

# Using Feeling Responses

Feeling responses can help ensure you really understand what your child is feeling. Using them lets your child know that their feelings matter to you, which helps them feel more connected to you. It also helps your child name their feelings and accept that having these feelings is ok.

## Here are some helpful tips to keep in mind when using feeling responses:

- » Avoid the quick fix – allow children to talk about their feelings
- » You are not creating the feeling by asking your child about it
- » Don't overdo it – most of what your child shares does not involve feelings
- » Listen for both pleasant and unpleasant feelings
- » Look for non-verbal cues like their facial expression or body posture
- » Remember, boys need to talk about feelings too
- » Ignoring painful feelings does not make them go away
- » Remember, your child might not feel the same way you would if you were in their situation
- » Use a general feeling if you are not sure about your child's feeling ("you're feeling bad, is that right?"). Your child will correct you if you are wrong
- » Try to match the level of feeling your child is showing. If your child says something with a lot of feeling, show that level of feeling in your response
- » If your child says something with only a little emotion, show a similar level of feeling in your response
- » End the conversation by showing appreciation, such as by saying "Thank you for sharing with me"

Remember, the goal is to let your children know you are trying to understand them. An understanding ear is sometimes just what your child needs!



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**MODULE 4: Respond to Your Children so They Feel Understood**

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