Opportunity Mindset Tips
Transforming Challenges into Possibilities

“My child keeps calling other kids mean names.”

CHALLENGE
How can I help my child understand that name calling hurts people’s feelings and is disrespectful?

CHOICE
You can decide how to think about this moment and how to respond. You can choose to see this challenge as a chance for your child to learn and grow.

OPPORTUNITY
When children understand how their words and actions affect others, they are building the life skill of Perspective Taking.

SKILL-BUILDING STRATEGIES

1. TAKE YOUR CHILD’S VIEW
NOTICE when your child is name-calling and what they might be feeling. Do they seem to be angry and unable to say how they feel? Do they seem to be trying to hurt someone who hurt them? Do they object to someone’s behavior? Is something else going on?

2. SHARE REASONS
SET LIMITS and explain your reasons. Share with your child that you know how it feels to be called a mean name, and it really can hurt. Let them know that it is important to try not to hurt other people’s feelings, and that you won’t let anyone hurt their feelings, either. Explain that we try to focus on what a person is doing that we don’t like and stopping that, rather than name-calling.

3. PROVIDE CHOICES
OFFER your child options within the limits you set. Let your child know that they have choices about what to say or do when they feel angry or hurt. For example, you could give two choices: “Name-calling is hurtful. Would you like to find a different way to say how you are feeling, or would you like to take a break until you feel calmer?”

4. PROBLEM-SOLVE TOGETHER
INVITE your child to suggest other ways to express their feelings. For example, instead of name-calling, they can try to identify the behavior they didn’t like. For example, they could say, “I didn’t like when you did this,” Or “I didn’t think that was fair.” You can role-play these situations and practice responding. Be sure to take turns with roles so you can model these approaches for your child.

5. SCAFFOLD
BUILD on progress your child makes. Take note when your child calls out a behavior or situation they don’t like instead of name-calling. You can say, “You told your friend that you didn’t like when they didn’t wait their turn. That was a helpful—and not a hurtful—way to say that!”

An Opportunity Mindset means choosing to see a challenge as a chance to learn and grow.

Perspective taking means learning that other people have their own thoughts and feelings. When we try to understand what other people think or feel, we are learning to take their point of view. When children learn to express themselves in respectful ways, they are also using Self-Control. In addition, they are managing their feelings, which helps them build and keep strong relationships. Source: Mind in the Making.

For more information visit: www.mindinthemaking.org

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