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## **TIPS FOR TEACHING CHILDREN HOW TO DEAL WITH ANGER**

Anger is normal. Both children and adults feel anger from time to time. Anger is frequently expressed when a person can't get what he/she wants or feels powerless in a situation. It can also be a cover-up for hurt feelings. .

How can you effectively respond to an angry child? The key is maintaining respect for the child at the same time you are teaching acceptable ways to cope with this emotion. Responding to anger with control and intimidations will generally make the situation worse. Consider these suggestions when dealing with an angry child.

- Acknowledge the child's feelings. Say, "I can see you are angry. It's okay to feel angry. Can you tell me in words who or what you are angry with?" This teaches children to show their anger through words, rather than hitting or fighting.
- Offer suggestions for expressing anger. This might be punching a pillow, listening to music, or finding a special cooling-off place.
- Praise good behavior. Children repeat actions that attract attention. Say, "I'm glad you shared your snack with your brother"; "Thank you for helping me set the table".
- Don't be overly critical of a child's behavior. Don't expect them to act like adults. Ignore behaviors that are tolerable, such as chewing food loudly or pouting. Don't ignore the child, just the behavior.
- Be consistent. Don't criticize one day and ignore the same behavior the next.
- Provide children with opportunities to work off excess energy. This helps to divert misbehavior.
- Maintain a sense of humor without sarcasm or ridicule. Children often respond better to light-hearted kidding than direct commands.
- Show interest in what children are doing. Get involved in their activities rather than being annoyed at being bothered. Say, "Show me what you are making" or "Can I help you build that tower".
- Show affection. A hug may be all an angry child needs to regain control.
- Explain how you feel in various situations. For example, "I really had a hard day at work and I'm tired. Please play quietly so I can have a few minutes to relax".

- If a child loses control and may hurt others, it may be necessary to gently restrain or remove the child. Remain calm. Don't lose your temper. Explain to the child that the behavior must stop.
- Help children recognize their strengths and understand they are valued.
- Set clear limits and enforce them. Get the assistance of the children in establishing rules. Don't be afraid to say "no".
- Be a model of good behavior.
- Teach children to talk about their feelings. Help them to use "I feel" statements, such as "I feel sad when you won't play with me".

Learning how to cope with anger is an essential life skill. Children who develop these skills grow into adults who can better manage their emotions and get along better with others.