

## WHEN YOUR CHILD IS SAD

Children have many complex emotions, including sadness. It's important for children to know that it's okay for them to feel sad and that everyone feels sad sometimes.

Encourage your child to talk about his or her sad feelings, if he or she wants to talk. Some children will show their sadness but won't want to talk about it or won't know how to talk about it. Sometimes they won't even know why they are feeling sad, just that they are.

The best way to affirm and acknowledge your child's sadness is simply to reflect back the feeling messages your child gives you.

### ***Instead of saying:***

- "That's nothing to cry about!"
- "Stop that crying or I'll give you something to cry about!"
- "You don't know what real sadness is!"
- "You've got nothing to be sad about/to cry about."
- "Your crying is driving me crazy!"
- "If you're going to act like that, get away from me!"
- "Be a good girl and stop crying!"
- "Don't cry."
- "Big boys don't cry."
- "Be brave."

### ***Try saying:***

- "You're feeling really sad right now."
- "You look very sad."
- "It's okay to cry."
- "It's all right, go ahead and get it out."
- "I know how sadness feels."
- "It's important to listen to your sadness."
- "I get sad too sometimes."

Often this is all children need to start working through their sadness—someone who empathizes and says, "You're not alone."

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