

CHILD SWEARING: What to Do & Say When Child Swears or Uses Unkind Words | Child Psychologist Tips

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SUMMARY

Dr. Jasmine, a clinical psychologist and mother, discusses the reasons children swear and how parents can effectively address it. She emphasizes the importance of curiosity and communication, suggesting that many instances of swearing stem from children's exploration of language rather than malicious intent.

- *Children often swear out of curiosity, imitation, or to assert power and control.*
- *Parents should approach swearing with curiosity, asking children what they think certain words mean.*
- *Ignoring swearing can be effective, especially if it's playful or not frequent.*
- *Education about the implications of hurtful words is crucial for children to understand their impact.*
- *Role-playing can help children learn to express their feelings without resorting to swearing.*
- *Establishing boundaries and discussing feelings behind the words can foster better communication.*
- *Proactive teaching about kind language during calm moments can reinforce positive behavior.*
- *Utilizing children's books can be an effective tool for discussing emotions and choices.*

oops your child overheard you dropped the f-bomb or the b-bomb or the s-bomb and now it's their new favorite word or better yet you overhear them in conversation and they swear and use words you've never even used and you're like what i don't even talk like that uh well hi i'm dr jasmine i'm a clinical psychologist as well as a mom of two little girls and in today's video i'm gonna be sharing why kids swear in the

first place and then most importantly what we can do about it so let's dive in [Music] so i don't know about you guys but i'll never forget the time my oldest daughter uh was singing a song that we all love and enjoy and she dropped the b word and we're like oh my goodness our heart sunk um can you remember the first time you heard your child swear drop down in the comments below let me know um but this is a common question

that i get like how do we handle swearing right whether it's done in playful just kind of testy behavior or if it's done repeatedly out of anger what is the best approach um so i'm gonna break it down for you in this video but before i dive in um i just want to share with you that i have a free two-minute quiz designed to help you understand your unique parenting style as well as give you some concrete

tips um tailored to that unique approach so that you can start to see better behavior so go to the mompysychologist.com forward slash quiz after you watch this video and take my free two minute quiz again it's two minutes it's free and it's a lot of fun uh the links will be in the description as well as the comment sections

below okay so let's dive in um again this question i get all the time especially inside of my private parent coaching

community the mom sisterhood and i think that there are two distinct pathways right there are the kids that swear maybe it's a one-time thing or it's a couple-time thing right it hasn't happened that often um and parents are just like okay how do i nip this in the bud um or it's a chronic issue so i'm gonna speak to both because i think we need to handle them differently um now the first thing the first line of event of defense

the first tip i will recommend to you and this is really whether your child swears or they just say something that catches you off guard like the other day um my little one started using the word evil or she was asking me a black about a black eye right just like weird random things and you're like where did you learn that from right where did you get that um or they swear right just in passing and you're like whoa right my

my little one started saying the p word and i'm like where did you hear that from we definitely don't say that in our house so anyways the first line of defense right the first thing i want you to do is train your mind to think in curiosity so my first question will often be when they throw these like random words at me is to say oh what do you think that means or what does that mean to you because nine times

out of ten especially if you have a toddler preschooler they don't even know what they're saying right they're like evil i don't know i just heard that in a tv show right so approach with curiosity don't jump to assumptions and conclusions uh that they know what that means and that they're using it maliciously because you'll often find they don't know what that means and often just a little bit of education or even just ignoring it and kind of

dropping it but often just a little bit of education will help them understand what that words means and then they can kind of use it in context or not use it at all so uh let me dive into the question that i received from a mom inside of my private parent coaching community the mom sisterhood because i love this question and i think there's a lot of gems that uh and and lessons that can be learned from her

specific scenario so she wrote in and said i accidentally had my four-year-old overhear me say stupid although this is not terrible it's something i don't allow my children to say or use i try to avoid it as well i ignored it at first to not give it attention however now it's constant all his toys are stupid his brother is stupid and now i'm being called stupid i've tried the word the whole words are not for hurting and let's

choose nice words examples silly or weird is this appropriate for a timeout or since many times he's in a state of dysregulation it's not appropriate how to make it stop okay i love this question because i love how she shares all of the things she has already tried right she's already tried to ignore it which i will say is my first like approach um other than approach with curiosity dispel any myths or you know

help them ex understand what that word means um so for in the in this example would be okay helping them understand what stupid means and why you know it could hurt uh people's feelings if we use that in

conversation uh when it's appropriate to say that word you know in your room by yourself um and you know just the the potential implications socially when you when we use those words i.e they hurt other people's feelings it's a really a verbal

put down um so approaching with curiosity providing education ignoring would all be the first things i would the first tip so i love how she said you know i've already done all that let's cut to the chase here right i've also tried to put a boundary saying things like you know you know let's try another word which i love right what are some other words we can use um to say the same thing but maybe in a more polite way

so i love how she uh tried to give her child other words to say already and then um you know she said you know words are not for hurting and i think that i don't know if that was like the complete conversation but i think i'd do a deeper dive into again the potential implications socially for saying those words and basically the consequences right other people might not want to be our friends other people might not want to play with

us and those are the things to just get them you know to keep them aware of of course we cannot shield our child from all natural consequences and so those things might be things that just might need to happen naturally in this in the environment but you definitely can set some boundaries in your home so before i share kind of my breakdown of the things that i recommended she do um i want to share some possible reasons

why your child might swear in the first place so especially if you have a toddler right they're just now learning to communicate preschoolers as well right they're learning new words every day and communication is still such a very fun and um just a curious thing right it brings a lot of adventure and learning with it right so a lot of the times children will say words that they're hearing that they're picking up either from their uh

tv shows cartoons even books say words are i'm like excuse me all right why did you just plant that in my child's head right they'll use those words all the time and i'm always like oh my gosh like excuse me right so um they are hearing these different words throughout the day and they're trying to understand them they're trying to test them out for themselves they are coming to understand that words bring a lot of power and of course around this age

they're all about power and control right they're learning to assert their own power and control learning about their own identity their own place in the world around them and so language is a fun thing to experiment with them a lot of these times this is not done you know maliciously this is just done out of curiosity and playfulness so either it's a young child exploring their the language and power they're trying to express a feeling they are

imitating what they have seen and heard or it sounds funny or they're looking for a reaction or they've gotten a reaction out of you in the past and they want to keep you know pushing those buttons a little bit uh for their own entertainment okay so i'm gonna share some quick tips before i dive into again what i specifically recommended for this mom in this particular situation again these situations are so nuanced and complex there's never gonna be just like one tip

that i can give for you for every situation so bear with me a little bit but tip number one especially if this was the first time if you sense that they are being silly they're being playful then you can opt to ignore it especially if you're not quite sure how you want to respond or you're feeling triggered just don't respond okay remember this is not an emergency type situation this doesn't need your immediate feedback your immediate response so if all else fails

if you're feeling totally caught off guard by what they are saying ignore it the other thing you can do is approach with curiosity what does that word mean right do you know what that word means what does it mean to you where did you hear that word just approach with more questions versus trying to shut it down completely all right because that's going to only uh entice their curiosity a little bit more as well as add to the confusion

right in the mixed messages right because if they're hearing this from like let's say a tv show they're kind of hearing the message it's okay to say these words right and then you're saying it's not okay and now they're more curious and they don't know so approach with curiosity and kind of get to know where they're coming from first especially if you're feeling triggered especially if you're feeling caught off guard now if this is something that's

done out of anger that i would speak more to the anger which i talked a lot about in a recent master class that i held i also talked about it on my recent instagram post but when your child lashes out at you and says hurtful things it's really important to see beneath the words and listen to the feelings underneath it you can put up a boundary like you know it's hard to hear you when you use words like that can you

try to find a different way to say that can you say that in a different way i want to hear you right so basically you're sending the message i want to hear you your feelings are important to me however um i need to hear it in a different way so that we can kind of you know talk together uh so that might be a way that you establish boundaries especially if they're an older child but especially if they're younger and

it's really hard for them i would just speak to those feelings wow you're having really big feelings right now you seem like you're upset you seem like you're angry tell me more right and then just get them talking about what's beneath those words often times we are just speaking to the words and we're getting offended and we're trying to put up these boundaries but we're missing the whole point right we're missing the forest within the trees if you will right so really pay

attention to those feelings of course you can always establish boundaries but i would lean towards establishing boundaries later in the conversation later in that interaction after you've connected with them and you really understand where they are coming from right children need to be heard in order to hear us and hear our lessons now for this mom and um this is kind of what i recommended to her um and that is to say you know i understand that you're upset right

because of xyz so this this child is using the word stupid to describe everybody so let's say they're saying hey mom you're stupid right so you can say you know i understand you're upset uh about xyz whatever is going on

in the environment at that time right or if you're not sure inquire more about you know what's going on for them um and then you know pull them aside to talk don't talk about this in front of

siblings don't talk about this in front of other people it's really best to slow yourself down slow your child down and have this conversation in private so that you guys can you know connect with each other now if they're activated you may need to spend some time connecting with them in other ways like play right talking about something else and then going back to hey you know just a moment ago i heard you use the word

stupid to describe me i want to talk to you about that so again during these conversations always lead with curiosities you know i heard you use that word stupid to describe your brother or me what does that word mean to you yeah and then you can kind of see where are they coming from do they understand that that's a hurtful word if not then you can say yes you know that word stupid is a put down right it's meant to

put somebody down and it actually really hurts people's feelings right words actually hurt people's feelings i understand that you were upset at brother you know and that's why it's so important before you even do all this teaching to understand from your child like what was happening in that moment because oftentimes we don't even see these things especially if it's between siblings so get your child's perspective right what was brother doing in that moment right before you said that word

right you really want to understand your child's trigger so that you can shine the light to them on their own triggers so that they can understand their emotional world better right so the basic uh message that you're sending in this conversation is when you're educating if they're not clear on what stupid means so you want to provide some education on you know what that word means and why we don't want to use that socially as well as sending the overall

message it's always okay to feel upset i totally get it you are so upset because you weren't done playing with that and you want to sound like that right you want to sound like oh my god i get it you aren't done playing with those blocks and he came in and he came and snatched them like i would have been disappointed too you really want to lead with that and right not butt but and there are other ways you can tell

brother how you were feeling or get help in that situation um so that you make the right choice right because this is such a powerful lesson that will help him in so many other ways right when he gets frustrated at school or playing sports or an extracurricular activity right this is such a important life skill right how do we handle our frustration in healthy ways we're not going to always get it right i mean us adults don't get

this right all the time right but these are the lessons that we can start to teach so you're drawing that boundary there here and helping them is depending on their age uh explore with them the different options they have right they could take a break they could tell brother very clearly their boundaries and if brother doesn't listen go get help right um they could remove themselves from the situation uh whatever it is right a lot of the times it's going to get help or

expressing a boundary verbally um and hopefully that works and if not again getting help um but you know helping them understand there are so many other choices other than lashing out with their words and then i would stop and say you know does this make sense what questions do you have for me stop and really uh allow them to ask questions or allow them to express what they're thinking what their opinions are and then you know

helping them understand we're going to work through this and so i would role play with them in the in these moments right and get silly get playful but you know role play the time where he was frustrated with brother about the blocks right and you can show him first you know oh i'm getting so frustrated right pretend he's brother and you're uh your child um and you can you know act silly get a little exact you know exaggerate a

little bit have fun but say you know space please or i don't like that or you know what i'm gonna go tell mommy i'm getting frustrated i'm gonna go tell mommy and then you guys switch and he gets to role play himself in that situation making a different choice and basically what you want to over and over remind your child is that we always have a choice and that we're always working towards making better and better choices and

that we're going to work on this as a team right they're not alone with this you're not judging them for their mistakes everybody has mistakes and so i'm going to help you i'm gonna be your partner along this path as you learn to make better choices and then on the back end outside of these moments because that's where a lot of the work happens you want to be proactive uh about teaching them and reinforcing the idea of using kind language even when

we're frustrated so this could be in play where the action figures are getting upset and they make a different choice or this can be through children's books which i will have a bunch of links of some of my most favorite children's books around this topic what should danny do and what should darla do are one of my favorites on the just the overall idea of the power to choose as well as there are some other great ones

so i'll definitely leave the links to those in the description box but you definitely want to be using children's books those are my favorite ways to keep this conversation going right about how we make choices and how do we deal with our big feelings and why it's important to use kind words even when we're frustrated so i hope that this video was helpful um not only in just kind of understanding where swearing comes from in the first place

but how to deal with it whether it's you know ignoring it the first couple times or having a more in-depth conversation with your child if you notice that it's becoming a pattern and above all else be proactive by not just trying to put out the fires when they are saying the swear words but also using moments when you guys are calm and connected to discuss these themes even further again don't forget to take my free two-minute quiz to find out your

unique parenting style and get some parenting tips and that is it for this video i will see you in the next one bye