What Should You Do if Your Children Start Using Swear Words?

At one time or another, nearly every child will use a swear word. Often, kids just try out a word they’ve heard to see if they can get a reaction from their parents. It usually works.

Still, most parents don’t want to hear this type of language coming from their children. And teachers certainly don’t want to hear it in their classrooms!

To encourage your children to use respectful language:

Stress your family’s values. You might say, “I know other people may use words like that. But in our family, that kind of talking is not acceptable.” Your children should feel proud to avoid using the inappropriate words they hear around them.

Talk about how those words make others feel. Words can hurt people’s feelings.

Remind them that people judge others by their language. If they use swear words, they will likely develop a bad reputation.

Praise them when they catch or correct themselves. Positive reinforcement is the most effective way to get more of the behavior you want and less of the behavior you don’t.

Review the School Year With Your Children & Set New Goals

It’s nearing the end of a busy school year. Your children have learned a lot. They have read new books and they have mastered new skills. Now is the perfect time to talk about all of the lessons they have learned.

Find a time when you can have a relaxing chat about school. You might even plan something special, such as going out for a treat or making a favorite meal together.

During your talk:

Take a look back. What were your children’s favorite projects this year? In what subject did they improve the most? Which book that their class read was their favorite? Which of their goals did they accomplish?

As they talk about these positive things, help them see the ways they have grown. “You really worked hard to master division this year. You can do hard things when you put your mind to it!”

Take a look forward. What are your children looking forward to this summer? What are they excited about for next year? Is there a subject or an area they would like to improve in next year? Are there books they would like to read?

Discuss how learning doesn’t stop at the end of the school year. One of the great things about the summer is the opportunity to learn things that aren’t directly related to school. Help your children think about something they would like to learn this summer. Would they like to learn a new sport? Would they like to teach themselves how to paint? Would they like to learn a new language? Together, make a plan to help them achieve their goal.
Seven Ways to Prevent Summer Reading Loss

Your children have worked on strengthening their reading skills all year long. You don’t want them to lose them over the summer! Yet research shows that summer reading loss is a real problem.

Thankfully, there are countless ways you can encourage your children to maintain—and even improve—their reading skills during vacation. You can:

**Read together daily.** In addition to reading books, ask for your children’s help with following recipes, looking up information on line and making lists.

**Keep reading materials handy.** Leave comics, magazines, books, newspapers and other materials around the house where your children are likely to pick them up.

**Choose irresistible materials.** Look for books and articles about your children’s interests, such as sports, art, fashion or even a favorite movie.

**Talk with experts.** Ask your children’s teachers or a librarian for summer reading suggestions.

**Visit the library regularly.** Give your children frequent opportunities to find materials that appeal to them.

**Take books with you.** Bring them on trips, into waiting rooms and anywhere else your children might complain, “I’m bored!”


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Do You Help Your Children Deal With Disappointment?

All kids face disappointments. Are you helping your children learn to deal with them? Answer yes or no to each question below to find out:

**1. Have you helped** your children understand what can and can’t be changed? “You can’t change the fact that it is raining, but you can change your plans.”

**2. Do you help your children** make a positive choice when the unexpected happens?

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Q & A

Q: My son struggled this year in fourth grade. He will pass—but just barely. I don’t have money to send him to summer school or an expensive camp. But I know he needs help or next year will be worse. What can I do over the summer to help my child catch up so he can keep up next year?

A: It sounds like your child has had a rough year. But there are ways to make sure he doesn’t repeat it in the fifth grade.

Here are four ideas to help you get your son back on track:

**Meet with your child’s teacher** before the end of the year. Together, lay out a summer learning plan. If he’s struggling in math, find out exactly what seems to give him trouble—fractions? Multiplication and division?

**Take care of some basics.** Have your son’s vision and hearing tested. It may be that he can’t see to read the board, or that he can’t hear the teacher. So rule out these problems early.

**Set some learning goals.** How many books will he read? (Sign him up for the library reading program.) Let him select the books—don’t worry if they aren’t “classics.”

**Set aside time each day** to work on school skills. Perhaps the teacher will give you work sheets or an old math book so he can practice.

**Have some fun together.** Learning doesn’t have to be drudgery! So visit the zoo or a museum. Look for a free concert. All these are ways to keep learning.

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__3. Do you help your children learn__ from mistakes? “Next time, you’ll study a little harder and earn a better grade.”

__4. Do you have the rule:__ You can feel disappointed, but you can’t sulk? Your children can control their actions, even when they feel let down.

__5. Do you help your children__ figure out solutions on their own—instead of trying to fix problems for them?

How well are you doing?

If you answered mostly yes, you’re helping your children learn how to cope when things don’t go their way. For no answers, try those ideas.