



Helping kids handle BIG emotions

There are lots of things that can upset your child. These can be upsetting, but not catastrophic.

Children can sometimes make these issues seem **bigger** than they are, and their emotional response doesn't match the situation.

They also know the **buttons** to press with you, and you can easily escalate your response to match your child's. Your behaviour can start to mimic your child's behaviour.

If you want your child to handle **BIG** emotions you need to rein in your emotions too. You want your child to mimic your response when stuff goes wrong.

Start by changing your own thinking. Rather than think "here we go again", replace the thought with "I'd better stay calm. My child needs me to model calm".

Then go through these steps.

1. Process

Use your senses and your intuition to check out what's happening. Think about what may have happened to lead to the situation. Kids can be faulty observers and often present one side of a situation. Think about the full story yourself.

2. Reflect

Give yourself time to think. Try to see the bigger picture. Is this so bad? Will things be better tomorrow? Has this happened in the past? Has your child been able to handle such challenges before? Is this an issue that I need to resolve? Ask good questions to get the full story.

3. Respond

Children's concerns need to be taken seriously, but sometimes TLC (Tender Loving Care in the form of a big hug) is sufficient and very reassuring. At other times some ideas about coping or handling the situation may be useful but this can occur over time. Avoid feeling that you have to 'fix' the problem for your child. Don't panic that you don't know what to do. Sometimes things work themselves out, or the solutions come over time.

Kids of all ages have tendency to catastrophise when life throws them curve balls. Nothing wrong with that, however it really helps if the significant adults in their lives can model calm, reflective behaviour when children come to them with their emotions out of control.

This information comes from Michael Grose, a leading Australian parenting educator.
We recommend [Michael's blog for more parenting information](#).