

Best and Worst Response to Your Child's Emotions

by Charlotte Peterson

Do any of the statements below sound familiar? In your day-to-day dealings with your child, work on phasing out any rejecting kinds of responses as you phase in more of the accepting ones. Acceptance helps to make your child feel safe, listened to and loved.

Rejecting

Accepting

MAD

Don't talk to me that way!
I don't want to hear about it!
Get that look off your face!
You're such a bad girl/boy!
Control yourself!

Looks like you've really had a hard day!
Boy, do you look mad!
It's okay to be mad, but it's not okay to hurt someone else.
Here are some good ways to get the "mad" out.

SAD

You are too sensitive.
You're acting like a baby.
There's nothing to be sad about.
Turn off those tears this minute!

Sure looks like you're feeling down.
Everyone feels like crying sometimes.
Crying is a good way to get the "sad" out.
I'm glad you're having a good cry.

SCARED

There's nothing to be afraid of!
It's not that scary!
Don't be such a chicken!
Grow up!

Aren't things scary sometimes?
I don't like scary movies, either.
I used to be afraid of dogs, too.
I'll help scare those monsters away!

ALL FEELINGS

You shouldn't feel that way!
That's unacceptable!
Don't be like that!
I am ashamed of you!
You're being ridiculous!

Isn't life hard sometimes?
Some days I feel that way, too.
Is there anything I can do to help?
How can I help you feel better?
Sure looks like you could use a hug.

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