

SESSION

## 8

## Understanding your child's behaviour Suggestions for helping children cope with anger

8.21

If your child is feeling angry there are many ways that you can try to see what helps your child calm down. Each child or teenager is different and you may find that you need to use a different approach at different times and with different children. These are some tips and phrases you may find useful when you or your child is feeling angry.

I think you are angry with me for not letting you out to play but tea is ready in five minutes and you can go out after tea.

This helps to put a name to the way your child's feeling, but also tells them why you are putting in a boundary and what you are prepared to do to negotiate.

I wonder if you are upset about something, do you want to talk about it?

This helps put a name to how your child is feeling and tells them you are ready to listen to them.

What sort of day did you have at school, because you sound a bit fed up?

This lets your child know that you have noticed how they might be feeling and you are thinking about what might have led to them feeling that way.

How are you feeling because you look a bit upset?

This also lets you child know you have noticed something about how they are feeling but you are not sure why and you are ready to listen.



8.22

I know you are really angry about not having some sweets but I will be here and when you have calmed down we can talk about it and have a hug/go for a walk/play a game.

This lets your child know that you have recognised they are feeling angry, linking it to something that has happened. You are helping them by letting them know you are still emotionally there for them and that you are expecting them to calm down – when they have calmed you can talk about it. You are helping them to cope with feeling upset but you are not giving in to what they want.

### Tips on managing anger

- ✓ Your feelings are important. Take care of your own feelings so you can be calmer and more able to think. This will then help you to help your child.
- ✓ Watch your child to see if there is a point at which your child is more receptive to calming down. If you try to notice signs your child gives that they are ready to calm, and take this into consideration when and how you act next, your child is much more likely to respond positively.
- ✓ There may be individual things that you will have noticed your child responds to that are more likely to help calm them.
- ✓ The best time to help your child to calm down may change depending on where you are, when it happens, how tired you and your child are, and whether you or your child have been experiencing stress or changes.



## Ways of helping children and teenagers calm down include:

- ✓ using a calming voice, naming how they may be feeling in a sensitive way, perhaps starting with 'I think you might be ...' or something similar (see above).
- ✓ stroking their hair/back/arm.
- ✓ sitting alongside them quietly (it may be a few minutes before a teenager is able to talk).
- ✓ judging your distance to a child or teenager – starting further away and gradually getting closer.

