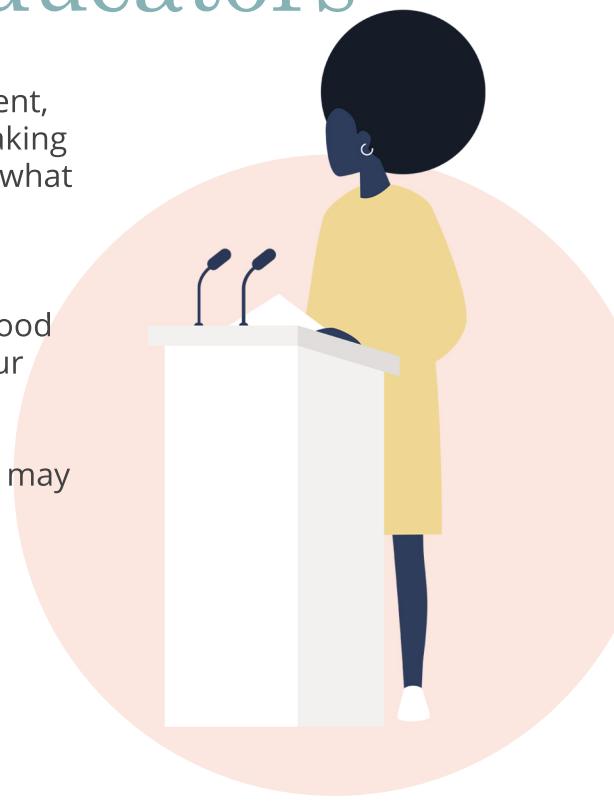


# Simple + Positive Language for Educators

As educators, we can sometimes find a specific class, student, parent, or colleague 'derails' us, and we notice ourselves taking a negative stance in our interactions. Even when we know what we should and shouldn't do, it's sometimes a good idea to review the basics.

Positive communication involves coming from a place of good intent. The way we communicate - the language we use, our word choice and phrasing, is one aspect we can focus on.

The ideas offered here, and the 'Do' and 'Try to Avoid' lists, may seem simple, but they can be used as prompts to be more mindful of the language we use as educators - both in and outside of the classroom.



## Useful Phrases

Below are some phrases you can use to encourage collaborative relationships. Context, means of communication, and tone are important to avoid sounding patronising or sarcastic. It is important to find what feels natural to you; your authentic voice. When delivered with positive intent, phrases, such as the ones given, can be used to strengthen our communication and promote socio-emotional well-being.

	Students	Parents	Colleagues
Great effort. I see you tried very hard.	✓		
How does that make you feel?	✓		
Look at how much you've improved!	✓		
What other strategies could you try?	✓		
I/we appreciate you.		✓	
Our aim/goal is the same.		✓	
How can we work together?	✓	✓	
I hear your frustration.	✓	✓	
Your ___ has made a positive difference.	✓	✓	
Your support/effort hasn't gone unnoticed.	✓	✓	
Thank you.	✓	✓	

## Do...

- Celebrate milestones and progress, and understand that this looks different for every learner.
- Convey belief - "I have every confidence you will try your best."
- Make positive assumptions and invite co-operation - "Thank you for listening well in this next presentation."
- Focus on enjoyment to build love of learning - "I see you were enjoying that task."
- Be specific in praise and feedback - "I like the way you...It showed me...".
- Highlight those exhibiting positive behaviour.
- Encourage autonomy - "Where can you go to find out more?
- Celebrate diversity to build a culture of belonging.
- Allow use of additional languages if needed - be language coaches, not language police.
- Focus on the positive - "Well done for staying on task".
- Find and use the preferred names, pronouns and titles of students, parents, and colleagues.
- Highlight positive personal growth - "I saw you stand up from your friend. That was brave."
- Keep calm when confronted with rude or disrespectful behaviour. Model appropriate responses. This can stop a situation from escalating and is more likely to produce a positive result for all parties. Practice calming techniques that you can use if you find yourself flustered.
- Be clear when talking about areas for development, or areas of progress. Give specific examples and set clear, unambiguous goals.
- If you want a specific answer, ask focused questions.
- If you want discussion, throw out ideas and let the students run with them. Guide the conversation only when necessary. Word choice and phrasing can be the difference between a class discussion bearing fruit, or the natural learning process being disrupted by too much intervention.
- Use a collaborative "We" rather than "I".
- Get on the other person's level to avoid intimidation, and ensure the distance between you is friendly and allows for open communication.

## Try to Avoid...

- Acting surprised or ridiculing students for not knowing something - "Do you not know that yet?"
- Drop the 'accusative you' - "You didn't...", "You haven't...". Blame and shame are enemies of both learning and cooperation.
- Don't threaten - "If I see you running I'll...".
- Be aware of negative phrasing of language - "You failed to...", "It's an issue...", "It's a problem...".
- Watch out for a sarcastic or mocking tone creeping in. There is a line between ironic or wry humour and sarcasm. People of different cultures, or with different learning needs or backgrounds, may take irony in unintended ways. Know your audience!



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