

Helping Children Deal With Their Feelings

Children need to have their feelings accepted and respected.

**Listen quietly and attentively
Acknowledge their feelings with a word.**

"Oh... Mmmm... I see."

Give the feeling a name.

"That sounds frustrating!"

Give the child their wishes in fantasy.

"I wish I could make the banana ripe for you right now!"

All feelings can be accepted. Certain actions must be limited.

"I can see how angry your are at your brother. Tell him what you want with words, not fists"

Instead Of Punishment

Express your feelings strongly, without attacking character.

"I'm furious that my new saw was left outside to rust in the rain!"

State your expectations.

I expect my tools to be returned after they've been borrowed.

Offer a choice.

"You can borrow my tools and return them or you can give up the privilege of using them. You decide."

Take action.

Child: "Why is the toolbox locked?" Father: "You tell me why"

Problem-solve.

"What can we work out so that you can use my tools when you need them, and so that I'll be sure they're there when I need them?"

To Encourage Autonomy

Let children make choices.

"Are you in the mood for your gray pants, or your red pants?"

Show respect for a child's struggle.

"A jar can be hard to open. Sometimes it helps if you tap the lid with a spoon."

Don't ask too many questions.

"Glad to see you. Welcome home."

Don't rush to answer questions.

"That's an interesting question, what do you think?"

Encourage children to use sources outside the home.

"Maybe the pet shop owner would have a suggestion."

Don't take away hope.

"So you're thinking of trying out for the play! That should be an experience"

Praise and Self-Esteem

Instead of evaluating:

Describe what you see.

"I see a clean floor, a smooth bed, and books neatly lined up on the shelf."

Describe what you feel.

"It's a pleasure to walk into this room!"

Sum up the child's praiseworthy behavior with a word.

You sorted out your Legos, cars, and farm animals, and put them in separate boxes. That's what I call organization!"

Free Children From Playing Roles

Look for opportunities to show the child a new picture of themselves.

"You've had that toy since you were three and it almost looks like new!"

Put children in situations where they can see themselves differently.

"Sara, would you take the screwdriver and tighten the pulls on these drawers?"

Let the child overhear you say something positive about them.

"He held his arm steady even though the shot hurt."

Model the behavior you'd like to see.

"It's hard to lose, but I'll try to be a sport about it. Congratulations!"

Be a storehouse for your child's special moments.

"I remember the time you..."

When your child acts according to the old label, state your feelings and/or expectations.

"I don't like that. Despite your strong feelings, I expect sportsmanship from you."