

Using I-Messages vs. You-Messages

I-Messages are a positive way to help families communicate strong emotions. During conversations or conflicts with others, we can use I-Messages to express how we are feeling and what we want to see happen.

You-messages make the other person feel like they are being blamed or accused of something (ex: "you are always arguing with your sibling") which can lead to an argument. I-messages state the problem without blaming and people more open to solving the problem. You-messages can stop the problem solving in its tracks. It is important to keep the lines of communication open.

ACCUSING LANGUAGE

You made me
feel angry.

I feel that you don't
care about me.

I want you to stop
being so mean.

I wish you wouldn't be so
annoyingly loud.

I would like for you
not to be so bossy.

ASSERTIVE LANGUAGE

 I felt hurt.

I feel lonely and
disconnected.

I want to be treated
with kindness.

I have a hard time
concentrating when
there's loud noises.

I would like to make my
own decision about this.

I STATEMENTS

A Simple Tool to Help
Kids and Parents Be Heard

I FEEL



sad



worried



ashamed



tired



angry



jealous



hurt



scared

BECAUSE _____ HAPPENED
(NAME THE SITUATION)

I NEED



A hug



You to listen
and try to
understand



A snack
or a drink



Alone time
to calm
down



Appreciation



Help
Breathing



Constructive
Parenting

I-Message Template

I feel - State the feeling

When - Why do you feel that way?

I would like - What would you like the person to do differently? What do you need?

Example: Instead of saying “you are always arguing with your sibling!”, try:

“**I feel** frustrated **when** you and your sister are arguing, **I would like** you to talk calmly to each other.”

Now it's your turn to practice. Imagine that you are talking with your children. How can you address the following problems and turn them into I-Messages.

1. Your child's room is always a mess.
2. Your child is spending too much time playing video games.
3. Every day you have to remind your child to do their chores.

For more information on how to use I-Statements effectively please read:

<https://constructiveparenting.com/blog-i-statements-child-therapist-and-parenting-counselor-charlotte-nc/>

Here is another example of using I-Messages, click here to watch this video:

<https://safeYouTube.net/w/EAKH>

Use the one that feels most comfortable to you.