



# Emotionally Intelligent Communication: Acknowledging and Validating Feelings

We all want to feel heard and understood. Having a RULER conversation can help acknowledge and validate feelings. These are some additional tips to help you to communicate more effectively with your children and build a secure relationship.

## Listening with Full Attention

- Before jumping in, spend some time giving your child a few minutes of full attention.
- Children who believe that their perspective is valued and feelings are understood, will feel more open to working together to find a mutually satisfying solution.
- Empathize with your child's feelings before tackling the problem.
- Hearing the problem from your child's perspective, may help you to see it differently, which may also lead to a different set of solutions.

## Name it to Tame it

- Simply attaching a name to the unpleasant feeling helps to "tame" it.
- Naming the emotion helps organize what's going on internally and generates more calmness.
- What's important is that it is communicated in a tone of voice that conveys genuine caring and understanding.
- Pinpointing just the right word for how you feel paves the way for exploring and handling how you feel.

## Reframing / Positive Reappraisal

- This is when we try to consider another way of thinking about this.
- Be curious. Ask yourself, "I wonder why I'm having this kind of response?"
- Ask yourself: "How else can I think about this?"  
Ask your child: "How else can you think about this?"
- Perhaps instead of thinking of how frustrating it is to get your daughter to cooperate, consider what a challenging week she has had, with testing and a bad cold, and how she persevered through it all.

## "I" Statements

- Share your feelings (e.g. *'I feel concerned that you are not going to finish before bedtime.'*)
- By doing this we are role modeling how to share feelings.
- It is so much easier to hear our children express unpleasant feelings when they use "I" statements (e.g. *"I wish that I didn't have to do all this homework."* vs. *"You and the teacher expect me to work all the time and never have fun."*)
- Avoid criticism & blame. Avoid saying "always" and "never".

**Remember to practice and model skills of emotional intelligence with the children in your family!**