



What to Say When Your Child Starts to Moan, Groan, and Grumble.

The Purposeful Parenting Way

When life doesn't go as we expect, it is natural for humans - both small and big - to get frustrated, irritated, or disappointed. Oftentimes, these negative emotions may come out as complaints, grievances, injustices, protests, insults, bad moods and attitudes:

"You never let me do that!" "I always have to.....!" "That's not fair!!!!"

When your child starts to complain and grumble, *resist the urge* to react with a counterpoint or correction, which fuels the frustration fires, provokes power struggle, and rapidly rises conflict. Don't escalate it.

Instead, **pause**...and be **part of the solution**. Help your child manage their negative emotion and problem-solve the original obstacle by using these 2 **Purposeful Parenting Skills: "Empathize to Neutralize" and "Involve to Solve."**

First:

1. Empathize to Neutralize



to validate & show understanding of their emotions, unmet wants/needs

- "I can see you are upset."
- "That must be hard/frustrating/stressful."
- "I'm so sorry that happened to you."
- "I'm sorry it didn't go the way you wanted."
- "This is really important to you."
- "I'm here for you."

Then:

2. Involve to Solve



to encourage collaborative problem-solving

- "How can we meet in the middle on this?"
- "How can we solve this problem peacefully?"
- "Let's brainstorm some choices."
- "Let's pick 1 to try and see what happens."

For more collaborative problem solving language, check out the [Purposeful Parenting Skill handout: "See-Agree-Empathize-Strategize,"](#) along with other FREE Parenting Skill Resource Printables at

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