As teachers we have the opportunity to help children learn how to cope with disappointment. One way to do that is to help them think about what they do have and what things did go well – just as Daniel Tiger’s strategy song suggests.

Use the following suggestions to minimize the chances for disappointment and celebrate the everyday victories.

- Routinely celebrate the small things in everyday life: the sunshine, story time, songs, and smiles.

- Stick to a regular classroom routine and environment as much as possible so that children know what to expect each day. During holidays and special celebrations such as birthdays, help yourself and the children by keeping stimulation to a minimum. When putting out paints, markers, crayons, and paper, select a few specific colors that fit the occasion so that no matter what the children create, it will look special and festive for families to admire.

- Try to be aware of when children seem to become stressed. Give them quiet activities and classroom places where they can find respite and calm.

- In the moment: “I know you’re disappointed that... Sometimes things don’t turn out the way we want them to. Let’s think about what we can do.” Example: “I know you wanted to play in the block center today, but your other classmates are already playing there. Let’s think about what else you could play today, and tomorrow I’ll be sure that you’re the first one to be in the block center.”

- When you are listening to children tell you how they are feeling, be sure to acknowledge whatever feelings they are naming before trying to help find a solution. Acknowledging the children’s feelings helps them feel that they are being heard and allows them to focus on what to do next.

♫ ♪ When something seems bad, turn it around and find something good. ♫ ♪