

When Your Child Is Upset:

✧ Words That Heal, Not Hurt ✧

When your child is upset, your words can either comfort or create distance. Be sure to avoid labels and criticism and instead focus on empathizing and validating their feelings. This builds trust and helps them develop the tools to manage big emotions.

- 1. Don't say:** "Calm down, it's not a big deal."
Instead, try: "I can see this is really hard for you."

Why: Dismissing their feelings minimizes their experience. Acknowledging them shows you're on their side.

- 2. Don't say:** "You're being dramatic."
Instead, try: "It seems like this is really affecting you. Let's talk about what's going on."

Why: Labeling their behavior as "dramatic" minimizes their feelings. Focusing on the issue shows understanding and invites communication.

- 3. Don't say:** "Why didn't you think before doing that?"
Instead, try: "Let's talk about what happened and how we can handle it differently next time."

Why: Criticizing their judgment creates defensiveness. Exploring solutions together fosters accountability without shame.

- 4. Don't say:** "Other kids your age don't act like this."
Instead, try: "Everyone handles things differently. I want to understand how this feels for you."

Why: Comparing them to others makes them feel inadequate. Focusing on their individual experience builds trust.

The goal is to replace criticism with empathy and understanding, creating an environment where children feel safe to express themselves and learn from challenges.

