

Grateful... and Still Struggling?

Children should not have to choose between gratitude and honesty.

Sometimes children feel they cannot admit something is difficult because they have been told they are lucky to receive support.

They may worry that being honest sounds ungrateful.

But gratitude and struggle are not opposites.

Both can exist at the same time.

A child can be...

- Grateful for support
- Thankful for therapy
- Happy to have adjustments
- Appreciate their teacher aide
- Benefit from support

And still...

- Feel exhausted by it
- Wish they had more free time
- Feel different because of it
- Want more independence
- Find it emotionally difficult

Supporting a child means making room for mixed emotions — not expecting only positive ones.

Children should never feel they have to hide difficult feelings to appear grateful.

Before Saying “You’re Lucky...”

Sometimes the most supportive response begins with listening.

Before responding, ask:

- ☐ Am I making space for honesty?
- ☐ Have I listened before reassuring?
- ☐ Am I expecting gratitude instead of understanding?
- ☐ Could this child be protecting my feelings?
- ☐ Have I made it safe for them to say,
“This is hard”?

Remember

Children often protect the feelings of adults they care about.

Sometimes they stay quiet — not because everything is okay, but because they don’t want to seem ungrateful.

**Support works best when
children feel safe to tell the truth.**

What Could You Say Instead?

Supportive conversations invite honesty rather than guilt.

Instead of

“You’re lucky to have that support.”

Try

“How is this support feeling for you?”

Instead of

“You should be grateful.”

Try

“It’s okay to tell me what’s been difficult.”

Instead of

“Other children don’t get this.”

Try

“What’s working well, and what isn’t?”

Instead of

“At least you have help.”

Try

“Is there anything you’d like to be different?”

The goal is not for children to feel grateful all the time.

The goal is for children to feel heard.

It’s okay to appreciate support...
and still wish parts of it were different.

Honesty and gratitude can exist together.

CHALLENGES BEHIND ACCEPTANCE