

Tools for Creating a Validating Environment



Use purposeful language

Listen and repeat back what you heard. Ask questions using a calm tone of voice without sounding angry or defensive. Nod your head to show that you are listening.

"I am glad that you shared this with me."

"I can see that you are really angry."

"I hear you saying _____. Is that correct?"

"I am so sorry that you feel that way."

"I can see how hurt you are."

"I can see this really bothers you."

Label emotions while modeling the healthy expression of emotions/feelings

Allow them to express their emotions in an appropriate way without fear of punishment. Pay attention to your body language. Angry body language may shut a kid up, but their feelings will fester. Educate on the difference between feelings and behaviors. They may feel what they feel, but they may not throw the dishes across the room.

Jimmy John is lashing out to his brother. Ask him what is causing him frustration. He may say, 'nothing' as he may not know how to express his emotions. We need to help him **label it**.

"Jimmy are you feeling scared because of what is going on?"

"Are you feeling angry/mad because you can't go to school?"

Identify/Empathize with him that you are feeling that way too. (model the expression of your emotions/feelings)

"It is alright to be angry, but you may not hit someone."

"I understand that you are mad, but you may not _____. " (a behavior)

Make the child a priority

During this challenging time, it is important we take care of children and each other. Engage in activities that allow us to meet their physical and emotional safety needs.

Turn off electronics, talk, plan family activities, family meetings, sit down meals, movie nights, puzzles

If Physically Separated: email, texts, Remind 101, Zoom meetings, Facetime, Skype