

Mrs Dowdell's Parenting Pointers

Helping children handle anger – Part 1

In our “Handling Anger in the Family” course, we are now using what we have learned about ourselves to help our children express their anger safely. Here’s what we learned ...

All children need rules to feel safe and secure and know where the boundaries lie. It’s also really helpful to have some rules about how we will handle anger in our families, so that everyone (including adults) knows what’s expected of them. Some suggested anger rules are ...

It’s OK to feel angry but ...

- Don’t hurt others
- Don’t hurt yourself
- Don’t hurt things and ...
- Do talk about it

Families that have mutually agreed rules experience less conflict and therefore, fewer problems with anger. Why not have a go at coming up with some Anger Rules for your family? Get the children to join in too, they’ll almost certainly have an opinion and it may open up opportunities to discuss anger in more depth.



In the group we made a list of things that make our children angry ... and there were lots! We recognised that children have very little control over many of the things that make them angry. If we take a moment to put ourselves in their shoes we can sometimes have some understanding about why they may feel angry. Of course, we shouldn’t give in just because they get cross but it’s important for us to remember that **it’s OK to be angry, it’s what we do with it that counts**. We also discussed the fact that children act out their feelings because they haven’t yet learned to put them into words. We also realised that often children don’t know why they have become angry and when we try and get them to tell us, it can sometimes make the situation worse.



Sometimes, when our children are already cross, we can make the situation worse by the way we react to them. It’s really important that we take time to empathise with them and (if possible) try and understand why they are angry. Even if an issue seems silly to us, it can be hugely important to our children and we need to respect that. When we belittle their feelings or raise our voices in response to their anger, we’re doing what I call “feeding the monster”. It takes two people to argue and someone has to be the grown up! We can respond by trying to listen

to our children and naming the feelings they may be experiencing. Often as parents we want to go in a “fix” our children’s problems but sometimes just listening to them is enough. In the vast majority of situations, conflict can be resolved just by allowing our children to feel listened to and understood.

Anger management is complex and takes more than a weekly article to unpack. If you need help, get in touch, we can chat some more and I can go through the ideas with you in detail. You can email me at parenting@foundrylaneprimary.co.uk