

## Discouraging Statements for Children Ages 6-12

1. "How many times do I have to tell you not to leave your bicycle in the driveway?"
2. "You act like this everyday! What is wrong with you?"
3. "I don't care what you want. Do it now."
4. "Never mind. I'm sure you'll do it later."
5. "If you can't be more responsible, you are grounded."
6. "I am going to set the timer for 10 minutes and your chores better be done when it dings."
7. "I am so tired of nagging at you."
8. "It's okay. I can do it for you this time."
9. "Why can't you just listen to me and do what I ask?"
10. "If you don't want your things thrown away, you'd better pick them up right now!"
11. "Why do you expect me to do every thing for you when you don't do anything for me?"

## Empowering Statements for Children Ages 6-12

1. (Show faith with a reminder of what the child/student can do.) "I know you know where your bike goes. Thanks for taking care of that now."
2. (Curiosity question) "What do you need to do to keep your sports equipment safe?"
3. (Acknowledge feelings first.) "It is hard to remember things that are not on your list or priorities. I'm happy to remind you once."
4. (As soon as \_\_\_\_\_.) "As soon as your chores are done, I'll give you a ride to your game."
5. (Check the child's knowledge or understanding.) "What is supposed to be happening now?"
6. (Invite cooperation and then a choice.) "I need your help. Do you want to do your chores now or in 30 minutes?"
7. (Connection before correction) "I don't know what I would do without your help. Anything you can do will be appreciated."
8. (I love you AND \_\_\_\_\_.) [say what you want/mean]. "I love you, and this needs to be done now."
9. (Use non-verbal language.) Put a gentle hand on his or her shoulder and then take the child by the hand, point at what needs to be done, and smile with a knowing look.
10. (Give Power.) "Do you want to set the timer for how much time you think it will take to get it done?"
11. (Connect and redirect.) "It is more fun if we work together. What would you like me to do to help, and what will you do?"

## Discouraging Statements for 2-5

1. "No. No. You can't pour the milk into your glass. You might hurt yourself or make a big mess."
2. "Pick up the toys now or you will sit in the naughty chair."
3. "Other children pick up their toys. I wonder if you are a baby or a big girl."
4. "I'm going to set the timer for 3 minutes and these toys better be picked up when it dings!"
5. "You are too little. Mommy will do it for you."
6. "We go through this every day. I'm tired of it."
7. "If you don't want your toys thrown away, you'd better pick them up right now!"
8. "Why can't you just listen to me and do what I ask?"
9. "It's okay. Your Grandma or I will do it."
10. "Don't ever ask me to do anything for you."

## Empowering Statements for 2-5

1. (Show faith and provide safe exploring environment.) "I know you can do it. This pitcher of milk is just your size."
2. (Acknowledge feelings first.) "You are so excited to try. Show me how you can do it."
3. (Check the child's understanding.) "What do we need to do with the toys before story time?"
4. (Invite cooperation and then a choice.) "I need your help. Do you want to clean up while singing or silently?"
5. (Share power.) "Here is the timer. See how many toys you can pick up before it rings."
6. (Offer limited choices.) "Do you want to put the big blocks away first or the small blocks?"
7. (Get down to child's level and say what you want/mean.) "Sweetie, It's time to put the blocks away now."
8. (Ask a curiosity question.) "Where does this toy go?"
9. (Connect and redirect.) "It is more fun if we work together. What would you like me to do to help, and what will you do?"
10. (As soon as \_\_\_\_ then \_\_\_\_.) "As soon as the toys are picked up, it will be story time."

## Discouraging Statements for Teens

1. "I can't believe you have procrastinated again. What will ever become of you? Okay, I'll do it this time, but next time you'll just have to suffer the consequences."
2. "Honey, I thought you would do your homework after I bought you a car, a cell phone, and gave you a big allowance."
3. "Honey, you hurry and do as much as you can now while I pick out your clothes, and warm up the car so you won't be cold when I drive you to school."
4. "I just don't understand. I excused you from chores. I woke you up early. I drove you everywhere so you would have more time. I made your lunches. How could this be?"
5. "Okay, I'll write a note to the teacher that you were sick this morning, but you'll need to be sure and catch up."
6. "Well then, you are grounded and you lose all your privileges, no car, no video games, no friends, until it is done."
7. "Well no wonder. I saw you wasting your time on video games, and spending too much time with your friends and sleeping in."
8. "You should feel ashamed of yourself. You'd better shape up or you'll be shipping out to live on the streets like a bum."
9. "How many times have I told you to get your homework done early? Why can't you be more responsible like your brother?"

## Empowering Statements for Teens

1. (Curiosity questions) "What is your picture of what is going on regarding your homework? Would you be willing to hear my concerns? Could we brainstorm together on some possible solutions?"
2. (Show faith) "I can see that you feel bad about getting that poor grade. I have faith in you to learn from this and figure out what you need to do to get the grade you want."
3. (Decide what you will do and inform in advance) "I'm not willing to bail you out. When your teacher calls, I'll hand the phone to you so she can discuss it with you."
4. (Listen) "I would like to hear what this means for you."
5. (Decide what you will do and follow-through) "I'm willing to be available for an hour two nights a week when we agree in advance on a convenient time, but I'm not willing to get involved at the last minute."
6. (Share what you want and listen) "I hope you'll go to college, but I'm not sure it's important to you. I'm happy to talk with you about your thoughts or plans."
7. (Share your feelings, positive time-out, family meeting agenda) "I'm feeling too upset to talk about this right now. Let's put it on the family meeting agenda so we can talk about it when I'm not so emotional."
8. (Joint problem-solving) "Could we sit down and see if we can work on a plan regarding homework that we both can live with?"
9. (Unconditional love and acceptance) "I love you just the way you are and respect you to choose what is right for you."

## Discouraging Statements Early Childhood Educators

by Laurie Prusso

1. "It is clean up time. Why are you just sitting there?"
2. "You act like this everyday! What is wrong with you?"
3. "All of your friends are able to help. I wonder if you are a baby—not a big girl?"
4. "Pick up the toys now, or you will sit on the chair instead of joining us at circle."
5. "I am going to set the timer for 3 minutes and these better be picked up when it dings."
6. "We go through this every day! I am tired of it."
7. "Why can't you just listen to me and do what I ask?"
8. "If you don't want your toys thrown away, you'd better pick them up right now!"
9. "Never mind. You can come back and pick them up later."

## Empowering Statements Early Childhood Educators

1. (Show faith with a reminder of what the child/student can do.) "I have seen you pick up your toys before. I know you can do it."
2. (Curiosity question) "What ideas do you have to get the toys picked up?"
3. (Acknowledge feelings first.) "You were really having fun. It is hard to stop playing to clean up. How about I pick up the squares and you pick up the rectangles?"
4. (Check the child's understanding.) "What is supposed to be happening now?"
5. (Invite cooperation and then a limited choice.) "I need your help and you are a good helper. Do you want to pick up the red blocks or the green blocks first?"
6. (Say what you want/mean.) Get down at the child's level and with a smile, calmly say, "Sweetie, it is time to put the blocks away now."
7. (Use non-verbal language.) Put a gentle hand on his or her shoulder and then take the child by the hand and lead her to the blocks and smile with a knowing look.
8. (Give Power.) "Do you want to set the timer for how much time you think it will take to pickup your toys?"
9. (As soon as \_\_\_\_\_.) "As soon as the toys are picked up, it will be reading time."



## Teacher Discouraging Statements

1. "I can't believe you have procrastinated again. This time I'll let you turn it in tomorrow, but next time you'll just have to suffer the consequences."
2. "I'll have to call your parents about this."
3. "You can have a prize from my treasure box if you finish your work by lunch time."
4. "How many times have I told you to pay attention and get your work done? Why can't you be more like your brother?"
5. "How come you always forget and never get your work done? Why can't you be more responsible?"
6. "I thought you would do your work after I was so kind to you and let you be my helper and take messages to other teachers in the building. You are so disappointing."
7. "Well, no wonder! I saw you wasting your time, looking out the window. You should feel ashamed of yourself."
8. "You are so irresponsible. You will never amount to anything in this world."

## Teacher Encouraging Statements

1. "I'm available to help with homework after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I won't be available to help with last minute projects."
2. "Do you know that I care very deeply about you, no matter what – and that you are more important to me than your grades?"
3. "What is your picture of what is going on regarding your work? Would you be willing to hear my concerns?"
4. "Could we brainstorm together on some solutions that might be helpful to you?"
5. "Could we sit down and see if we can work on a plan regarding class work that we both can live with?"
6. "I would like to hear what this means for you. Will you share with me why it isn't important to you to do your assignments?"
7. "I feel upset when you don't do your work because I value education so much. I wish you could see the value to you in your life."
8. "I can see that you feel bad about getting that poor grade. I have faith in you to learn from this and figure out what you need to do to get the grade you would like."