

FACT SHEET • PRIMARY

Helping Your Child Manage Their Feelings

Big feelings are part of growing up. A primary-aged child feels things strongly long before the thinking part of their brain can steady them, which is why a small disappointment can look like the end of the world. We don't want to prevent feelings, but to help children to cope with them and, little by little, to do it for themselves. These five tips are the ones to reach for first.

**TIP 1****Name the feeling out loud**

Say what you see: "That looks like disappointment." Naming a feeling makes it smaller and gives your child the words to use next time.

TIP 2**Calm first, teach second**

Nothing goes in while a child is upset. Stay close, stay quiet, and save the conversation about what happened until they are settled.

TIP 3**Give the feeling somewhere to go**

Movement helps: a walk, a run round the garden, a cushion to squeeze, a picture to draw. The feeling needs an exit before it needs an explanation.

TIP 4**Notice the build-up**

Most meltdowns have a run-up: hunger, tiredness, too long on a screen, a hard day at school. Spotting the pattern is how you head the next one off.

TIP 5**Go back to it afterwards**

Later, when everyone is calm, ask what would help next time. Children remember what they worked out themselves far better than what they were told.