

For Parents of Toddlers & Preschoolers

SIMPLE TOOLS FOR BIG FEELINGS

Emotion Coaching Guide

Calm scripts, real-life strategies, and
support for everyday moments



Why Emotional Skills Matter

Children aren't born with emotional regulation.
They build it through caring relationships,
practice, and support.

They are still learning how to:

- express feelings
- calm their body
- handle frustration

When children don't yet have the skills to manage big emotions, those feelings often show up through behavior.

That means whining, yelling, hitting, or shutting down are often signs that your child needs support, not just correction.

When we teach emotional skills early, behavior improves over time.



A Simple Mindset Shift

Instead of asking:

“How do I stop this behavior?”

Try asking:

“What skill is my child still learning?”

Behavior is often a sign of a skill that isn't fully developed yet.

Young children may still need support with:

- calming their body
- handling frustration
- using words
- waiting
- moving through transitions

**Your child isn't giving you a hard time.
They are having a hard time.**

When we teach the skill behind the behavior, change becomes more possible.



The 3-Step Emotion Coaching Method

1. Notice the emotion

Pause and observe what your child is feeling before reacting.

2. Name the feeling

“You’re feeling frustrated.”

“I see you’re upset.”

3. Support + guide

“I’m here with you.”

“Let’s take a breath together.”

Every time you notice, name, and support an emotion, you're helping your child build emotional regulation.



What to Say in the Moment

- I see you're having a hard time
 - It's okay to feel upset
 - I'm here with you
- Let's figure this out together
 - We can work through this
- You're safe, I've got you
- I'm not going anywhere

These simple words help your child feel safe enough to calm down and begin learning.



What to Say When Emotions Are Big

When your child is overwhelmed, they need support, safety, and simple words.

Try saying:

- “I won’t let you hit.”
- “It’s okay to be upset, I won’t let you throw.”
- “I’m here to help you stay safe.”
- “Let’s calm your body first.”
- “You can be mad, and I will still help you.”
- “When you’re ready, we can try again together.”

Calm, clear boundaries help your child feel safe, supported, and ready to learn over time.



What to Avoid

Some responses can increase overwhelm instead of helping your child regulate.

Try to avoid:

- “Stop crying”
- “You’re fine”
- “Calm down”
- raising your voice
- giving long explanations in the middle of a meltdown

In hard moments, your child needs calm support before they can listen, learn, or problem-solve.

Your child needs support before they can regulate.



Simple Calming Tools

These tools can help your child feel safer, more regulated, and more supported during hard moments.

Children are more likely to use calming tools they've practiced before they're upset.

Try:

- deep breathing
- quiet space
- comfort item
- sit together
- hug or gentle touch
- read a familiar book
- listen to calm music
- take a short break

Practice these when your child is calm so they can begin to use them when they are upset.



Remember This in the Hard Moments

When behavior feels overwhelming, come back to these reminders:

- ♡ Big feelings are not bad behavior
- ♡ Your child is still learning
- ♡ Calm helps the brain learn
- ♡ Connection makes teaching easier
- ♡ Emotional skills take time
- ♡ Repetition matters
- ♡ Progress is not always linear

You are not just managing behavior.

You are teaching skills for life.



Keep Supporting Your Child's Growth

You do not have to do this alone.

Small, consistent moments of support make a lasting difference.

Every calm response, every repair, and every moment of connection is helping your child build skills they will use for life.

If you want more tools and support for everyday parenting moments, I've created additional resources to help.

Keep Supporting Your Child's Social-Emotional Growth.

Children are more likely to use calming tools they've practiced before they're upset.

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