

# Parenting for Emotional Health



## Cut out negativity

1

Create a nickname for the internal pessimistic voice, and interrupt negative thoughts by calling it out. "That sounds just like the voice of Doomsday Darryl. Let's listen to our other, more positive thoughts!"

## Model hopeful perspectives

2

When experiencing hardship in your own life, model managing it with confidence and optimism. Think out loud: "This is so difficult, but I think I can do it with a little more time" or "Wow --- I felt worried this would be impossible, but I did it!"

## Create gratitude rituals

3

Develop a routine as a family to include gratitude and optimism --- consider taking turns sharing a proud moment of the day at dinner time, or use a white board or bulletin board in the kitchen to co-create a list of things you and your family are thankful for.

## Practice co-regulation

4

We cannot help a child regulate when we are not regulated. Practice taking a break and using coping skills yourself to bring the calm to your child. Sometimes this looks like: "I need to take a few deep breaths and I need a break from this right now. I am going to take a time out and I will be back in 2 minutes"

similar to the book:  
**14,000 Things To Be Happy About**  
by Barbara Kipfer



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## Be choosy about teaching moments

5

A meltdown moment is never a teaching moment. We will not get through to our child about the errors of their ways when they are completely dysregulated. In these moments, your only job is to remain calm, present and empathetic to your child. "I know this is so hard for you, you are so mad. I am here for you. Let's try again when you are ready."

similar to the book:  
**No Drama Discipline**  
by Dan Siegel

## Always circle back

6

When we are choosy about a teaching moment and decide to wait, we can always circle back (at least ~4 hours later, when everyone is more regulated) to discuss behavior. "I want to talk about how it was really hard when you and your sister struggled to share earlier. Here's some ways I think we could try to deal with that differently"

## Address aggression quickly

7

When children hit or hurt, we have a great opportunity to demonstrate how to set a boundary. "I am not going to let you hit me. You can hit this pillow, or the bed if that helps, but you cannot hit me. If you hit again, I am going to move my body so you can't touch me."

## Avoid power struggles with co-planning

8

Help your child feel like a member of the team by including them in making decisions about whatever directive you're making. Offer choices when possible ("okay, we have to leave the park. When we get home, do you want to watch an episode of Bluey or help Dad make lunch?"), and seek their input ("the playroom is a mess, yeah? Should we set a timer for 10 minutes and see how much we can get done? Or do you think we should wait until tonight and listen to your audiobook while we clean?")

Parenting is a very hard job!

Our Integrative Behavioral Health Clinician, Alexandra Shumway, LICSW, is available for parent consultations, help and guidance along the way! Call our front desk to schedule a consultation: 413 253 3773

