

Teacher Tips:

Use Your Words



When children can talk about their feelings with a caring listener, they find out that their feelings are natural and normal, and that others have felt that way, too. Teachers can help children find constructive ways to express themselves – ways that won't hurt themselves or anyone else. Teachers often discover that when children learn to say things like: "I'm mad," "I miss my mom," "I'm tired," and "I'm sad," they are less likely to bite, hit, kick, or use some other disruptive behavior.

We need to encourage children to talk about their feelings. Being able to use words to describe what they are feeling gives children power over their feelings. Giving words to feelings can make them become a lot less overwhelming or upsetting or scary.

Here are some tips for helping the children in your care learn to use their words to express how they are feeling.

- Children have internal sensations that they might not know are emotions. Help children label those inner sensations. Giving children simple words to use can help them feel power over those feelings.
- Explain each feeling by using words and pictures from familiar children's stories or by showing examples from a children's television series like DANIEL TIGER'S NEIGHBORHOOD.
- Keep it simple: Use visuals or pictures and relate the lesson back to the child's life.
- Offer individual praise to a child when he remembers to use words to state how he feels, instead of hitting or pushing or biting. Ex: "I really liked the way you used your words when you told J that he hurt your feelings."
- Remind children that they can always ask for a teacher's help.
- Understand that managing emotions is critical to children's overall development.
- When children are upset, remind them to take a deep breath, count to four, and then they'll be better able to find their words.
- Remember that children who can express their feelings in socially acceptable ways (with words) are less likely to exhibit behavior problems.
- It is important for children to know that adults have feelings, too. Model using your words when you are full of "feelings."



🎵 Use Your Words. 🎵



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