



A skylight information sheet

WHEN YOUR KIDS GET REALLY ANGRY!!!

skylight's popular parenting book THE ANGER TOOLBOX equips parents and carers to find ways which suit their own child or teen, to better manage rising anger. It also gives lots of insights and ideas for adults who know their own anger gets out of control from time to time. Contact skylight on 0800 299 100 or see www.skylight.org.nz to order your copy.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- It's okay for kids to get angry - it's normal - it's healthy. Anger is part of life.
- Helping them learn what to do with their angry feelings is what counts.
- Anger can be expressed inwardly or outwardly.
- It's never okay to hurt anyone or anything in anger times - teach them and show them that.
- Teach your child safe ways to let anger out. (See The Anger Toolbox for lots of ideas about this.) Suggest things to try - find what works best for them.
- Think about what's behind their anger - anger is often a response to other underlying feelings, such as hurt, fear, sadness or guilt. What extra understanding and support might they need right now?
- Take time to listen to your child regularly - what's going on for them? What's on their mind? What are they facing? Spend time with them, get to know them.
- Help your child learn names of different feelings, so they better understand emotion and how it can affect different people (including you) in different ways. For example, look for books or DVDs that have anger and other emotions depicted and perhaps ask what the child thinks the character was feeling and why.
- Encourage your child to look for signs that their anger is building and to use ways to wind down, rather than up!
- When your child has behaved destructively, let them experience the consequences (e.g. getting in trouble with others) - don't always rescue them. Consequences can provide great learning times.
- Be the role model they need - check out your own anger management actions
- Teach them problem-solving skills and how to make compromises with others. Both these are very helpful life skills - they can help alleviate escalation of anger and demonstrate that conflict can be solved without anger.
- Get some extra professional help if anger has become destructive or violent, or when nothing you do is able to help the child break their anger cycles.

THINGS YOU COULD SAY WHEN YOUR CHILD'S OR TEEN'S ANGER IS RISING

- To get in charge of your feelings, how about taking a few minutes in the other room? I think you might find that's helpful. Come on back when you've got those feelings under control.



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- Stop, and then think about what's happening inside - I know you can make some good choices about what to do next.
- It might help if you take some deep breaths as slowly as you can, so you can breathe your anger out.
- You can do it - you can get your anger under control - I know you can.
- It's okay to feel angry but why not try using words and not your hands or feet. People aren't for hitting.
- It's okay to feel angry - but it's not okay to hurt other people or things. So, tell me what's really getting you angry right now?
- You're the kind of kid who can let your angry feelings out in safe ways - how would you like to do that now? (kick a ball, run outside, hit a pillow, talk it out etc.)
- Do you want to talk about how you're feeling? I've got time to listen.
- I'm feeling mad myself right now so I am going to the other room to cool off, then we'll talk a bit eh?
- Sometimes I get really mad myself. Then I tell myself, it's okay to get angry, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone or anything.
- Good on you for telling me how angry you're getting. That shows me you're learning about how to manage/deal with your angry feelings. What might help you get them out now?
- I know sometimes it's really tough having angry feelings building up inside. But I believe in you. I know you can find some ways to let them out that work for you. Any ideas?
- You're a terrific kid. I am sorry today's a tough day for you. What do you think might help you feel a little better?
- How about you take some time for yourself - maybe outside? Or in another room?

KEEPING CALM WHEN YOU'RE FACED WITH ANGRY KIDS!

- Staying calm doesn't mean you're passive and not doing anything. It means keeping your head while others are losing theirs!
- Take several deep breaths before you respond, or sit down for a minute and remind yourself you are the adult, and that you can manage this situation well.
- Take time out until you calm down enough to manage the situation constructively.
- Have a plan - see The Anger Toolbox for ways to plan responses to an angry child who is pushing all your buttons!
- Decide not to take it personally when an angry child speaks to you.
- Focus on the behaviour first - be mindful of what might be behind it.
- If you say or do something you wish you hadn't, say sorry and set things right as necessary.

KIDS MAY FORGET WHAT YOU SAID TO THEM, BUT THEY WILL NEVER FORGET HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL.

