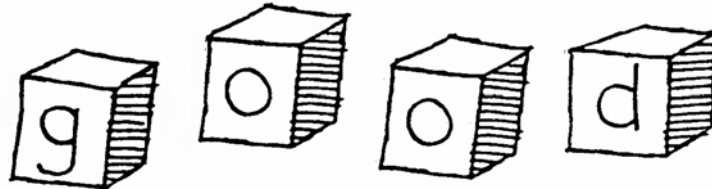
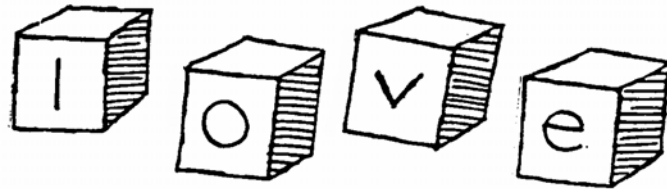
That's a good try.

I love you.

Positive Word Cube

What You'll Need:

- Cardboard Box
- Colored Paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Magazines



What To Do:

- ☆ Help your child cover the cardboard box with colored paper.
- ☆ Ask him to cover all sides of the box, as well as the top and bottom, with pictures and illustrations of positive words that children like to hear. (Encourage the child to draw his own illustrations.) Talk with your child about how these words make him feel and why.