

Everybody Has a Bad Day!

Recognizing your child's feelings will help her to:

- Express how and what she is feeling in a healthy way
- Know what to do when she is angry or upset
- Continue to build positive relationships with others

Ideas to try with your child:

- Listen to and reflect on your child's feelings. For example, "It seems like you feel mad, because you threw the puzzle pieces on the floor. Is that right?"
- When your child is angry or upset, be clear about limits. "You may be angry about the broken doll, but you may not hit your brother."
- Set clear expectations about behavior. For example, "I want you to sit in the cart at the grocery store. At the end of our shopping trip you will get to choose a cereal."
- Follow through. Keep your cool if it doesn't go perfectly and pay attention to your child's limits for how long he can behave.
- Look for books about feelings at your local library; *The Feelings Book*, By Todd Par; *When Sophie Gets Angry*, by Molly Bang; *My Many Colored Day*, by Dr. Seuss; or *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day*, by Judith Viorst

If your child is struggling:

- Let your child express unhappy feelings and distress, and respond with closeness and soothing words. For example: "It makes me sad that you are so angry. We can talk when your calm down, I love you."
- Give your child choices that are okay with you. "Would you like hold my hand while we cross the street or hold Grandma's hand?"

Going further:

- Tell your child what behavior you expect from her when experiencing new or challenging situations. "The twins are coming to play this afternoon and you must share your wagon."
- Encourage your child to express her feelings through words, art, or pretend play.

The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children's best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children Ages 3-4 years** that parents can help improve at home.



Adapted from *WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012*: "Find it hard to cooperate when tense, hungry, scared, sad, angry etc., resulting in behavior that is hurtful, harmful or withdrawn." *About Me and My Family and Culture*, Ages-3-4 years, pg.58