

Parent Hacks

3 Ways To Help You & Your Kids Manage Big Emotions

#1 CREATE A "FEEL GOOD PLAN"

- Set up a family meeting where everyone ages 2 or 3 and over makes a list of things they can think, say and/or do when they're having big feelings
- Make the list as simple or as creative as you like! Puffy stickers? Bubble letters? Flower chain border? Comic book characters? Anyone?
- Post the Feel Good Plans in a visible place so they can be referred to often (see HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN)
- Three things that should be on everyone's list - Movement, Deep Breaths and Helpful Self-Talk (I can handle it, Maybe next time, etc.)
- Two things that should NEVER be on a Feel Good Plan - screens and vices. This is for you too, parents. We use screens to distract too much and that is not a habit you want to encourage. See the video tutorial for exceptions.

#2 USE A FEELINGS CHART

- All feelings are okay. It's what we say and do with them that is either okay or not okay (It's not okay to be mean with your mad, or hurt people with your sad)
- Download and print out a feelings chart
- Post the chart next to the Feel Good Plans
- Regularly ask your kids to identify their feelings and why they might be having them. Make this a ritual for after school, first thing in the morning, when they're (and you!) are having big feelings

#3 CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WISELY

- Practice concise, simple language when coaching your kids through big emotions. Think kind and firm. Tell them you believe in them and you will help them
- I highly recommend the books Have You Filled a Bucket Today? (for ages 4-8) and Buckets, Dippers and Lids (ages 8- adults) to learn language to correct, protect and encourage your kids

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THE WHY BEHIND THE 3 HACKS

Kids Need Skills

BEHAVIOR IS A SKILL JUST LIKE READING OR MATH

- Kids are our professional development coaches. They let us know exactly where we need to skill build
- If a child has misguided behavior, they are lacking a skill and/or getting a need met. It's our job to figure out the skill they need and teach it to them or how to get their need met in an appropriate way.

Kids Need Healthy Choices

TEACH YOUR CHILD TO CONTROL THEIR REACTIONS

- It's not what happens to us that matters. It's how we HANDLE what happens to us. This is important to teach and model to even our youngest kiddos
- Properly identifying feelings and choosing how to process them raises empowered humans who can identify what they need and how to get those needs met in healthy ways

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

Model It

KIDS LEARN BY OBSERVATION

- This means they are doing what you do so you must MODEL to them how to soothe their nervous system
- For example, when you come home from a hard day walk over to the feelings chart and say "I'm feeling (blank) so I'm going to fill my bucket by choosing (blank) from my Feel Good Plan"

Werk It

WHAT IT SOUNDS AND LOOKS LIKE

- Kiddo asks for screen time and you say No
- Kiddo starts losing their minds so you matter-of-factly say "I see you're having big emotions that don't feel good. Why don't you name your feelings (using the feelings chart) and pick something from your Feel Good Plan so you can fill your bucket. When you're calm we can talk about when you can have screen time."
- Consistently use language such as "When you shared your toys with your brother you filled his bucket, your bucket and mine!" and "Is what you're doing bucket filling or bucket dipping?" and "Your classmate was rude to you today. How did you use your lid?"

