

How can I help my child manage their anger?

Anger is a common emotion experienced by many young children when they are frustrated or unable to obtain any given desire. Some children express their anger through facial expressions, crying, or yelling and do little to solve the problem. Others resist by physically or verbally defending their position, and sometimes will physically act out their anger. Young children have a limited ability to reflect on and understand their anger and need guidance with identifying and managing their feelings. They primarily learn effective ways of expressing their anger by watching the social interactions of their families, caretakers, and peers. Parents who are most effective in teaching anger management model acknowledgement of their emotions and express their anger in straight forward and nonviolent ways.

Parents are encouraged to assist their children in identifying the feeling and labeling it as anger. When children are expressing anger, it's recommended that others listen without judging or telling them that they should feel differently. Reading books about emotions is helpful with this process as it validates the child's feeling of anger and gives them information about how to control the emotion. When teaching how to self-regulate emotions, adults can create faces with corresponding emotions and use them to help children identify how they are feeling. Talking about what to do when angry prior to experiencing this emotion is also beneficial in resolving conflict.