

SAY THIS, NOT THAT:

Words to Celebrate a Choleric's Strengths

Words are powerful. The right ones at the right time can change a child's life for good. The trouble is that the wrong words can too.

As a parent, teacher, coach, or other grown-up, every word you say to a child will build them up or tear them down. The choice is yours... after all, every word you use is a word you choose.

Let's look at what to say (and what not to say) to a Choleric child.

SAY THIS

- 1 You're so **good at delegating** during group projects.
- 2 You answered Mrs. Smith so **confidently**. You're great at talking to adults.
- 3 Most third graders don't know that word. You're so **articulate**.
- 4 Shopping with you is the best! I love how **decisive** you are.
- 5 That job would have taken me twenty minutes and you finished in five. You're **efficient**.
- 6 You did that all by yourself. I'm impressed by how **independent** you are.
- 7 Wow! What a clever idea. You're so **resourceful**.
- 8 Not everyone your age is **responsible** enough to start babysitting, but you are.

- 9 You're the most **logical** person I know. How would you tackle this problem?
- 10 There aren't many people as **driven to achieve their goals** as you.
- 11 Other people might buckle under that kind of pressure, but not you! You are **always up for a challenge**.
- 12 Your class presentation was impressive. How **persuasive** for a fifth grader!
- 13 Can I get your perspective? You **see things so clearly**.
- 14 The way you handled homework and practice all semester showed such **discipline**.
- 15 You **know what to do**. Tell me what the plan could be.
- 16 The team needs a **leader** like you right now.
- 17 The way you stood up for your friend was so **courageous**.
- 18 You cleaned your room, emptied the dishwasher, and did your laundry. You're so **productive!**
- 19 Picking up all those toys was a big job. Thanks for **taking charge** and helping your little brother.
- 20 I can't believe you did that! You're so **adventurous!**

There is no magic in the sample words and phrases I've provided. Look closely and you may notice that they coincide directly with the list of Choleric strengths. Building up a child with your words is as easy as affirming the strengths they are wired with.

So, if you ever get stuck coming up with the right thing to say, simply tell a child, "I believe in your ability to be **(insert strength)**."

NOT THAT

Here are the kinds of words to avoid when speaking to a Choleric child:

1 Stop telling other people what to do. You don't always have to be in charge.

2 Please don't interrupt. Your thoughts are not welcome right now.

3 Calm down. There's no need to lose your temper.

4 Did you think about ____ before making that choice?

5 If you don't slow down, you're going to make a mistake.

6 You're not ready to do that by yourself yet. Ask for help next time.

7 Your way isn't the only way.

8 Loosen up! Live a little! You're supposed to be having fun.

9 I've made my decision. You aren't going to change my mind.

10 You can be so stubborn sometimes.

11 Fine! You win. I don't want to talk about it anymore.

12 Did you consider anyone else's ideas or opinions?

13 Don't question me. I just need you to do what I say.

14 Keeping up with you is exhausting.

15 Here is the plan for today.

16 Give someone else a chance.

17 Why does everything turn into an argument? Can't you chill out?

18 I don't care whose mess it is. Clean it up!

19 You are not in charge. I'm the grown-up.

20 Did you think that through first?

You don't have to say something intentionally to tear down a child with your words. Anything that undermines or devalues the strengths they are wired with is likely to have a negative emotional impact.

Be on guard for words that may be twisting their strengths or criticizing (rather than coaching them through) their weaknesses.