



華人警訊服務中心 Chinese Community Policing Centre



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Anger is amongst the most powerful of our emotions. As such, it can lead us to engage in destructive behaviours. Managing anger can be especially difficult for children and adolescents, who have not yet fully developed the rational control-centre of the brain: the prefrontal cortex.

This pamphlet has been designed as a resource to help you help de-escalate your child when they are in a state of anger or enragement.

Signs a Child might be Angry

Balled fists, fidgeting, shaking, 'eye-balling' another child, head thrust forward, clenched jaw, speech becoming more rapid or high-pitched.

Helpful Strategies

Emotional Education: Be proactive – teach your child to understand which feelings are associated with anger (e.g. tensed muscles, heavy breathing, clenched fists, feeling hot, an urge to stomp or hit).

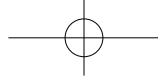
Let them know that many people feel these things when they are upset. When they display these signs in the future, ask them to think (out loud) about what lead to them feeling this way, and how you can work together to make things better.



Anger

De-escalating
an Enraged Child





Calming Techniques: Teaching the child (and yourself) to refer to helpful calming techniques or activities when angry can be very beneficial. Keep an accessible list of techniques your child can use to remedy anger.

Examples: Encourage and practice deep breathing with your child, squeeze modelling clay or squishy toys, listen to relaxing music, calmly count to 10. It can also be helpful to keep a box to house anger-relieving items (e.g. clay, squishy toys, or bubbles).

Modelling: Be sure to remain calm and display a more favourable way of how the child should be behaving. As an adult, it is not unlikely that the child considers you a role model. As such, they may attempt to emulate your behaviour. Maintain a calm one of voice and vocal volume. Maintain open, accepting, un-opposing, neutral body language and facial expressions. Display emotional control and positive self-conduct by using polite language when addressing an enraged child.

Distraction: Momentarily distracting the child can help them to feel more grounded, and to re-engage their rationality. For example, you could comment on something out the window, ask about their favourite TV character, or ask them to name a green vegetable.



Resources: In addition to the list of helpful items or activities mentioned above, teach your child about available resources in spaces where they are most likely to experience anger. For example, assure your child that if they are to become enraged at school, their teachers are more than willing to help make things right. If your child is uncomfortable forthrightly speaking about their emotions with others, you could encourage them to journal their feelings, or express their emotions through art (drawing, clay-sculpting, etc.).

Tip: Be open and accepting when discussing mental health topics with your child.

Other Helpful Tips

Tell the child what you want them to do rather than what you do not want them to do; for example, ‘I want you to sit down’ rather than ‘stop arguing with me.’

Give the child a little time (e.g. count to 10) after any direction, and avoid backing them into a corner, either metaphorically (verbally) or physically.

Use non-aggressive words and phrases when de-escalating. For Examples:

- Let’ s try...
- Maybe we can...
- Would it help if we ...

What to avoid

- Do not make threats you cannot carry through.
- Do not be defensive or take it personally. What is being said may seem insulting and directed at you, but anger is about what’ s going on inside the child, not about you.
- Do not use humour unless you are certain it will help and you have a very good relationship with the child.
- Do not use sarcasm or humiliate the child by minimizing their feelings (saying things like “it’ s not a big deal,” “grow up,” or “you’ re embarrassing me”).