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The Encouragement Process

- * Emphasize the deed, not the doer.
- * Emphasize the doing and the joy of doing. Satisfaction is gained in accomplishing something.
 - * Emphasize the good part of what was done.
 - * Be positive in comments made - avoid saying don't.
 - * Avoid making statements ending with a question.
- * Watch that conditional acceptance is not communicated in one breath and defeated in the next breath.

SOME WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Whether the following remarks are encouraging or not will depend on the attitude of the person saying them. You must feel trust, confidence, and acceptance; and convey those feelings in your voice, facial expressions and body language. If you feel impatient, superior, angry or lack confidence; these phrases will *not* be encouraging.

1. Progress is extremely important. People need to be encouraged whenever they show growth and improvement.

“You have improved in...”

“Wow! You're really getting better at that.”

2. Always encourage a person's effort. Encourage them to try things, especially things they think they cannot do or are they think are too hard to do. We all learn through experience, but frequently we are afraid to try things because we believe we might make a mistake or fail. People need your confidence in them to help them risk making a mistake.

“You thought you couldn't do that, but you tried anyway.

“You asked me to do that for you, but you figured it out yourself.”

“You're really trying hard on that.”

3. Never do anything for children they can do for themselves. This is *discouraging* and sends them the message that they are not capable. If they are asking for help in a situation that you truly do not believe they can master, you can work *together* to find a solution, but don't solve the problem for them.

“You would like me to decide that for you, but I think you can decide for yourself.”

“Looks like you're struggling with that. Let's see if we can figure it out together.”

4. People can learn a great deal from mistakes and you can help them do this by asking them to think about what they learned and how they might act differently in the future. You can also help them be more realistic about the potential “dangers” of making mistakes. After all, a mistake is only a mistake if we don't learn something from it.

“You look like you're really sad because you made a mistake. What can you learn from this mistake?”

“How will you handle a situation like that differently, in the future?”

Information based on:

Kottman, Terry. (1995). *Partners in Play*. VA: ACA.
Baruth, L., & Eckstein, D. (1978). *The ABC's of classroom discipline*. IO:Kendall/Hunt.