

8 EASY WAYS

YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR CHILD WITH DE-ESCALATING

When we are emotionally invested, we take on other people's actions as a reflection of ourselves. If they go into crisis mode it feels as though there is something we should have done, said, avoided, etc. This can lead to us feeling a sense of urgency...this behavior/crisis/situation needs to end now. The next thing we know our blood starts pumping...and then all of a sudden, the situation has exploded. We must stay calm when working with a child who is cycling through intense anger. It is all about them...not us. In turn we must give away some of our need for control before we can help child replace explosive anger with positive coping strategies.

The minute we lost the ability to stay calm, the situation becomes about us and not teaching the child how to manage their anger.

Adapted from the article in: TheHelpfulCounselor.com, Livestron.com

OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE SETTING

"Let's talk about this privately."

"Let's walk and talk."

"Let's find a quieter spot."

Never work through anger with an audience. The statements are to be used to guide children to act and not directives. Using "Let's" creates a sense of doing something...movement. Limit these questions until they are in a calm state.

PROVIDE CHOICE OF COPING SKILLS

"Would you like a 5 to 10-minute break in the calming corner?"

"Would you like to write or draw about it?"

Teach children how to diffuse anger by suggesting coping strategies. Stay away from open ended questions, instead use specific choices that provide structure while allowing the child to feel in charge...win/win

LET THE CHILD ADVOCATE FOR WHAT THEY NEED

Give the child control over that situation by letting them advocate for what they need. Sometimes, children have easier answers...adults tend to over think situations and miss the needs of the child.

MAKE THEM FEEL

"Tell me about that."

"Tell me your point of view."

"Anything else you would like to tell me?"

Make sure you are meeting them at their level, looking them in the eyes and focused on the conversation. Put all distractions aside.

"You may join us when you are ready to learn."

The goal is ALWAYS for the child to return to their normal routine. Punitive measures that isolate anger children tend to backfire. Belonging is a basic human need; children are more likely to lash out if they do not feel welcome.

Providing children with the opportunity to rejoin the group encourages them to regain their composure and turn their day around

INVITE THEM TO REJOIN THE GROUP

Positive and healthy self-esteem helps control anger. Point out your child's positive attributes and get them involved in activities they are good at. If they feel in control and good about themselves, they will be less likely to become angry. When they do become angry, they will be more competent to deal with what angers them in an appropriate manner.

PROMOTE SELF-ESTEEM

SET HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

"I care too much about you to argue."

"I will talk to you when your voice is as calm as mine."

Healthy boundaries are a must. Kids will try to push your buttons. Don't let them.

Never argue or debate. Set parameters...give voices. Stand firm, you don't have to "win" you just need to not waver.

"First _____, then _____."

"Students who _____, get to _____."

Using statements like the above help by:

- The child knows what they need to get what they want.
- It focuses on the task at hand. There is no need to go into further

Override the part of the brain that regulates emotion (amygdala) and engage the part of the brain that regulates memory (hippocampus).

"What have you done so far to help solve the problem?"

"What choices do you have?"

"What do you think you should do?"

"What has happened before?"

"Would you like to hear what some other kids have done?"

Kids are much less resistant to change when it's their idea. Use the questions above to help them in finding the best way to manage their anger.

FLIP THE SWITCH FROM EMOTIONAL TO COGNITIVE RESPONSE