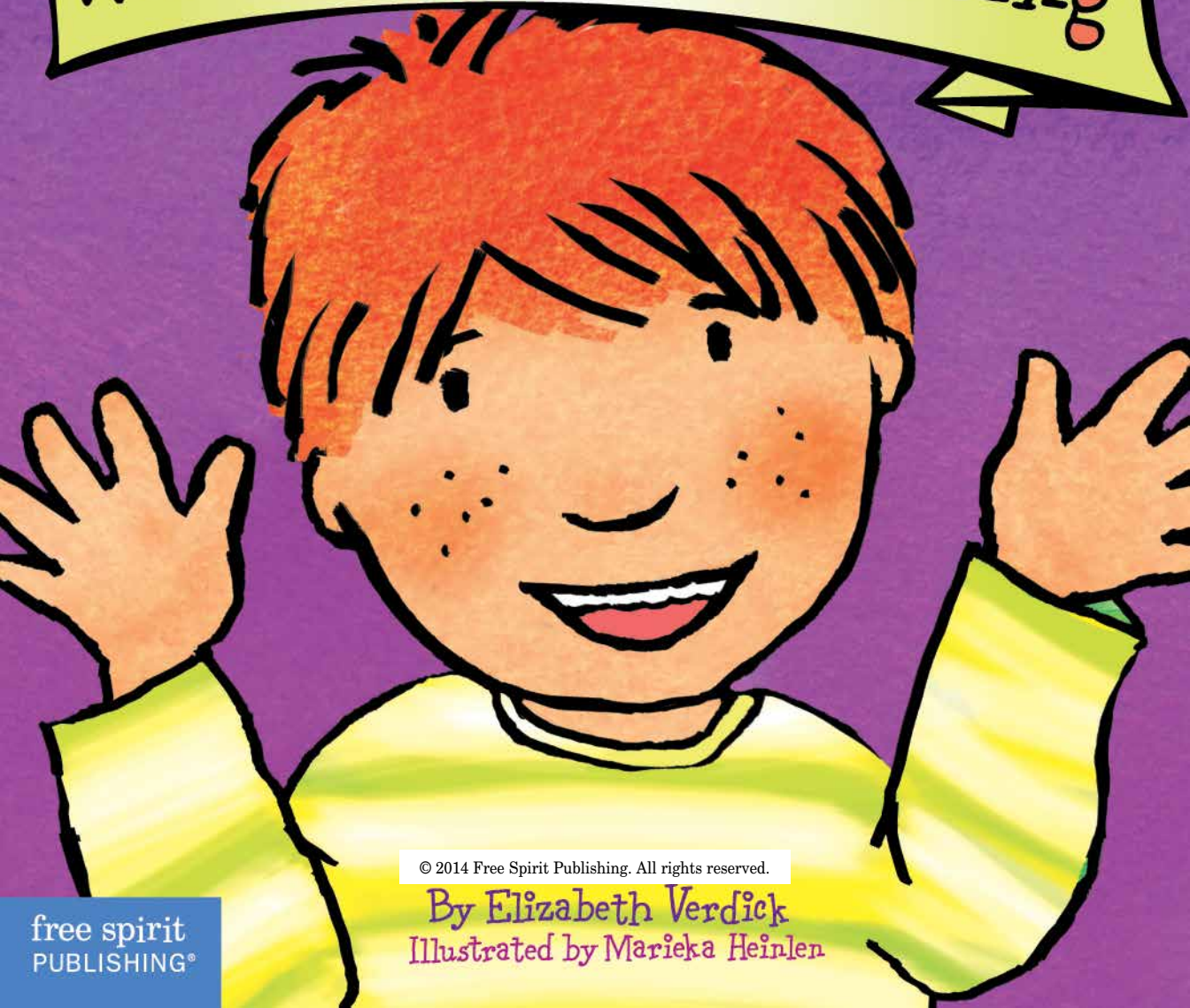


Words Are Not for Hurting



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You know
lots of words.

Who listens
when you talk?

Your family, your friends,
your teachers...

many people!





Tips for Parents and Caregivers



- **Use this book interactively.** Invite your child to point to the pictures or respond to questions you ask while reading. You might say, “Why is this girl crying?” Or, “How do you think this boy feels?”
- **Notice when your child uses words in kind or helpful ways.** You could say, “I sure liked it when you said ‘please’ just now.” Or, “Thank you for asking for that toy so nicely.”
- **Gently intervene when you hear hurtful words.** You could take your child aside and say, “See how sad your friend is because you called him that name? You know how it feels to be sad, too. Let’s think of what you can say to help him feel better.” You might add, “Words are not for hurting.”
- **Talk about feelings throughout the day.** To learn to use words in helpful ways, children need names for feelings. You might say, “I feel happy when I take a walk with you” and “When you smile like that, I can see that you feel good inside.” Help your child notice the feelings of others, too: “He looks like he feels angry right now.” “I can tell she’s unhappy because she’s crying.”
- **Try the simple reminder “Use your words.”** Toddlers often scream or cry instead of communicating their needs in words. When your child has something important to express, you might calmly repeat the phrase “Use your words.” At first, you may need to do some prompting: “Are you trying to tell me that you’re still hungry?” “Are you mad because you didn’t get a turn on the swings?” With repetition, your child will come to know what “Use your words” means, and will begin to have more success with putting thoughts and feelings into words.
- **Teach the importance of “I’m sorry.”** Help your little one understand that everyone makes mistakes, including adults. Encourage your child to offer an apology when needed. When it’s you who slips up, show that you know how to say “I’m sorry,” too. Your child is always learning from your example!
- **Be patient.** Toddlers naturally think they are the center of the universe. It can be hard for them to remember to be concerned about how their words and actions affect others. And while language development is different for each child, both toddlers *and* preschoolers are in the process of discovering new ways to express themselves. Often, they don’t have the words they need right when they need them. Gradually, they will come to understand that other people have feelings just like they do. Over time, they will have command of more and more words that let them speak in ways that are helpful to them and to others.