Have you ever been at a restaurant and the waitress, who you have never met before calls you honey or mija or even worse, sugarlips? How about in a preschool aged classroom...do you ever call children by endearing names. "Honey, can you bring me a pair of scissors", "Hey squirt, what are you doing?"

Experts argue that using endearments like honey or sugar can confuse young children as to the meanings of those words. As children construct language, educators should provide a solid, stable model for them. Additionally, by calling a child by their name reinforces that child's individual identity.

The use of endearments can also show favoritism if one child is called honey and another is not. Plus endearments should generally be reserved for family members since they challenge the level of respect between students and teachers. While families often use these among themselves some parents are defensive when a provider has a pet name for a child. Another point of consideration is that of cultural sensitivity. Some families, ethnicities and cultures are sensitive to a name while the teacher may not even be aware of this sensitivity. For example, "little monkey" may be acceptable to a teacher, but to an African American family may be offensive.

Furthermore when parents or other colleagues hear someone using these endearments the speaker is often perceived of as "unprofessional". While many times our intentions are good, and we mean to convey affection and sincerity, the perception of this habit can be harmful to not only the reputation of the speaker, but also to how the public views the profession of early childhood.

So what should we call children instead of "darling" or "baby" while still allowing them to know that we care and are happy that they are with us?

- Use their name
- Be sure to always smile when you talk to a child
- Use Miss, or Mister _(Name)_

- Nicknames approved by family (i.e. Jenny for Jennifer)
- Call a child a specific name that relates to what they are doing (i.e. block builders, artists or students)