

I Statements

'I' language is a powerful tool for ensuring children will take notice of you when you speak to them. For example, saying, "I need" or "I want" something rather than "you should" or "you shouldn't" do something. u

Children are more likely to take action with "I need you to pick your belongings up now," rather than "you shouldn't leave your belongings all over the floor," because:

- It is respectful.
- It is direct.
- It is honest.
- It is clear.
- It expresses the parents' own want or need.
- It avoids making the child feel like a problem (which may make it easier for them to avoid responsibility).

Try switching from *you* statements to *I* statements:

YOU STATEMENTS	I STATEMENTS
"You've got to hurry up and get dressed."	"It would help me if you got dressed now."
"You've got to spent alternate weekends with your father."	"I would like you to spend..."
"You shouldn't keep leaving your homework at school."	"I want you to bring your homework with you."
"You make me very cross."	"I feel very cross."
"You're always watching TV and leaving me with the washing up."	"I'd like you to turn the TV off now and help with the washing up."
"You're so selfish."	"I'd like you to think about others."
"Look what you've made me do."	"I've spoilt this because I am upset."
"You're always late, you're so inconsiderate."	"I need to leave by 8.30," or "I feel angry when you get in late, because it means the meal is spoilt and I've been wasting my time cooking."

'I' messages are empowering. The speaker is taking responsibility for their own feelings, giving the recipient information about their behaviour/actions, and giving a reason for why that action has caused the feeling. An 'I' message usually gives the opportunity for an apology or discussion.

By using 'I' statements we give an example to our children, encouraging them to express their needs too.