

Change the Labels

We should speak *about* our children and *to* our children with words that make them (and us) feel good. We should use words that are positive. Words that focus on what's *right* about their behavior, not what's *wrong* with it. Think about advertising companies and realtors and the words they use to describe their products. The words that make you think how cool, fun, charming and useful their product is. We need to turn our negative labels into labels that make us smile, that make us proud, and even ones that make us laugh. Labels, whether spoken aloud or internalized, affect how we feel, act, and think about our spirited children. But how do you even begin to change your thinking about a trait that drives you crazy?

Here are some examples of negative labels with their more positive counterpart in italics:

bossy *future manager*

distracted, not listening *curious, perceptive*

wild, never stops *energetic, full of life, busy*

resistant *focused*

whiny *expressive*

negative *analytical*

reckless *adventurous*

nags, annoys and otherwise drives you crazy to get what he wants *argues intelligently for what he wants*

argumentative, demanding *persistent*

picky *selective*

rebellious *independent*

manipulative *charismatic, persuasive*

overwhelming *powerful*

stubborn *goal-oriented*

thin-skinned, high-strung *sensitive*

dangerous thrill-seeking behavior *likes to learn, explore, try new things*

noisy, loud *enthusiastic, zestful*

explosive *dramatic*

Look For the Positive. (Even if you have to search really hard!)

Source: Raising Your Spirited Child