

Validation PHRASES for KIDS



Before You Read These Phrases...

The most important thing is not what you say, **it's how you show up.**

These phrases are divided by age group, but they are meant to be used however works best for your family.

Just because a phrase is listed under a specific age does not mean it only works for that age.

Use what resonates, adapt what doesn't, and remember that these are here as guidance, not a rulebook.

You know your child best.

HERE IS WHAT YOUR CHILD NEEDS FROM YOU *in those moments:*



Your calm: Children feel your nervous system before they hear your words. Take a breath first.



Your presence: Get close, get low, make gentle eye contact. Be there before you speak.



Your tone: A soft voice communicates safety. A tense voice communicates threat, no matter what words follow.



Your patience: The nervous system does not calm down on command. Give it time.



Your consistency: Every time you show up this way, you are building something that lasts.



The goal is not for your child to stop being upset.
The goal is for them to move through it with you beside them.



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and let's navigate this together.





Validation Phrases for TODDLERS

Ages 1-3



LESS WORDS, MORE PRESENCE. Your calm is the message.



"I'm right here."



"You're okay.
I've got you."



"That felt really big."



"You're so frustrated
right now."



"I see you."



"I know. I know."



"You wanted that
so much."



"It's hard to stop,
isn't it."



"I'm not going
anywhere."



"That was really scary."



"Let's take a breath
together."



"You're safe.
I've got you."



Your presence is more powerful than your words at this age.
Get down to their level, soften your voice, and just be there.
You don't have to have the perfect words, **you just have to stay.**



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Validation Phrases for



PRESCHOOLERS



Ages 3-5



NAME THE FEELING. Keep it short. Stay close.



"You're really disappointed right now."



"It makes sense that you're sad."



"You really wanted to keep playing."



"Your body is so upset. Let's breathe together."



"I can see how mad you are. I'm staying right here."



"That felt so unfair to you."



"You're not in trouble. I just want to help you."



"I hear you. You really didn't want that to happen."



"It's okay to cry. I've got you."



"You wished it could be different."



"I know this is hard."



"I'm right here until you feel better."



Naming feelings for your child helps their brain build the language for emotions. You are literally teaching them emotional vocabulary in these moments. Feelings are not problems to fix, they are experiences to move through, **together.**



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Validation Phrases for



ELEMENTARY-AGE KIDS



Ages 6-11



ACKNOWLEDGE BEFORE REDIRECTING. Wait for calm before problem-solving.



"I can tell you're really frustrated. I want to hear about it."



"Once we're both calm, let's figure this out together."



"It makes sense you're upset. I would be too."



"You're not wrong for feeling that."



"You don't have to explain it right now. I'm not going anywhere."



"I'm not going to make you talk about it right now. I'm here when you're ready."



"I'm listening. Tell me what happened."



"I see you working really hard to hold it together."



"That sounds really hard."



"Your feelings make sense to me."



"I believe you that it felt that way."



"It's okay to be upset. I still love you exactly the same."



Children this age need to know their feelings are valid before they can hear anything else you have to say. Connection first, correction second. The goal is not for them to stop being upset, it is for them to **move through it with you**.



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Validation Phrases for

TWEENS & TEENS

Ages 12+



LEAD WITH CURIOSITY, NOT CONCLUSIONS. The relationship is the leverage.



"That sounds really hard. I'm glad you told me."



"I hear you. I'm not dismissing what you're feeling."



"I get why you're angry."



"I'm not here to argue. I actually want to understand."



"You don't have to agree with my decision. I do need you to respect it."



"I'm not going to pretend that's not a big deal, because it is."



"I trust you. And I still need to say no to this one."



"You're allowed to be upset with me."



"I love you even when we disagree."



"What do you need from me right now, to vent or to problem-solve?"



"I'm on your side, even when it doesn't feel like it."



"You matter to me more than being right does."



Teens pull away when they feel judged and open up when they feel safe. Validation is not weakness, it is the bridge back to connection. Your teenager still needs you, they just need you to **listen before you lead.**

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