



What to say instead of "BE CAREFUL"



Breaking the Habit

Imagine this scenario: Your student is climbing up a small tree and the slim branches are bowing under their weight. In a flash your brain calculate multiple scenarios, all of them end badly. Even though your student isn't in immediate danger you want to call out "Be Careful!", here's what you can do instead:

STOP: Notice what you are about to say and tell your brain to "STOP!" or "PAUSE".

BREATHE: Acknowledge how you feel and take a deep controlled breath.

REFLECT: Look at the situation with fresh eyes and ask yourself:

- **What is the potential for serious harm?**
- **Why does this situation make me feel uncomfortable?**
- **What skills are they learning right now?**

RESPOND: There isn't one right response for every situation. If your student is in danger by all means do act quickly! However, some situations might require you to do nothing and other situations might require you to help them **foster awareness** or **problem solve**.

Help foster awareness by saying

- **Notice how...** these rocks are slippery, that branch is strong...
- **Do you see...** the poison ivy, your friends near by?
- **Try moving...** your feet carefully, quickly...
- **Try using your...** hands, feet, arms, legs.
- **Can you hear...** the rushing water, the singing birds, the wind?
- **Do you feel...** stable on that rock, the heat from the fire?
- **Are you feeling...** scared, excited, tired, safe?

Help problem solve by saying

- **What's your plan...** if you climb that boulder, cross that log?
- **What can you use...** to get across, for your adventure?
- **Where will you...** put that rock, climb that tree, dig that hole?
- **How will you...** get down, go up, get across?
- **Who will...** be with you, go with you, help you if?