

Confidence-Building Language for Kids

How to use your words to boost self-belief, resilience, and participation

What you say matters. As an Age Manager, you play a key role in shaping how children see themselves—especially when they’re trying something new or facing a challenge. With the right language, you can help Nippers feel brave, proud, and ready to give things a go, no matter their skill level.

1. Why Language Matters

- Helps kids feel safe to try—even if they’re not “the best”
- Builds a growth mindset and resilience
- Reinforces that effort is more important than winning
- Encourages kids to reflect on their own progress
- Promotes a supportive, non-judgmental group culture

2. Shift the Focus from Outcome to Effort

- **Instead of:** “You’re so fast!”
- **Try:** “You really pushed yourself today—great effort!”

- **Instead of:** “Good job, you won!”
- **Try:** “You stayed focused and gave it your best—that’s what matters.”

- **Instead of:** “Don’t be scared.”
- **Try:** “It’s okay to feel nervous. You’re being really brave.”

3. Use Encouragement That Recognises Progress

- “You’ve come a long way since last week.”
- “I noticed you joined in straight away—well done.”
- “Last time you weren’t sure about the water, and today you gave it a go!”

4. Celebrate Small Wins

- Effort: “You didn’t give up, even when it got tricky.”
- Teamwork: “I saw you helping your buddy without being asked.”
- Listening: “Thanks for being ready and listening so quickly today.”

5. Help Kids Reflect Positively

Ask open-ended questions that promote self-awareness:

- “What part did you enjoy most today?”
- “What’s something you found tricky but kept trying anyway?”
- “What are you proud of from today?”

6. Reassure and Support When Things Don’t Go to Plan

- “That didn’t go how you wanted, and that’s okay. Want to try again later?”
- “It’s not about being perfect—it’s about learning and trying.”
- “You’re still learning. That’s part of the fun.”

Final Thought: You’re a Voice They’ll Remember

Age Managers have an incredible influence, even in small moments. Your encouragement may be the thing a child remembers years later—the moment they felt seen, supported, and strong enough to keep going.

