

Positive words for kids

48 words, feelings and things to say to a child. Updated 28 October 2026. Free to print and share in a classroom.

Ages 4 to 6: first positive words

Short words a young child can say about themselves and their friends. Say the word when you see the child do it.

happy

Feeling good and glad inside.

I feel happy when we go to the park.

kind

Being nice and helping others.

It was kind of you to help me up when I fell.

brave

Doing something even when it feels scary.

I was brave at the dentist today.

gentle

Soft and careful, so nothing gets hurt.

I am gentle when I hold the baby chicks.

helpful

Doing things that make a job easier for someone.

I was helpful and set the table for dinner.

friendly

Kind and nice to be with.

The friendly girl asked me to play.

calm

Quiet and not upset inside.

I take three slow breaths to feel calm.

proud

Feeling good about something you worked hard to do.

I am proud of my drawing.

funny

Making people laugh.

My funny uncle tells the best jokes.

careful

Taking your time so nothing goes wrong.

I am careful when I carry the fish bowl.

polite

Using good manners, like please and thank you.

I am polite when I ask for more juice.

cheerful

Happy and smiley, and it helps others feel happy too.
Grandpa is always cheerful in the morning.

caring

Looking after people and wanting them to be OK.
My caring friend gave me her tissue when I cried.

fair

Treating everyone the same way and taking turns.
It is fair if everyone gets one go on the swing.

loving

Showing love with hugs, words and care.
My loving mom reads to me every night.

sharing

Happy to let others use or have some of your things.
My sharing friend let me use her crayons.

Ages 7 to 9: words for how we act

Words for the way a child behaves and works, the ones teachers use on a report and children can use in their writing.

curious

Wanting to find out how things work and why.
I am curious about how bees make honey.

honest

Telling the truth, even when it is hard.
I was honest and said I broke the cup.

patient

Waiting without getting cross.
I was patient while Dad finished his phone call.

creative

Good at making up new ideas and things.
We made a creative costume out of boxes.

generous

Happy to share and give to others.
It was generous of you to share your snack.

thoughtful

Thinking about what others need.
It was thoughtful of you to make Grandma a card.

confident

Believing you can do it.
I feel confident about my spelling test because I practiced.

respectful

Treating people and things with care.
We are respectful and listen when others talk.

responsible

Doing the jobs you said you would do.
I am responsible for watering the plants.

determined

Not giving up until you get there.
I was determined to ride my bike without help, and I did it.

grateful

Thankful for what someone did or gave.
I am grateful that my friend helped me find my shoe.

loyal

Sticking by your friends.
A loyal friend stays with you even when others walk away.

hopeful

Believing something good can happen.
I am hopeful that my plant will grow.

imaginative

Good at making up stories, games and pictures in your head.
My imaginative brother turned the sofa into a pirate ship.

organized

Keeping things in order so you can find them.
I am organized: my homework goes in the blue folder.

joyful

Full of happiness.
The joyful music made everyone dance.

Ages 10 to 12: bigger words for character

Longer words for character, ready for essays, self-reflections and class discussions.

resilient

Able to bounce back after something goes wrong.
He was resilient: he lost the race and signed up for the next one.

empathetic

Able to imagine how someone else feels.
He was empathetic and knew his friend felt left out.

considerate

Thinking about how other people feel before you act.
It was considerate of you to whisper while the baby slept.

optimistic

Expecting good things to happen.
I am optimistic that our team will play well.

compassionate

Feeling for someone who is hurting, and wanting to help.
She was compassionate when the new boy missed his old school, and showed him around.

independent

Able to do things by yourself.

I am independent and pack my own school bag.

enthusiastic

Excited about something and showing it.

Our class was enthusiastic about the museum trip.

dependable

Someone others can count on, every time.

Ali is dependable: he feeds the class fish every Friday.

courageous

Very brave, even when it is hard or you might lose.

It was courageous to tell the teacher what really happened.

humble

Not showing off, even when you are good at something.

She scored three goals and stayed humble, thanking her team.

tolerant

Accepting people who are different from you.

We are tolerant of each other's ideas, even when we disagree.

diligent

Working carefully and steadily until the job is done.

She was diligent and checked every answer twice.

inquisitive

Always asking questions to find out more.

Our inquisitive class asked the firefighter twenty questions.

trustworthy

Someone people can trust to tell the truth and keep a secret.

She is trustworthy, so the teacher gave her the classroom key.

sincere

Meaning what you say.

His sorry was sincere, and he fixed the tower he knocked over.

persistent

Trying again and again until it works.

I was persistent with my puzzle and finished it on the fifth day.

Feelings

Every feeling is OK to name, the hard ones too.

happy

Feeling good and glad inside.

I feel happy when my friends play with me.

excited

So happy about something that you can't sit still.

I feel excited the night before my birthday.

calm

Quiet and peaceful inside, with no worries.
I feel calm when I hug my teddy.

proud

Feeling good about something you did.
I feel proud when I finish a hard puzzle.

loved

Knowing someone cares about you a lot.
I feel loved when Grandma reads me a story.

surprised

Feeling it when something happens that you did not expect.
I felt surprised when my cousin came to visit.

shy

Feeling a bit nervous around people you don't know.
I feel shy on my first day in a new class.

worried

Thinking something bad might happen.
I feel worried when I can't find my mom in the store.

scared

Feeling afraid.
I feel scared when there is thunder.

sad

Feeling unhappy, sometimes like you want to cry.
I feel sad when my friend moves away.

angry

Feeling very cross when something is unfair or goes wrong.
I feel angry when someone breaks my tower.

frustrated

Feeling cross because something is too hard right now.
I feel frustrated when my shoelaces won't tie.

What to say: when they try hard**Say**

You kept going, even when it got hard.

Say

I can see how much practice went into this.

Say

When the first way didn't work, you tried another one.

Say

Look how far you've come since last week.

What to say: when they are kind

Say

That was kind. Did you see their face when you shared?

Say

Thank you for helping without being asked.

Say

You noticed your friend was sad, and you went to them.

Say

You waited for your turn, even though you really wanted to go first.

What to say: when something goes wrong

Say

Mistakes show us what to try next.

Say

It's OK to feel cross. Let's take a breath and try again.

Say

You can't do it yet. Let's look at it together.

Say

I'm proud of you for trying, whatever happens.

What to say: before something new or scary

Say

It's OK to feel nervous. You can be nervous and brave at the same time.

Say

You've done hard things before, like [learning to swim].

Say

I'll be right here when you come out.

Say

Just try your best. That's all anyone can do.

Instead of

Instead of "You're so smart."

Say: "You worked that out step by step."

It praises what the child did, which they can do again next time.

Instead of "Good job."

Say: "You finished the whole puzzle on your own."

It tells the child exactly what was good.

Instead of "Don't cry."

Say: "It's OK to be sad. I'm here."

It names the feeling and stays with the child, so the feeling can pass.

Instead of "Be careful!"

Say: "Hold on with both hands on the high bar."

It tells the child what to do, not only what to fear.