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Watch Your Words

by Rynette R. Kjesbo, M.S., CCC-SLP



But did you know that the words you use when talking about YOURSELF can also have a negative impact on your child? Children learn a lot through observation. Even before they begin to speak, they are watching and listening to their parents, siblings, relatives, caregivers, and others around them. Children hear the positive comments as well as the negative comments those around them say. They are learning from their environment how to behave, feel, interact, and communicate with others.



We've all heard it. Some of us have even said it... "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." But it's not true. Sometimes words DO hurt.

In fact, sometimes words have a negative emotional impact that may take longer to heal than any physical cut or bruise. Hurtful words can cause insecurity, anxiety, and a variety of other issues that can have long-lasting, harmful effects on a child – significant effects than can last for days, weeks, months... or even throughout the child's lifetime.



Some hurtful words are obvious ... "Can't you do anything right?" "Why can't you be more like your brother?" Most parents are careful about the words they use when speaking to their children and avoid using deliberately hurtful words that attack their child's confidence and damage his/her self-esteem.



As adults, we may often express personal feelings with our children present. Comments such as "That's a man's job," "Men don't cry," "I wish we had more money," "I'm a bad mom" can negatively affect the development of children's ideas of how they should feel and act regarding work, money, and self-image. These words can have a lasting impact on children as they grow into adulthood. Therefore, when you're tired, frustrated, or stressed out, be mindful of the words you use and remember that the little ears around you are listening to what you say.



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