

Anger Management

We don't choose anger, it chooses us. Here are 10 ways to help your child(ren) manage anger when it happens to them.

1. Explain that anger is normal and that it's how we manage it that counts.
2. Help your child identify signs of anger from the obvious like yelling or screaming to the subtle like upset tummy or headaches. Other physical cues that I ask my students to pay attention to are warmth and redness in their faces, sweating, heart beat speeding up, fists clenching.
3. Show understanding. If you validate their anger with words like, "I can see that you're angry because I won't let you play until your homework's done," they may feel heard and less threatened or scared by their anger.
4. Teach proven "cool-down" methods. These include counting to 10 (or 20 or 100?), whatever it takes, and sometimes back down again, taking slow, deep breaths (breathe in through your nose, exhale out through your mouth), writing the angry thoughts on paper, then tearing up the paper, or even screaming into a pillow - in a room or area where it won't disturb or scare anyone, of course!
5. Have your child write a list of ways to handle anger better next time. Role-playing is very helpful, once the child has settled down and is no longer in the midst of the angry feelings.
6. Encourage your child to talk about feelings in order to find the root of the anger.
7. Keep your child healthy, with enough rest and a variety of nutritious foods.
8. Limit your child's viewing of violence in the media, including the nightly news! There are so many sad and violent stories on the news.
9. Help your child handle stress. Some stress reducers are soothing music, exercising, playing with a pet, or simply going outside for some fresh air.
10. Remind your child to always respect the rights and feelings of others. Mrs. Gruener is a trained mediator who will gladly sit down with children who are angry and try to help them resolve their conflicts whether it's with a friend here at school, a sibling at home, or even a parent or guardian.

****Note:** As parents and guardians, remember to be good role models and never use any kind of physical force on your child(ren) out of anger.