

Problem Solve: (Child over Three Years Old)

- Help your child think of ways he can calm down and talk about how he is feeling. Ask questions such as:
 - “What can you do to calm down?”
 - “What helped you calm down before?”
 - “Describe how you are feeling.”
- Have your child pick one idea and try it.
- Ask your child if his idea helped him. If his idea didn’t work, encourage him to try a different one.

Example

You and your child are in line at the grocery store. Your child starts to whine and scream. You could say:

- *Under two years:* “I can see that you are angry. It’s okay to be angry, but it’s not okay to whine and scream.” Then start singing the child’s favourite song.
- *Two to three years:* “I can see that you are angry. It’s okay to be angry but it’s not okay to whine and scream. Would you like to help mommy take the groceries out of the cart or do you still need some time to calm down?” or “I can see that you are angry. It’s okay to be angry, but you can’t whine and scream. Use your words to tell me you are angry.”
- *Over three years:* “I can see that you are angry. It’s okay to be angry, but it’s not okay to whine and scream. What can you do to calm down and talk about how you are feeling?”

References

Infant Mental Health Promotion Project. (2000). *A Simple Gift - Helping Young Children Cope with Emotions*. The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Ontario.

Pearson, J., & Kordich Hall, D. (2006). *Reaching In...Reaching Out Resiliency Guidebook*. Retrieved February 2008, from <http://www.reachinginreachingout.ca/documents/Guidebook-06.pdf>.



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Helping Children Deal with Strong Emotions



Everyone has strong feelings and all feelings are okay. What's important is how these feelings are expressed. Children aren't born knowing how to deal with strong feelings. Many toddlers have temper tantrums, hit, bite, kick, and stomp their feet when they are angry. Parents need to teach children better ways to express their feelings.



Children who handle their feelings well:

- Are more likely to feel good about themselves.
- Do better in school.
- Behave better.
- Get along better with others.

Name the Feeling

- Find a name for how you think your child is feeling.
 - Your child may be acting angry, but could be scared, hurt, or sad.
 - Giving words for feelings helps your child understand that there are many types of feelings.
- Tell your child you can see that she is feeling sad, worried, or scared.
- Let your child know that it's okay to have these feelings.

Happy Feelings

Good	Wonderful	Excited
Funny	Great	Pleased
Glad	Accepted	Loved

Unhappy Feelings

Angry	Scared	Tired
Left Out	Disappointed	Sad
Hurt	Frustrated	Worried



Set Limits

- Let your child know it's not okay to whine, yell, or hit.
- Decide what behaviours are not okay in your family.
 - Everyone needs to follow the same rules.
 - Children tend to act the way their parents act.

Distract or Redirect (Child under Two Years)

- Stay calm and remember:
 - Temper tantrums are normal in children under two years of age.
 - Children under two can control their feelings only half the time.
 - Children under two need to be told over and over again what's okay and what's not okay.
- Distract your child:
 - Sing a song.
 - Say a rhyme such as "This Little Piggy Went to Market."
- Redirect your child:
 - Give her a toy or book to play with.
 - Let her help you sweep the floor, dust, or put clothes in drawers.



Talk about Feelings (Child Two to Three Years Old)

Encourage your child to talk about how he is feeling.

- Most children will need to calm down before they can talk about feelings.

Ideas to help your child calm down:

- Deep breathing:
 - Have your child pretend to blow up a balloon.
 - Then have him fill his belly with air, and blow up the balloon again.
 - Have him do this a few times in a row.
- Take a time out:
 - Encourage your child to go to his room or a quiet place.
 - Have him think about something else until he calms down.

Things to say to your child:

- "Use your words."
- "Tell me how you are feeling."
- "Tell me what you like and don't like."
- "Tell me why you are mad."