

5 STEPS TO HELP YOUNG KIDS SHARE THEIR BIG FEELINGS



1. GETTING STARTED

Choose a relaxed time to talk, such as during a bike ride or while playing a card game at home.

Put your phone away, so they have your full attention.



2. ACKNOWLEDGE THE REALITY

Saying "Don't worry, everything will be fine" might invalidate how they're feeling. Instead try:

"I know things are really different and that can feel weird and scary."

"I'm sad, too."

"It's hard right now, I know that"

3. RELATE TO THE TOPIC THEY CARE ABOUT

Let them know that you understand how they feel by saying:

- *"I know you miss netball. I really miss my friends at my yoga class. They're great mates and the class makes me feel good."*
- *"I understand that you miss your school. It's such a big part of what you do every day. I miss walking to school with you."*
- *"I feel sad and even angry sometimes because we can't go out as much as we normally do. It's frustrating to be at home so much."*

4. REFOCUS ON THE POSITIVES



Once you've shown that you've noticed the negative feelings, don't dwell on them. Instead try the below phrases to reangle the conversation:

- *"Was it nice talking to Grandma on the phone? I know it made her really happy. What else was good about today?"*
- *"I'm really looking forward to watching you play netball when the season starts up again. Have you talked to your coach or team mates about any new skills you might learn?"*
- *"I'm glad we can talk about how we feel when we're sad, just like we talk about when we're happy. Let's focus on what makes us happy, like watching a funny movie or going for a bike ride. Should we do that now?"*

5. REACH OUT FOR HELP

There are places to go if you need help as a parent. You'll find worksheets, videos and articles at **Calm Kid Central**, plus access to **child psychologists** who will answer your questions within 48 hours. Eligible HCF members* can use this support service for free.

Find out more at hcf.com.au/calmkids

*You must have had hospital or extras cover for 12 months, excludes Accident Only cover and Overseas Visitors Health Cover.

