



Communicating With Your Child:

Letting Your Child Know You Understand

All behavior is communication. Challenging behavior can feel overwhelming, but helping your child see that you understand their struggle the same way they do can help pave the way for more positive interactions. Reading your child's cues and 'hearing' what they are telling you is the first step to easing communication. Use simple words and a calm voice to let your child know you understand their message the same way they do.

Let your child know you understand by....

| First , name the feeling you see your child expressing. Use short, calm, simple to understand phrases to start, such as... | Then , finish the phrase to say why you think your child is feeling that way. Let your child know you are seeing their interests or concerns the same as they do. |
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| I can see by your frown you feel sad.... | ...because you don't want to leave the park yet. You are having fun and want to stay longer. |
| When you clench your fists you show me you feel angry.... | ...that your sister took your toy and you want her to give it back. |
| I can tell when you throw your cup that you feel frustrated... | ...because you are finished eating and want to get down from your highchair. |
| You are showing me by rubbing your eyes and whining that you are tired... | ...and want to cuddle before we turn out the light. |

Watch for cues to ensure you understood your child's message. Getting on your child's level and putting words to their behavior and emotion models for your child another way to express

themselves. The more you model alternative ways to communicate, the quicker your child will learn to imitate you.