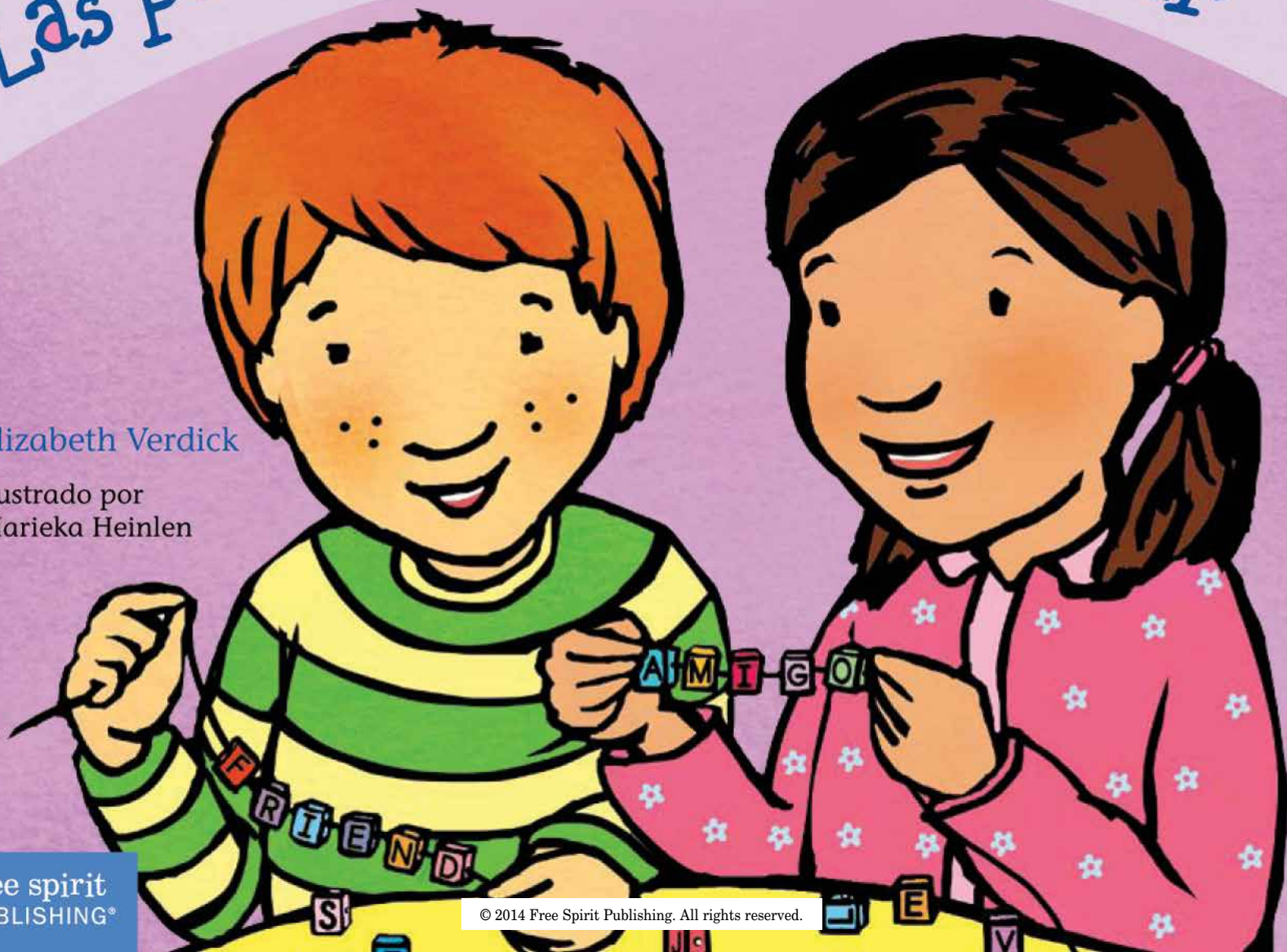


# Words Are Not for Hurting

## Las palabras no son para lastimar

Elizabeth Verdick

Ilustrado por  
Marieka Heinlen



English-Spanish  
Inglés-Español

For Ages 4–7  
De 4 a 7 años

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For my children, Olivia and Zachary.  
Every day, you teach me more about love and  
patience, and you always make me smile.

–E.V.

Para mis hijos, Olivia y Zachary.  
Cada día me enseñan más acerca del amor y  
de la paciencia, y siempre me hacen sonreír.

–E.V.

For my mother and father,  
whose words of encouragement  
helped me believe in myself.

–M.H.

Para mis padres, cuyas palabras de  
aliento me ayudaron a creer en mí.

–M.H.

## *Dear Parents and Caregivers,*

Children are known for saying whatever comes to mind. Their words—so often funny, surprising, and insightful—are a window into their feelings. There are times when we hear children saying something mean or hurtful. They might tease another child, for example, or make unkind comments about someone's appearance. They might shout, or even swear. What's behind these words? Often feelings of anger, sadness, rejection, confusion, or fear. Just like adults, children may lash out with a raised voice or hurtful words.

All of us, young and old alike, can learn to choose our words wisely. We can think before we speak and make an effort to use words that convey kindness and respect.

Most important, we can apologize when something we've said has hurt someone else. Those two little words, "I'm sorry," are sometimes so hard for us to say. But the more we practice them, the better we get at it. And those two little words can make all the difference!



### *Elizabeth*

P.S. On pages 28–30, you'll find activities, discussion starters, and other resources that reinforce the message of using helpful, not hurtful, words.

## *Queridos padres y educadores:*

Sabemos que los niños dicen lo primero que se les viene a la mente. Estas palabras —muchas veces divertidas, sorprendentes y astutas— son una ventana a sus sentimientos. A veces escuchamos a los niños decir palabras negativas o hirientes cuando, por ejemplo, se burlan de otro niño o bromean acerca de la apariencia de alguien. Pueden hacerlo gritando o incluso maldiciendo. ¿Qué esconden estas palabras? A menudo rabia, tristeza, rechazo, confusión o miedo. Al igual que los adultos, los niños a veces contestan subiendo el tono de la voz o usando palabras hirientes.

Todos nosotros, grandes y pequeños por igual, podemos aprender a escoger rudentemente nuestras palabras. Podemos pensar antes de hablar y esforzarnos en usar palabras amables y respetuosas.

Y aún más importante, podemos disculparnos si hemos lastimado a alguien. A veces nos resulta muy difícil decir estas dos palabras: "Lo siento". Pero mientras más las usemos, más fácil será acceder a ellas. Y estas dos palabras pueden hacer gran diferencia.



### *Elizabeth*

P.D. En las páginas 31–33, encontrarán actividades, temas de conversación y otras herramientas que apoyan el mensaje de usar palabras amables y no palabras que lastiman.



Did you know you can make *millions* of words with just these letters?

¿Sabías que con solo esas letras puedes formar *millones* de palabras?

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm

Nn Ññ Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz



See page 28 to learn more about the Spanish alphabet.

Vea la página 31 para aprender más sobre el alfabeto español.



Some words are super short.  
Algunas palabras son cortas.

“Hi!”  
“¡Hola!”

“Bye”  
“Adiós”

“No”  
“No”

“Yes!”  
“¡Sí!”

Don't forget D-O-G.  
No olvides P-E-R-R-O.



Some words are really loooong.  
Algunas palabras son muy laaaargas.

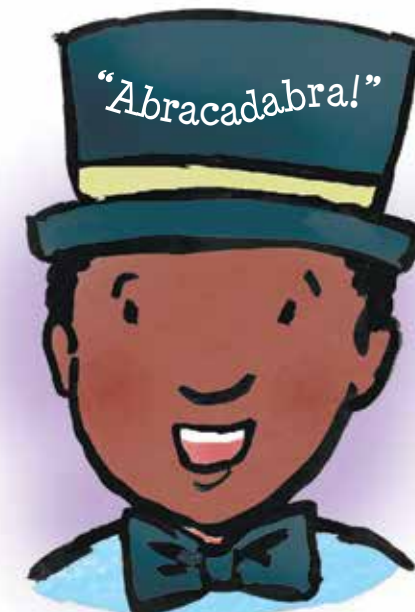
“Thingamajig”  
“Cachivache”



“Mississippi”



“Abracadabra!”



And some are just plain silly.

Otras son simpáticas.

“Wiggly Giggly”  
“Saltimbanqui”



“Cock-a-doodle-doo!”  
“¡Quiriquiri!”



# Activities and Discussion Starters

## How We Use Words

### Fun with Words

Talk about how we use words to greet others, tell stories, sing songs, ask questions, and much more. Talk about words that rhyme, words that are silly, or words that are very short or long.

### Words in Different Languages

If some children speak a second language, ask them to teach a few new words to the other kids. Imagine a world without words—what would it be like if we couldn't communicate with each other verbally.

**NOTE:** In Spanish, “ch” and “ll” are letters, too. These letters are made by pairing two letters together. They are generally written as “ch” or “ll” and “Ch” or “Ll.”

## “Talking” Without Words

### What Your Face Says

Help children understand that we “talk” with more than our mouth—our face also sends messages about what we are thinking or feeling. Have children make faces to match feelings such as happy, sad, mad, scared, or excited. Let each child see his or her expressive face in a hand mirror. Ask others how the child is feeling and how the child's face shows it. Discuss how facial expressions can be hurtful or helpful. Ask how children would feel if someone scowled at them and said, “You can't play with us.” Next, talk about ways they could help someone who's wearing a sad or scared expression.

### What Your Body Says

Introduce the idea of body language by explaining how our actions and gestures may “talk” for us and show how we feel. Demonstrate some body language yourself: lower your head to show that you feel sad or shy; stomp your

foot to show anger; shrug your shoulders to suggest that you're unsure; take a step backward and hold your arms inward to show fear. Turn to pages 4–7 and 12–13 in this book to see children and adults using different body language. Ask what each person might be thinking or feeling. Invite volunteers to show how they might respond to these feelings in helpful ways.

### What Your Mind Says

Ask children how they talk to themselves inside their head. Is there a voice saying kind things like “You can do it” or “That was a good try”? Talk about how words inside our head can be helpful or hurtful. When we tell ourselves something positive (“I will try my hardest”), we feel stronger and we're more likely to succeed. When we tell ourselves something negative (“I better not try because I might fail”), we feel discouraged and less likely to succeed. Help each child think of one positive message to think throughout the day such as “I can do it.”



## Positive Ways to Use Words

### “Feelings” Words

Children can learn to recognize their feelings and put their emotions into words. Once they have words for their feelings, children are better able to recognize and respond to the feelings of others. Talk about words that describe how we feel: happy, sad, cranky, mad, worried, lonely, surprised, nervous, excited, sleepy, and so on. Act out some of the emotions using clear facial expressions and body language. Have the children act out telling someone how they feel: “I am sad.” “I feel so excited!” “I am angry.”

## Polite Words

Point out that “please” and “thank you” are among the most helpful words people use. To show the importance of polite words, give examples of not using them (“Get off the swing!”) and of using them (“May I please have a turn on the swing?”). Talk about how it feels to do something nice for someone but not hear a “thank you.” Ask how it would feel if someone bumped into them and never said “Excuse me” or “Sorry.” Practice saying polite words. Compliment children whenever you overhear them using good manners.

## Tone of Voice

Tone of voice can make a difference in how others interpret and respond to our words. To give children an example of how this works, you might use a loud, demanding tone of voice and say, “It's MY turn to go first! You always go first and it's not FAIR!” Next, use different words and a different, gentler tone of voice: “It's my turn to go first now. You went first last time, and it's only fair that I get a chance, too.” Ask how it feels to hear the words spoken both ways.

## Talk About It

This book tells children two important concepts: *Your words belong to you* and *Think before you speak*. Ask children what each idea means. Explain that our words come from our head and our heart—we use words to express how we think and feel, and this is why our words are ours.

It isn't uncommon for children to choose to blame someone else for something hurtful they have said.



You might hear a child say, “Luis told me to say it!” or “She said it first!” Talk about how each person must take responsibility for what he or she says. Discuss why shifting blame to someone else doesn't help.

Suggest that, the next time they are about to say something hurtful or mean, they take a deep breath instead and count to 5 in their head. After thinking about it, can they come up with a better, kinder way to say what they feel? Or can they decide to say nothing at all?

## Words That Hurt

### Mean, Angry Words

Ask children if words can hurt. Why or why not? What are some examples of hurtful words (name-calling, teasing, etc.)? Talk about how it feels to be teased, yelled at, or called a rude name. Also talk about how it feels to tease others. Does this lead to good feelings? Why or why not?

### A Word to Grown-Ups

Young children listen to our words, even when we think they aren't listening. They may overhear grown-ups yelling, cursing, gossiping, criticizing, or saying unkind things. Children may then imitate what they hear. As adults, we can make an effort to choose words that are kind, loving, and peaceful. If we slip, we can acknowledge it, apologize, and let children know that we'll try harder next time.

### “Bad” Words

Children may swear to express anger, to test their boundaries, or simply because they've heard the words and don't yet realize the effect they have. Talk about how such words make others feel: upset, angry, embarrassed, uncomfortable. You can help children understand that using inappropriate words has consequences, such as a brief time-out.

## Words That Help

### Questions

Children need to know that asking a question is a great way to find out more—whether they're confused about something or simply curious. Help them understand that asking questions can help them learn and feel confident.