

What Do You Do with the Mad That You Feel?

Activities

For Parents

Think of a Time You Were Angry

- What physical changes happened to you?
- How did you behave when you were angry?
- What helped you calm down and deal with the situation?

Plan for Warm and Caring Times Together

One of the best ways parents help children learn to handle angry feelings is by building a warm and trusting relationship with them. When there is a close bond, children are more likely to try to please their parents. It is with a loving family that we all learn to control our behavior.

- Spend quiet time together reading a book or sharing stories.
- Make up a simple song about how your child might be feeling.
- Ask your child about his or her day: “What was the best thing that happened to you today?”

Talk About Angry Feelings

When children know their parents care deeply about them and about whatever they are feeling, they are more likely to talk about their feelings than act them out in hurtful ways.

- When you have had a frustrating day, you can say, “I am really angry today because . . .”
- At a quiet time, talk about things children can do when they are angry so they won’t hurt anyone or anything.

Help Develop Controls

It takes time for children to learn to stop doing something that will hurt others.

- Toddlers who are very upset need to have adults firmly and caringly hold them or take them away from the situation.
- Praise your child when he or she shows control.
- Help your child practice starting and stopping by playing games like Red Light, Green Light.
- Children also learn self-control when they do activities that need careful concentration, like stringing beads, moving toy cars along a path, or using snap-together toys.

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For Parents (continued):

Find Healthy Outlets

When children have some controls, they are more able to channel their energy when they are angry. Parents can encourage healthy outlets by offering things like

- crayons and paper for drawing a picture of their angry feelings.
- clay for kneading and pounding.
- musical instruments like a drum or a xylophone.
- construction paper to tear and make a collage.
- puppets to act out their feelings.

How to Intervene When Children Lose Control

Stop Them

Physically hold back children from hurting themselves or others. Be aware of what situations may cause a child to be angry. Stop children before they lose control.

Say No

While stopping a child physically, say, “No,” clearly and firmly. You can be specific and say, “No biting” or “No hitting.” Offer positive alternatives.

Get Physically Close

Especially with younger children, it helps to get close and use gentle touch. Get down at the child’s eye level rather than calling across the room.

Stay Calm Yourself

Don’t get caught in the emotion of the moment when children are crying or hitting. Your calmness is reassuring to your child and will help him or her settle down.

Allow the Anger, Not the Hurting

Tell them, “It’s okay to be angry, but it’s not okay to hit.”

Problem Solve

When things calm down, talk about what happened and how they could manage better next time. Children won’t hear you if you try to talk to them while they are upset.



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For Parents (continued):

Use Words

Encourage children to use words to tell others what is making them angry. Young children may need you to help them use the right words.

Time Away

Sometimes children simply need time away from the activity. Tell them that since they can't play without hitting, they need to go play somewhere else.

Make the Environment Safe and Caring

Remember that these strategies work best in an environment with

- a caring relationship with a nurturing adult.
- clear and consistent limits.
- a sense of safety, physically and emotionally.
- a chance for children to have some sense of autonomy.



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What Do You Do with the Mad That You Feel?

By Fred M. Rogers

What do you do with the mad that you feel,
When you feel so mad you could bite?
When the whole world seems oh, so wrong . . .
And nothing you do seems very right?

What do you do? Do you punch a bag?
Do you pound some clay or some dough?
Do you round up friends for a game of tag?
Or see how fast you go?

It's great to be able to stop
When you've planned a thing that's wrong,
And be able to do something else instead
And think this song:

I can stop when I want to,
Can stop when I wish.
I can stop, stop, stop any time.
And what a good feeling to feel like this
And know that the feeling is really mine.
Know that there's something deep inside
That helps us become what we can.
For a girl can be someday a woman
And a boy can be someday a man.

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[Watch the Video: www.pbskids.org/rogers/songLyricsWhatDoYouDo.html](http://www.pbskids.org/rogers/songLyricsWhatDoYouDo.html)

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From *Mister Rogers' Plan & Play Book*

Stage 1 (Infancy): Establishing a Sense of Self and Body Boundaries

In order to have self-control, a child needs a physical sense of self. During this stage, children learn where their bodies begin and end. Many teachers find that children who don't have a clear sense of their body boundaries tend to bump into furniture, take things that aren't theirs, eat off each others' plates, etc. These are indications that they don't know where they begin and end.

Body Outlines

Trace the outline of your child on a large sheet of paper or on several sheets taped together. Have your child draw in his or her own face and details. This activity can help children understand and accept individual differences as well as the difference between real and pretend.

Simon Says

Acting as the leader, give the children simple directions, starting with the phrase "Simon says." Have the children follow the commands. These should be things like "Touch your nose," "Stand on one foot," or, for older children, "Put one knee on the floor and two hands on your head." Occasionally give a command without using the phrase "Simon says." Children should not follow these commands.

Stage 2 (Toddlerhood): Managing Impulses and Being Able to Stop

Once children begin to gain a sense of self and body boundaries, they need to learn what it feels like to control oneself. During this stage, they learn what it feels like to stop and to control their impulses. They also learn to name feelings and use the word "no." Many teachers find that preschoolers who don't have good impulse control can't stop their bodies when playing games like Red Light, Green Light, or they say no to themselves and still continue to do something they know they should not.

Trolley Tracks

Spread an old sheet on the floor, or tape several pieces of paper together. With a marker, draw a set of trolley tracks. Use boxes or blocks as the trolleys and let children drive them along the tracks.

It's Too Noisy

Before you start, everyone needs to agree on the "stop" signal. Allow children to talk loudly for several seconds. Then give the stop signal, and the children must stop. Then have them clap loudly until you signal for them to stop. Other ideas could be singing, stamping their feet, etc. Finally, let them do all these things at once until you signal a stop. Then ask the children to be as quiet as possible for several seconds.

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From *Mister Rogers' Plan & Play Book*

Stage 3 (Early Preschool Years): Finding Alternative Physical Outlets

Once children have some self-control, they can be encouraged to work through their angry feelings in a physical and controlled way that won't hurt anyone. They can use an activity as an emotional release, but they won't have the emotional control to do constructive activities when they are angry. At this stage, children begin to use words to substitute for aggressive actions.

Let's Dance!

Allow children to dance to music to express themselves and develop coordination. If they need encouragement, you could suggest that they hold scarves while they move, pretend to be animals, or make up their own dances.

Beanbag Toss

Place a basket in the middle of the room, and put a piece of masking tape on the floor about three feet away from the basket to mark the spot from where the children will toss their beanbags. Tell the children that no one makes it into the basket every time, and talk about games that people play that take practice. Let younger children stand closer if they need to in order to make it into the basket.

Stage 4 (Later Preschool Years): Channeling Angry Feelings in Symbolic, Constructive, and Organized Ways

Children can now channel their anger into something they produce, like drawing a picture or playing an angry song on a xylophone. Aggressive play is often at its peak at this time, but it provides an outlet—as long as adults help children know they must not hurt other people or things (though they still may not be clear about what is pretend and what is real).

Making Up Songs

Ask the children to make up a song about what they are thinking. They can use a familiar tune or make up their own. Ask them questions to prompt them about their feelings, questions like “Can you think of a time when someone didn't have time to play with you? How did you feel? What did you do about your feelings?”

Puppet Plays

If you have puppets to play with, first introduce each puppet to the children. Talk about what it is and what it is made of. Then put the puppet on your hand and talk to it about the children or things that have been happening. As children become more interested in the puppet's reactions than in what you're saying, begin talking for the puppet. Have it answer questions you ask it, and turn its head so it can talk to the children as well. Then let the children play with the puppets and pretend to be different characters.