

5 WAYS TO GIVE KIDS ENCOURAGEMENT

In a world filled with negative attitudes and events, children need to hear positive things about themselves. It leads to healthy self-esteem and the confidence that what they're doing makes a positive impact. Here are a few genuine ways to encourage kids:

1. Tell Them HOW They Make a Difference.

It's one thing to thank a kid and tell them "you made a difference," but they often need to hear WHY their actions were received so well. It's the difference between "Thanks for your help on the bus today" and "Thanks for helping Lina find a place for her violin when the bus was really full this morning. You made her more comfortable and showed that you're a good, kind kid!"

2. Show Them That You're Listening.

Follow up on something a child told you yesterday or last week to show that you're listening. "You mentioned going to a baseball game with your dad last week—how was that?" Picking up on the details is a way to encourage kids to open up and talk about what's going on in their lives.

3. Give Them Compliments Based on More Than Just Looks.

While saying, "Your hair looks cool that way" is nice, kids need to hear about more than just their physical appearance. Compliment their curiosity—"You sure ask some great questions!" Compliment their interests—"Thanks for telling me about what you're reading—it sounds so interesting!" Compliment their brains—"I know you studied really hard to learn those vocabulary words so congrats on your good grade!"

4. Ask Them to Share Their Talents.

Perhaps you've noticed the great doodles that a kid jots on his notebook. Why not ask him to help with murals in the cafeteria? Or if a kid regularly brings her baseball glove to school, ask if she can show you the best way to hold a baseball. A quick question that taps into their talents can provide a world of encouragement! Kids love being in the teacher role.

5. Encourage Their Kindness and Compassion.

When you catch kids doing something *right*, celebrate it. For instance, if he gets paper towels when another kid spills her juice, take him aside and say, "That was really nice how you helped Ashley be less embarrassed by getting paper towels." Or ask her to take on a needed role that requires compassion. For instance, if you notice a new girl sitting by herself on the bus or in the cafeteria, say to a compassionate student, "I've seen you be a really good friend. Would you mind welcoming Teresa and helping her get to know some of the other kids?"

What Kids Love to Hear

- *You're so fun.*
- *Thanks for sharing your great smile.*
- *People really seem to like being around you.*
- *You're kind.*
- *I'm proud of you.*
- *Your imagination and creativity are awesome!*
- *Thanks for being so nice to the other kids.*
- *You taught ME something new today.*
- *You're really catching on!*
- *You are important to us.*
- *You do excellent work!*
- *That was such a great effort – thanks for taking it seriously.*
- *I'm going to put this on the wall so other people can see it, too.*
- *You're wonderful!*