

WHAT TO SAY DURING A FRIENDSHIP STRUGGLE



When kids are hurting, the right words can help them feel seen, supported, and strong. The wrong words - even when we mean well - can shut them down. Use this guide as a quick reminder.

✓ TRY SAYING THIS	✗ INSTEAD OF THIS
✓ I'm here to listen. I want to hear what happened.	✗ Why are you so upset? It's not a big deal.
✓ That sounds really hard. I can see why you're upset.	✗ Just ignore them. Walk away. Don't let it bother you.
✓ What are you thinking of doing? How can I support you?	✗ Here's what you should do... (before you really know what happened)
✓ You're not alone. We'll figure this out together.	✗ You need thicker skin. You're too sensitive.
✓ You handled that thoughtfully. I'm proud of you for telling me.	✗ At least you still have other friends. (This can minimize their pain.)



- ✓ Kids don't always need us to fix it. They need us to listen, validate, and help them think it through.
- ✓ Our calm helps regulate their nervous system. Stay steady.
- ✓ Connection comes before correction. When kids feel understood, they are more open to guidance.
- ✓ You are not alone. We're all learning as we go.