# Establishing Common Language

This document outlines key considerations for stakeholders when evaluating the adoption of the *Responsive Classroom* approach to teaching and discipline.

**1** **Positive language is a powerful tool for building a calm, safe learning environment.**

When all the adults at school—not just classroom teachers—use positive language, students hear consistent messages about behavior expectations, which leads to a stronger sense of safety. As a result, students are more likely to meet established behavior expectations in all areas of the school.

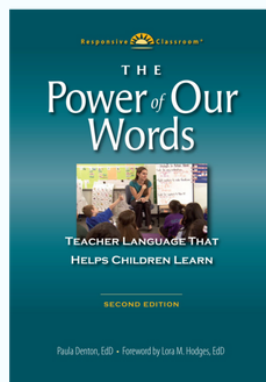**2** **Focus on reinforcing and reminding language.**

In the Responsive Classroom approach, positive adult language is direct, brief, and focused on specific actions that help students meet academic and behavioral expectations and thrive as valued members of a learning community.

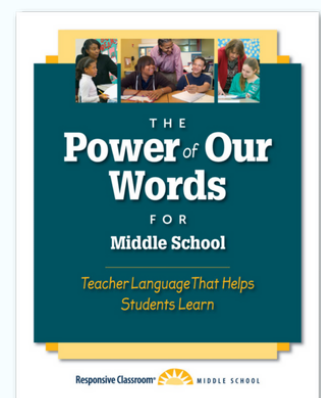Two types of positive adult language are particularly beneficial for all staff:

- **Reinforcing language** names strengths. By highlighting their skills, positive efforts and attitudes, and quality work, reinforcing language gives students a scaffold to stand on as they reach for the next higher level in their learning.
- **Reminding language** sets students up for success before a possibly challenging task or prompts them as they begin to go off track so they can stay on task, organized, responsible, and safe.

**3** **Provide training in positive teacher languge for all the adults in the school.**

- Have staff practice crafting and delivering positive language—with partners or in small groups—using real scenarios that staff may encounter.
- Provide helpful sentence starters:
  - "I can see . . ."
  - "You remembered . . ."
  - "Show me . . ."

*The Power of Our Words*

*The Power of Our Words For Middle School*

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