

Declarative language: Quick view cheat sheet

The following cheat sheet was developed from the book Declarative Language Handbook by Linda K.Murphy.

What is declarative language?

Declarative language (as opposed to imperative language, which we most often default to) is an invitational style of language that can be used to improve communication in relationships. In this case we will talk about it in the context of parent and child. This invitational style of communication uses language that doesn't command, demand or ask direct questions, but instead, uses statements or comments that do not require a 'correct response.'

<u>Here's an example:</u>

Imperative language: 'Put your socks on now' or 'Where are your socks?'

Declarative language: 'I wonder if it's time to pop our socks on now?' or 'I'm curious to find out where your socks are…'

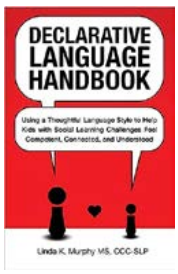
How might declarative language be a supportive strategy for communicating with my child?

Declarative or invitational language can break down that barrier in communication where children sense a demand or a requirement of them in the communication. Instead, the invitation offers a more conversational or open style of communication between parent and child. Obviously there are going to be times where parents simply have to use imperative language to 'get the things done.' However, when there is an opportunity for communication that helps to strengthen a relationship, declarative language is an effective and fairly simple opportunity to achieve this.

<u>Other benefits of using declarative language to support child development:</u>

- Promotes curiosity and social wondering
- Allows children to 'hear our thoughts' to learn skills for regulation and problem solving
- Encourages social reciprocity
- Builds inferencing skills
- Supports development of executive functioning skills

The following are examples that you may want to test out as you experiment with this style of language and communication. We highly recommend reading the book if you have a chance.



Wondering...

I'm wondering... if you would like to have a shower before or after dinner.

I wonder if... you mean... you know... you saw... you remember how or when... what will happen if...

Imagine if... I would imagine that...

Thinking...

I think... now might be a good time to... last time we did...

I was thinking... of going... of putting... of asking... of inviting...

I think... I can smell lunch cooking... today might be a swimming lesson day.

I'm thinking this will be interesting for us...

I think it might be time for...

Wishing...

I wish we could...

I wish it was...

I wish that were a...

I wonder if you mean you wish it wasn't...

Knowing...

I know it's hard when...

I know it feels yucky to have to...

I know you are challenged by...

Noticing...

I can see... others are starting to... that must mean...

I can see that's not safe.

That _____ looks...

Those _____ are...

I notice it's... getting cold outside... raining outside... getting late...

I see that... dinner is on the table... that it's getting dark now... your sister is upset.

Your... Mum looks upset... bedroom looks a bit messy... hair looks like it has a few knots in it.

I heard something...

I can hear you sister laughing, I think she is happy about something.

I heard Dad say something...

That looks tricky to me... I could only do that if I had someone to help me.

Lets...

Let's decide when to...

Let's decide what...

Let's think of some ideas for when or what...

Let's... get ready...

Possibly, maybe, sometimes, not sure...

Maybe... maybe we should check the weather.

Might... we might go to the store later... it might be raining tomorrow.

Possibly... we could possibly consider doing it another time instead .

Perhaps... there's another way to do to this.

Sometimes... it can help to do this rather than that...

I'm not sure about that. What a great thought!

I don't know... that's a great question. I don't know the answer to that yet.

We could go...

I, me, my...

I'll need to bring my...

I'll need to get my jacket on...

I remember when...

It is important that... I hold your hand to cross the road...

I will get hurt if you keep doing that.

I'm going to... put my shoes on now.

My favourite way to do this is...

My idea is... to play Uno.

I can't wait... to see Nan.

I'm worried about this because...

Here is my... pen. I'm going to use it to write my name.

I forgot about...

I realised...