

# Emotionally Intelligent Communication: Applying RULER to Conversations about Homework

These are suggestions for using RULER and the skills of emotional intelligence to communicate with your child in a way that creates a positive experience around getting homework done. We suggest adding your own ideas too!



## Recognizing

- Child's feelings: "It looks like this homework is causing you to feel overwhelmed."
- Parent's feelings: "I'm feeling concerned that if you don't get started soon, you won't be able to finish this and I will feel frustrated."



## Understanding

- If the child is overwhelmed: "This is a big assignment and I can understand how you might feel overwhelmed. Maybe it would help if we divided it up and you just worked on one piece of it tonight. Do you think that would help?"
- If the child is frustrated: "I realize you've been working on this project for several days now, and you're not as far along as you hoped you'd be. Is there one part that seems to be holding you back?"



## Labeling

- Child's feelings: "It looks like you are feeling overwhelmed." (or "frustrated").
- Parent's feelings: "I'm feeling concerned that if you don't get started soon, you won't be able to finish this."



## Expressing

- "It's okay to cry. That's what families are for. Occasionally I cry when I'm overwhelmed too, and it helps the feelings pass. On the other hand, if I feel overwhelmed at work, I know I need to manage those feelings so that I'm professional on my job, and I have other ways to take care of myself. As I've gotten older, I've figured out ways to organize myself to prevent feeling overwhelmed."
- "It's hard for me to listen to you when you are stomping around. I'm here, I love you and want to support you. Can you think of another way to tell me that you feel angry or frustrated?"



## Regulating

- "I've seen you do assignments like this before. What can you tell yourself or do to move from the red to the green?"
- "One strategy that really helps me is to get my circulation going. I take 15 minutes to get some fresh air, exercise/stretch, and drink a tall glass of water. Then I feel refreshed and ready to begin."