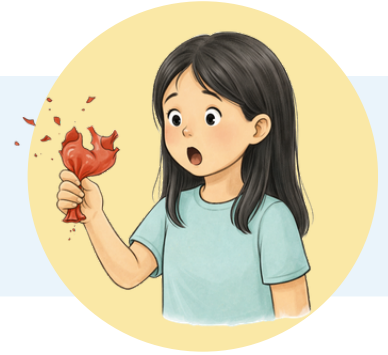


Supporting A Child Through Disappointment

A child holds onto hope like a balloon — a **dream**, a **plan**, or an **expectation**. It grows bigger and brighter, only to pop in an instant. No warning. No time to adjust. When you want to downplay it and say, “It’s not a big deal,” remember the pop. Your role isn’t to dismiss their feelings, it’s to help them cope with the shock and, when the time is right, find a “new balloon” to hold onto.



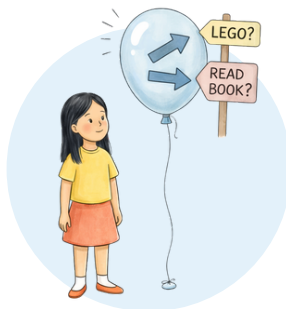
THE STEPS: WHAT TO THINK, WHAT TO SAY



1. Acknowledge the pop

Make eye contact, stay close, and give them space to feel their disappointment. Avoid offering solutions or trying to make it better right away, the goal is to acknowledge their emotions first.

Say: "I know. That's really disappointing. It's okay to feel upset. I'm here for you."



2. Offer a new balloon

Give them a little time to calm down before offering alternatives. If you rush into giving choices too early, they may feel even more upset. Wait until they seem ready to listen.

Say: "We can't do what we planned, but I have an idea. Maybe we can come up with something fun together. What do you think?"



3. Build resilience

Later on, even the next day, help them reflect on the situation by naming what happened and what they did to get through it. This helps them connect “I survived that” to “I can handle challenges ahead.”

Say: "That was a tough one, and I'm proud of how you handled it. You showed a lot of strength."

POWER SCRIPTS

When they're mid-upset

"I can't fix this, but I'm right here with you."

When they say it's not fair

"I hear you. I get why you're upset. It's frustrating when things feel unfair."

When they push you away

"I'll stay close. I'm here if you want to talk, or just need quiet."

WHEN THERE IS NO “NEW BALLOON”

Sometimes, disappointment can't be replaced — a lost game, a missed invitation, or a friend's 'no.' In these moments, just be there without offering a solution. Skip step 2.

Step 1 might take longer. Just sit with them, acknowledge the loss, and avoid trying to make it better right away.

Step 3 is key. Remind them later that they overcame this before, helping build their confidence for next time.

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