

Special Foster Care & Therapeutic Respite Care

Tips, Tools & Resources

Honey Speak

Where have all the kind words gone?

If you spend some time listening to how families communicate to each other these days, you might very well hear words of criticism, words of complaint or words of cutdown, far more often than kind ones. Just as the thank you note seems to have fallen by the wayside, so has the habit of speaking more with honey than with vinegar. Try some of the following for 2 weeks and see if it makes a difference in your family.

At the Dinner Table Kind words may not be the only things missing at your dinner table. Many families struggle to even get there. Make a point to eat together as a family at least 3 nights a week. During the meal, establish a round-robin routine wherein each person in the family shares a high moment and a low moment from their day: the High/Low. This way you can keep on top of what matters most to the members of your family.

Doing Chores Maintaining any household takes work, and many families take an all-hands-on-deck approach to chores in order to get everything done. Use this as an opportunity to thank family members for their help on a regular basis. Comment on the job they have done and how much their contribution means to you.

Homework, Crafts, Games, Music and Sports Celebrate the accomplishments of the members of your family on a regular basis. Ask to see homework and artwork and take the time to make detailed comments on the work. Ask how music or soccer practice went and have

your child share next steps in their musical or athletic development.

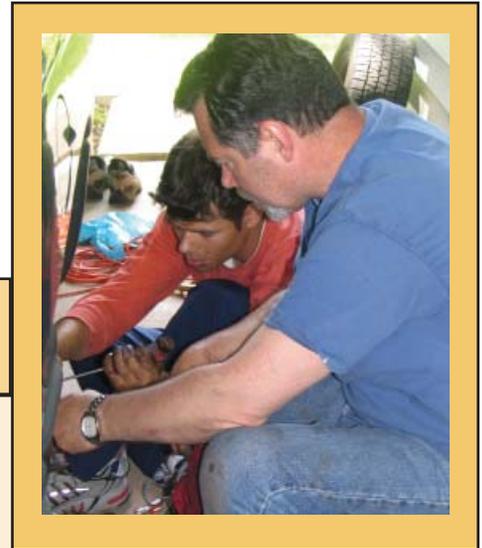
Attend games/recitals and note skills demonstrated by your child. Ask your child to teach you something about their interests: listen to their music, collect some bugs, play video games, visit websites, flip through trading cards, etc.

You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

Family Game Night Families that play together stay together. While Pictionary might not solve the world's ills, playing a few rounds with your family can be a prime opportunity to encourage and reinforce each other. While the competition might become fierce, keep words of vinegar away. Then, when the game is over, make everyone a winner by awarding categories such as "Quickest Draw," "Monet in Training" or "The Picture Worth 1,000 Words."

Honey Speak Resolutions

- Thank a family member for something he has done at least once a day.
- Share something you admire about each of the members of your family at least once a week.
- Encourage a family member in his pursuits at least once a week.
- Hide notes of encouragement, praise or gratitude in creative places for family members to find.
- Maintain a family gratitude journal.
- Send out family newsletters/emails celebrating accomplishments.



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent Training Exercise

Why are words of praise, encouragement, and gratitude important?

Describe three things you admire about each member of your family.

Describe three scenarios where you might model how to praise, encourage, and thank for members of your family.

Return to your caseworker for evaluation. Accurate answers can result in a training credit of 1/2 hour.