



Figuring Out Frustration

Everyone gets frustrated, angry, or upset sometimes, and young children are still learning how to handle their emotions. By using some of these tips, most children will learn how to handle difficult emotions, allowing them to become more self-reliant and confident. You can watch a video on this topic clicking this [link](#) or scanning the above QR code with your mobile device.

Steps for Building Frustration Skills

- **Stay calm (at least on the outside).** It can be difficult to feel calm when your child is upset, but if you can act calmly, it helps them know things are okay and provides a positive model.
- **Be supportive and encouraging.** Say a few words that tell your child you understand their frustration. Younger children will especially need more support labelling their own emotions.
- **Have them try again.** Once your child has calmed, encourage them to approach the frustrating situation again. This helps them learn that problems are challenges to be overcome, not obstacles that need to be avoided.
- **Praise improvements and persistence.** Any time your child handles a difficult situation, tell them how well they did! Anything you like and want to see more of should get praise.

Things to Avoid when Kids are Upset

- **Getting upset yourself.** It's natural to feel distressed when your child is upset, but showing how upset you are can make the situation worse.
- **Distracting from the problem.** Distraction can be a great tool *before* a child becomes upset if you are able to prevent it, but once they have become very upset it's better to wait until the child starts calming down naturally. This helps children learn self-soothing.
- **Asking too many questions.** When children are very upset, asking them questions feels overwhelming and can make the situation worse. Instead of asking "What's wrong?" say something like, "You're frustrated because that toy isn't working."

Prep for Success

To use these tips, it will be easiest if you've thought about what you want to do beforehand. By knowing what situations usually upset your child, how you normally react, and what you'd like to do differently, you'll be better prepared. Filling in this worksheet will help parents be ready when the time comes to use these skills

What are some situations that make your child upset?

How do you usually react in these situations?

Using the tips above, what would you like to try and do differently in the future?
