

Children never grow out of needing heavy doses of praise—no matter what their ages. The five-to-one praise principle is a good rule of thumb to follow: balance every negative comment you make to a child with five positive comments. Think before you speak. Ask yourself if what you want to say will build up or tear down your child. Each day, look for ways to affirm your child's unique giftedness and personality. Encourage others in the family to do the same with each other.

There are times in every child's life when it's hard to maintain the five-to-one ratio. But it's important that we keep looking for the positives. They're there.

Things You Should Never Say to a Child

1. You're just no good.
2. You'll never amount to anything.
3. You got what you deserved.
4. What's wrong with you?
5. When are you going to act your age?
6. Can't you do anything right?
7. I've had it with you.
8. All you ever do is cause trouble.
9. Just wait until you have kids.
10. When will you ever learn?
11. You are stupid.
12. You are lazy.
13. Who do you think you are?
14. You'll be the death of me yet.
15. Haven't I taught you anything?
16. You need to have your head examined.
17. Don't you care about anything?
18. What makes you think you're so special?
19. Don't you ever listen?
20. When are you going to start obeying me?
21. If I've told you once, I've told you a million times.
22. I can't wait until you're gone.
23. Why can't you be more like your sister?
24. You are so much trouble.
25. I don't know why I had kids.

Things You Can't Say Enough to a Child

1. It is such a blessing to be your mom.
2. You're an incredible person.
3. You did that so well.
4. If more kids were like you, the world would be a better place.
5. It's so good to be with you.
6. You're the best!
7. You are such a nice person.
8. You're learning fast.
9. You mean so much to me.
10. You are very bright.
11. You have unlimited potential.
12. You're on the right track now.

13. You're getting the hang of it.
14. That's the best you've ever done.
15. You're getting better every day.
16. You're such a quick learner.
17. I appreciate your attitude.
18. I can tell you are trying.
19. I knew you could do it.
20. Keep up the good work.
21. You are a real trooper.
22. You did a great job.
23. I believe in you.
24. You're going to go far in life.
25. If someone lined up all the four-year-olds (use your child's age) in the world and told me I could pick any one I wanted, I'd choose you.