

Instead of telling a child **not to be sad...**

Notice and Validate

"That made you really sad, didn't it?"
"It's really hard when that happens."

Suggest Coping Behaviors

Give them ideas for what they can do to help release and process the sadness. "Would it help to talk?" "Do you need a hug?" Or suggest drawing a picture, listening to music, or reading a story together.

Hold the Limits

"I know that you're sad. But I won't change my rules just because they make you sad. Those rules help to keep you safe and healthy."

Reassure Them and Move On

"When something sad happens, it just seems like you'll be sad forever. But I know it does get better. I'm here for a hug or a talk whenever you need it, but let's also try moving on and try doing something new."



...let's teach children
how to handle being sad

Instead of telling a child **not** to be scared...

Notice and Validate

"You're looking really worried. You're wondering if this new thing will be OK or not."

Suggest Coping Tools

"Would it help if I came with you?"

"Tell yourself it will be OK."

"Pretend to be brave. Fake it till you make it!"



Make a Plan

"I know you're scared, but I'm confident you can do this and it will turn out OK. Let's make a plan for how to handle this."

Reinforce Successes

When something goes better than they feared it would, remind them: "You were scared, but you tried it. And you had fun! Great job!"

If something negative happened, acknowledge that, but also point out that they survived it and can learn from it how to help things go better in the future.

...let's teach children
how to handle being scared

Instead of telling a child **not to be mad...**

Notice and Validate

"I can see that really upset you. You're feeling angry."
"I understand why that made you mad."



Re-Direct Behavior

Give them ideas for what they can do to help release and move past the anger. Can they stomp around or do an angry dance? Pound playdough? Scribble? Do wall push-ups? Go for a walk?

Set Limits

"It's OK to be mad. It's not OK to hit."

Affirm Your Love

"It's safe to let your big feelings out with me. I love you and I can help you find the right way to handle them."

Process What Happened

Later, when they've calmed down, talk about what happened, how it felt, and what could be done differently in the future.

...let's teach children
how to handle being mad