



LANGUAGE MATTERS!

POCKET CARDS TO ASSIST WITH STUDENT CONVERSATIONS

INSTEAD OF...
“How can I help you?”



TRY THIS:
“Thanks for being here today.”

OR: “It’s good to see you. How are you doing?”

THEN,
“How can I help you?”

OR: “What do you need to be ready to learn today?”

STARTING THE DAY

STUDENT SEEKING HELP

INSTEAD OF...
“That’s too many questions at once. Ask one question, then come back.”



TRY THIS:
“You’ve fallen behind a bit, but we can get back on track. What is the first thing you need to know?”

THEN MAYBE:
“I’d like to suggest we focus on X and Y today, but I want to make sure we have enough time to fully explore A and B. Can you try this part first, then we can review it together?”

INSTEAD OF...
“I see you didn’t X as we discussed.” (e.g., do the assigned homework.)



TRY THIS:
“Please tell me how things have been since I gave you that assignment.”

OR: “Last time we talked about this, we had a plan to do X. How did that work out for you?”

OR: “How has it been going with X? Do we need to look at changing something to help you meet your goals?”

DISCUSSING MISSED WORK

DISCUSSING ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

INSTEAD OF...
“You know what you need to do for this assignment, but I’m not seeing a lot of progress.”



TRY THIS:
“Please tell me more about what you think might be going on around not progressing on this assignment.”

INSTEAD OF...
“Your child needs this <support>, but that may take some time.”



TRY THIS:
“I’d like to make a referral for support but that can take some time. If you agree, we’ll make the referral today, but let’s talk about shorter term options to support your child while we wait for that appointment.”

DISCUSSING SUPPORT OPTIONS

WHEN SIGNS OF STRESS OBSERVED

INSTEAD OF...
“What’s wrong?”



TRY THIS:
“How are you doing right now?”
OR: “How are things going? You look like you’re having some trouble.”

THEN: “Is there something I can do to help you concentrate or feel more comfortable?”

INSTEAD OF...
“If you don’t settle down, I’m calling the office/you will need to leave the classroom.”



TRY THIS:
“I hear that you’re upset/angry. I’m here to help, but it’s hard for me to help when you’re speaking that loudly.”
OR: “It’s not easy asking for help. Is anything worrying you?”

IF YES: “Would you like to talk about that?”

IF NO: “Would you like to take a short break and we can start again in a few minutes, or you can check back later?”

WHEN SIGNS OF STRESS OBSERVED