

Useful Phrases for Child Direction

At our recent Parent's Guide to Montessori Discussion a parent requested some suggestions for positive language to use at home. Below are some tried and true ideas from our team of teachers.

Positive Enforcement

It is very powerful to try to "catch" children doing the right thing. Instead of waiting until they do something notice and comment on what they do right.

It's so nice that you are eating your dinner using your good manners.

I like the way you picked up your toys the first time I asked & did such a great job.

I feel happy when you are cooperative.

I'm sure the cat/ dog feels happy when you are gentle with him/her.

You are learning to take breaths and calm yourself down. What a great skill you are learning! I'm doing that too!

It was really kind the way you greeted Daddy/Mommy/ Grandma when he/she came home. I'm sure that made him/her feel good!

Reminders – when a child is not making a good choice

Your feet stay on the ground.

Indoor voice please. (model indoor voice)

I'll talk to you when your body is calm.

Let's go back and try again.

That's tricky isn't it? Let me show you how to use/do it.

It looks like you're upset/frustrated/sad, do you need a hug? And then move on to redirect following through with whatever occurred before the upset... Connect to redirect.

Let's make it right. (when someone has been hurt on the outside or inside, help child figure out ways to make the person feel better without using the word "sorry")

The water needs to be mopped up now.

May I show you another way to do this? Or, let me show you how to do this.

Would you like help with that?

As soon as your activity is put away you can join us for a story (or you can join us for dinner, or whatever the next activity will be)

Next time you can [carry your bowl with two hands] [pour the milk slowly] [state whatever you want done better next time].

Peter is using that activity. You can have a turn when he is done. (then invite the child to do a different activity)

It is time to (fill in the blank). You can do it yourself, or I will help you. (Very often the child will choose to do something themselves. This is often effective when you have stated that it is time to do something and the child has expressed that they do not want to comply. If they don't choose to do it themselves you need to be prepared to help them with no more discussion.)

Set you glass down sooo quietly that it does not make a sound. (a way to redirect children from throwing, dropping or slamming items down)