

For You to Know

What you say to other kids has a big effect on them, so it's important to try to say things kindly. There are even times when it's a good idea not to say anything at all.

Unkind words or critical remarks stick with other people for a long time after you have said them. Even if kids don't react right away, you can bet that they will continue to be hurt by them. If you are worried about the way someone does something, think before you speak. How can you talk about this problem without hurting their feelings? Are you sure that your criticism is fair—is it something that they need to change for their own good, or is it something they truly can't help about themselves?

For You to Do

Read these situations and then tell what each kid could say to be kind and helpful. If you think it would be better not to say anything, tell why.

Ever since Jorge’s older brother broke up with his girlfriend, he has been very blue. He just lies around all afternoon, watching television and eating junk food, and he sleeps a lot. Jorge understands why his brother is sad, but it’s been a month since the break-up, and now his brother is out of shape and cranky and he refuses to do anything fun.

What could Jorge say to his brother?

Michael always looks forward to seeing his mother when she comes home from work. He helps her cook dinner, and she helps him with homework. They sometimes pack lunch together for the next day or play a board game before Michael has to go to bed. On Wednesdays and Fridays, his mother has to work a double shift. When she comes home on those nights, she is tired and irritable. She doesn’t want to do anything together and she seems distracted whenever Michael tries to tell her about his day at school. When she acts that way, his feelings are hurt.

What could Michael say to his mother?

Sarah and Vanessa have been friends since first grade. They hang out every day at school and on most weekends. They like the same music and the same books, and they have the same taste in clothes. They are both popular at school, play lots of sports, and like to be with people. One day, Sarah announced that she was giving up basketball and joining the school's poetry club. Vanessa was baffled—they had always done things together, and suddenly Sarah was going off in a new direction. Didn't she realize how much it would change their lives if she started hanging out with the poetry kids instead of the basketball team?

What could Vanessa say to Sarah?



... And More to Do!

Can you think of a time when someone said something critical to you? Tell what happened.

How did it make you feel about yourself?

How did it make you feel about the person who said those things?
