



Hi!
I am Adina Soclof, MS. CCC-SLP. I have been teaching parenting classes for many years based on the award winning book "How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk" by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish.

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Simple Ways to Improve Your Child's Behavior

How to Criticize Your Children Gently and Effectively

Criticism is always painful to hear. Children are like adults in that they are affected very deeply by criticism. We need to take extra care when we speak to our children about their negative behavior. Many therapists recommend using what they call the sandwich technique to motivate children to improve their behavior.

The sandwich technique has 3 components:

1. **Start with the positive**
2. **Criticize briefly**
3. **End with the positive**

Instead of: "You never get dressed on time. Why do we always have to wait for you?"

1. **Start with the positive:** "You know how to get dressed by yourself"
2. **Criticize briefly:** "You are taking a long time this morning"
3. **End with the positive:** "I know you are going to speed things up so we can get going on time this morning"

Instead of: "You are so bossy. No one will want to listen to you"

1. **Start with the positive:** "I have heard you ask your friends opinions and come up with solutions instead of fighting with them."
2. **Criticize briefly:** "I heard the way you spoke to Hillary, it sounded really harsh"
3. **End with the positive:** "I know you can find a way to speak to her nicely and make her feel better."

Instead of: "Stop lying, you never tell the truth"

1. **Start with the positive:** "Remember when you told me that you were the one who tracked dirt into the kitchen, you told the truth."
2. **Criticize briefly:** "The story you just told me does not sound right"
3. **End with the positive:** "I know you can find the courage to tell me what really happened."

Instead of: “You have such a big mouth! Stop interrupting all the time!”

1. **Start with the positive:** “You know how to wait your turn, like the way you wait for your turn at basketball practice and other stuff.”
2. **Criticize briefly:** “Right now you are using a very loud voice and are interrupting.”
3. **End with the positive:** “I know you can find a way to wait quietly until your sister is finished talking.”

Instead of: “Don't talk to me with that tone young lady! You are always so disrespectful!”

1. **Start with the positive:** “I know you can use respectful language.”
2. **Criticize briefly:** “The language and tone that you are using is disrespectful.”
3. **End with the positive:** “I know you speak respectfully; why don't we try this again when we are both calm.”

A natural reaction to being admonished is defensiveness. When we initiate our conversation with a positive comment, it puts your child at ease and they are better able to accept criticism. Ending with a positive affirmation lets your child know you have faith in their ability to do the right thing.

Adina Soclof, a certified Speech Pathologist, received her masters’ degree from Hunter College in New York in Communication Sciences. Adina worked as a Speech Pathologist in preschools for the developmentally disabled in the New York area before staying home full time with her family. She reentered the workforce as a Parent Educator for Bellefaire Jewish Children's Bureau facilitating "How to talk so Kids will Listen and Listen so Kids will Talk" workshops as well as workshops based on “Siblings Without Rivalry” and "Raising a Spirited Child". She has been featured at numerous non-profit organizations and private schools in Cleveland. Adina developed TEAM Communication Ventures and conducts parenting, teacher and clinician workshops via telephone nationwide. Adina lives with her husband and four lively children in Cleveland, Ohio.