

## 7 things to tell your kids every day

Here are many ways to say “I love you” to your children, without actually uttering those three small-but-mighty words. Below are my seven favorite alternatives, which also double-duty as “Empowering Life Philosophies” for raising kids who feel resilient — kids who feel deep inside themselves that they have what it takes to bounce back from life’s assorted (and sordid!) challenges. After all, let’s face it. No matter how hard we all try to travel a bump-free path to happiness, life will always present its share of surprise potholes.

*I don't literally mean to literally say each one of these 7 things every single day. Switch 'em up. Sprinkle them into your day.*

### 1. “I believe in you.”

- I’ve told my 3-year-old son, Ari, “I believe in you” so frequently, that he’s started to boomerang these words right back at me.
  - Funny example: The other day I was ransacking our apartment for my keys. I collapsed on the sofa, frustrated because I couldn’t find them. Suddenly I felt a tug, tug, tug on my yoga pants. It was Ari.
  - “Mommy,” he says, “I know you can find your keys. I believe in you.”
  - His words were just the booster shot of adrenaline I needed to stand up and try pulling the sofa away from the wall for a quick peek behind it. Eureka! I found my lost keys!
  - Yep! I greatly believe in the propulsion power of “I believe in you!”

### 2. “Never give up.”

- Actually, when I say these words to my son, I say them three times in a row, in a silly, exaggerated, Winston-Churchill-type voice: “Never give up! Never give up! Never give up!”
  - This makes Ari giggle. And laughter is a great [stress](#) reliever, which continues to move him forward.
  - Recently, however, I realized these words need an important addendum. My son and I were putting together a Spiderman puzzle. Ari kept trying to squeeze the wrong puzzle piece into an empty puzzle space — while repeating: “Never give up! Never give up! Never give up!”
  - I corrected him by saying: “Never give up! Never give up! Never give up! Unless of course you’re doing something which might be wrong — then you need to stop, think and come up with a new strategy!”
  - “A new strategy?” he asked.
  - “Yes,” I said, “If you keep doing what you’re doing, you’ll keep getting what you’re getting. If nothing changes, nothing changes. So ... you need to look for a new way of doing it, a new strategy, to get new results.”
  - Ari now recognizes the importance of never giving up, while also being open to seeking new strategies.

### 3. “Practice is how we learn.”

- This phrase reminds Ari not to be upset at himself for slip-ups and downfalls. I like to say this not only during a challenging activity, but also before, as a warmly worded warm up.

### 4. “Every expert started out as a beginner — just like you.”

- I feel it’s essential to remind Ari that people who are awesome at something didn’t start off awesome.
- I want my son to grow up knowing that it’s OK to make mistakes. It’s OK to fail. It’s OK to struggle. What’s not OK is to think that mistakes, failure and struggle are permanent states of being! They’re simply a bridge you need to keep traveling across to get yourself to “The Land of Awesome.” I want my son to grow up knowing that persistence, patience and effort are all far more important than perfection.

### 5. “Failure is not an option.”

- “I received this mantra via one of Ari’s talking ninja toys. When I first heard the toy utter this phrase, I said: “OOOoooooh I love this toy! Failure is not an option! That’s a good one!”
- Ari and I then talked a bit about what this phrase means, things like: keep on trying, learn from everything, don't view it as "failure" but as "fullure" — "full" of lessons and insights to learn so you can try again with a new strategy and lots. So failure is never an option. One’s options are: learning, growing, letting it go, loving oneself for trying, and trying again!
- Now whenever Ari is having trouble doing something, he’ll Ninja-Up and announce: “Failure is not an option!” Thanks to this phrase, Ari has become better and better at learning to read books!

### 6. “You gotta learn from every oopsy and ouchie.”

- Each time Ari spills something, breaks something, drops something, kicks something, hurts something — I repeat for him this same little verbal ditty: “You gotta learn from every oopsy and ouchie.” I then ask him to specifically tell me what he learned from whatever the oopsy or ouchie might be — and we talk it through.
- I let him know we all make oopsies and ouchies. We just have to try not to make the same oopsy or ouchie more than once.

### 7. “You are safe and loved.”

- I recently added this phrase into my “Resiliency Words Tool Kit” after doing a hypnosis session with my friend. She was trying to put me into a relaxed emotional state. Her strategy? She asked me to remember a time in my childhood when I

felt safe and loved. Hoo boy! As soon as she requested this, I tensed up instead of calming down! I couldn't remember a clear, definitive time in my childhood where I felt safe and loved.

- Afterward I thought about how important it is to raise kids to feel safe and loved. It bolsters their self-esteem and encourages courage.
- I've now added the words "You are safe and loved!" into my goodnight ritual for my son. I whisper these words softly in his ear before he drifts off to sleep. "You are safe and loved." I truly hope this quiet whisper creates a loud, infinite echo which lasts him long into adulthood.