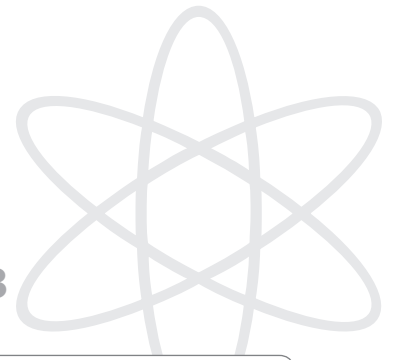


'Helping my child to deal with his feelings' handout 1 of 3



FEELINGS AND HOW WE HANDLE THEM

Feeling	What kinds of things make my child feel this way?	How does he show this feeling?	What do I normally do or say when he feels like this?
 Fear			
 Anger			
 Sadness			
 Worry			

How we sometimes react

If you are very worried about something, and someone tells you:

'Cheer up! Don't worry! It might never happen,'

does that make you feel better?

Helping my child to deal with feelings 2 of 3

People often think that, instead of listening to how you feel and showing sympathy, they should tell you to stop feeling that way. But does that make the feeling go away? Sometimes it can make it worse.

It might be more helpful if they said:

'You poor thing. You are really worried about that, aren't you?'

Parents may do the same with children:

The child says

I hate my brother.

*I'm worried nobody will play
with me at preschool.*

I'm scared of the dark.

The parent says

No you don't, you like him really.

Don't worry. Of course they will.

*Don't be silly. There's nothing
to be frightened of.*

The parent is telling the child he does not feel like that.

But does that make the child feel better?

Is the child likely to keep telling his parents how he feels, or will he learn to keep his feelings to himself?

A different way of reacting

The child says

I hate my brother.

*I'm worried nobody will play
with me at preschool.*

I'm scared of the dark.

The parent says

*You sound pretty cross with him. He must have
done something big to upset you this much.*

*I can see that you are really anxious
about being on your own, aren't you?*




*You seem very frightened about
having the light off.*

Helping my child to deal with feelings **3 of 3**

This time the parent is listening to what the child says, and accepting that he feels that way. He is showing he has listened and he believes the child by describing the feelings back to him.

When a child can't put it into words

Sometimes a child is unable to tell you how he feels, but you can see something is wrong. He may need your help putting it into words:

- ✿ 'That's an unhappy face' 
- ✿ 'You look very cross to me' 
- ✿ 'You seem really worried' 

Not only are you showing that you have noticed how he feels, you are giving him the words to describe the emotion.

Encouraging the child to show his feelings

Listening carefully and then describing the child's feelings will let him know it's OK to show how he feels.

You could also encourage him to vent his feelings more:

- ✿ 'It's OK, have a good cry'
- ✿ 'Why don't you hit that pillow as hard as you can to show me how cross you are?'
- ✿ 'Shall we write down all the things you are worried about?'

Based on model suggested by Faber and Mazlish (1980)