

30 Positive Things to Say to Kids (Especially When They Need a Boost)

by [Leah R. Singer](#) January 3, 2023

Sometimes, saying “I’m proud of you” can make all the difference”

When you become a parent, you pick up the basics pretty quickly. It’s figuring out how to raise happy and confident kids that can be a challenge as the years go on. What we do know is that positive words for kids will go a long way to help boost their [confidence](#) and change their day for the better—sometimes it’s [words of encouragement](#), and sometimes it’s just a simple “I love you.” In that spirit, here are 30 positive things to say to kids.



- 1. You make me smile.** Telling your kiddo they make you happy is one thing. But telling them they're the reason for your smile will give them happiness and a sense of pride that'll stick around all day.
- 2. Your words matter.** The old saying "sticks and stones" isn't entirely accurate. Let your kids know that words have power.
- 3. Tell me one good thing that happened today.** Focusing on the positive helps keep the bad stuff at bay.
- 4. Tell me one bad thing that happened today.** It’s important to talk about the bad stuff too.
- 5. I'm proud of you for doing XYZ.** When kids hear that someone is proud of them, it has a big impact on them. Think of one positive thing, and tell your little one about it.
- 6. Mistakes happen.** Kids are a messy business, and they may ruin the nice stuff you own. But what's more important—material things (just keep the priceless china stashed away) or your kids knowing they can come to you when they make a mistake? That knowledge that you love them unconditionally goes a long way in life.
- 7. How are you?** Asking your kiddo how she feels shows that you are interested in them. [Brandi Russell](#), a pediatric occupational therapist, and parenting coach recommends checking in with your little ones just as you would a spouse or friend.
- 8. What would you do?** This is a great response to kids always asking for help with things. Empower them while giving yourself a break. You may not think much of it now, but that empowerment goes a long way as they grow older.
- 9. What nice thing did you do or say today?** Encourage kindness by reinforcing it daily.
- 10. Nothing will change my love for you.** This phrase may seem self-evident, but sometimes kids need you to state the obvious. Rebecca Eans, the bestselling author of [Positive Parenting](#), believes you can't go wrong with this loving reminder.
- 11. Don't let mean people define who you are.** There will always be bullies in life. This simple phrase helps kids know that negative voices are not the most important, and it's a lesson they can remember as they encounter difficult people as teens and adults.
- 12. I like it when you ...** Even when the kids are driving you crazy, there’s always at least *one* thing they did that made you smile.



- 13. Please.** If we want respect as parents, then we need to show that same behavior to our kids. [Dr. John DeGarmo](#), a national foster parent coach, advocates parents should always say "please" and "thank you" to model respectful behavior.
- 14. Clean up your toys, dishes, or whatever is left out.** Encourage kids to take ownership of cleaning up their belongings, says [Maureen Healy](#), author of *Growing Happy Kids*. Even if it's just one or two items a day, it will help you in the long run.
- 15. That's smart thinking.** Sometimes hearing you're smart is even more powerful than telling a kid she looks cute. That early feeling of being called intelligent is sometimes one of the memories kids remember most as they grow.
- 16. I like you.** Kids may hear the words "I love you" regularly, but do they know you like them too?
- 17. I'm proud of you.** They know you love them. But do they know you're proud of them too? Author, and clinical psychologist, [Dr. Sherrie Campbell](#) believes those words are just as important as affirmations of love to kids.
- 18. Thank you.** Social skills and courtesy are important in the home and outside of it, and they are skills that go through adulthood.
- 19. I'm sorry.** We all lose our temper or make mistakes. [Dr. Alison Mitzner](#), a pediatric specialist, believes what's important is how we react.
- 20. Just be yourself.** Teach your kids they're enough, and they never have to be anyone else.
- 21. I love being with you.** [Amy McCready](#) is a parenting educator who believes encouraging words and phrases go a long way to help your kids feel safe and secure. Telling your little one how you love being with them is a great positive affirmation they'll never tire of hearing.
- 22. Do your best.** It's not about the result. It's about how you get there.
- 23. Always tell the truth, even if it's not great.** The sooner kids know you'll still love them after hearing the truth—even if it's not great—the more truthful they'll be as they grow.
- 24. I'm listening. What do you want to say?** According to [Katie Hurley](#), LCSW, 57% of girls say they don't always tell their parents certain things because they don't want their parents to think badly of them. Show your kids you do care what they have to say by demonstrating you want to listen to them share information with you.
- 25. You don't have to eat it.** It's tough to [deal with picky eaters](#). Instead of fighting with your kids to eat their veggies, give them the power to say no and be in control. But don't provide an alternative meal choice or dessert either.
- 26. You make me happy.** Because everyone wants to feel like they matter to someone else.
- 27. I love you.** They may be simple, but [Jennifer Wolf](#), a PCI-certified parent coach, believes there's no substitute for these powerful words.
- 28. What do you think we should do today?** Letting your kids have a say in the day's activities will do a lot to keep them feeling satisfied and valued for more than just a few hours.
- 29. You make a difference...** in life, in the family, and at school. When kids hear they're important, they feel empowered and happier.
- 30. You were right.** To let a child know when they were right (and maybe you were wrong) is empowering.

