A script for tricky parenting moments

Children need to be taught to make the cognitive links between the feeling and the body’s reaction. This in turn supports self-regulation (reconnecting the thinking brain) and an independence in managing their own emotions.

Emotion Coaching Scripts

**Key message for children: ‘It’s not the feeling; it’s what you do with it that really makes the difference.’**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What you say  | Why you say it. |
| Step 1: Label the feeling I can see that…It seems that…I’m wondering if …I’ve noticed …I get that you might feel …Am I right that …I would feel like that I can see you’re angry because your fists are clenched and … | We need to let them know these feeling are ok.To really identify and support the children, we need to imagine how we might feel in that situation. Children need to be taught what their emotions are called. so they can talk and plan their responses rather than ‘acting out’.If children feel valued, listened to and understood they are much more likely to comply.  |
| Step 2 – Setting limits There may need to be a gap between initial conversation and setting the limits. It’s ok to feel how you feel, but it’s not ok to …This is how our family does things/this is our routine/ this is our family rule - we follow them to keep everyone safe.  | Understanding that behaviour is a communication.Once we have helped identify the emotion that is driving the behaviour, we have to help the child learn appropriate and acceptable ways of responding. We limit the reactions not the emotions.  |
| Step 3 – Problem Solving Next time this happens, let’s think about what we could do.Let’s make a plan for next time.How do you think you could manage it differently next time?  | When the child is calm, this conversation can take place.Explore what happened.Scaffold a plan for next time.Empower the child to independently manage their reactions.  |

‘Someone is sitting in the shade because someone planted a tree a long time ago’.