Emotion Support and Emotion Coaching

Studies show that when grown-ups give consistent *Emotion Support* and *Emotion Coaching*, kids are better at managing their own feelings and are more comfortable talking to adults about them.

**Emotion Support**

- **I feel you**
  - “That makes me feel sad too.”
  - “I know how it feels to be sad.”
- **I see you**
  - “You are used to being at home with grandma, and now you go to school every day where you don’t see her as much. That can make you feel sad.”
- **I accept you**
  - “It’s okay to feel sad. We all feel sad sometimes.”
  - “I’m glad you told me how you are feeling.”

**Emotion Coaching**

- **What is the feeling called?**
  - “Can you tell me what you are feeling?”
  - “Your voice sounds angry. Are you angry right now?”
- **Where does it come from?**
  - “Do you know why you are angry?”
  - “Did it hurt your feelings when he called you a name?”
- **Where does it go?**
  - “I’m having a hard time understanding when you yell. Can you please use a softer voice so I can hear you better?”
  - “Sometimes when I feel angry I take deep breaths to help me feel better. Can you try that with me?”
  - “Do you want to go take a walk? Sometimes that helps me when I have a lot of anger.”
  - “What do you think would make you feel better?”

*Write your own*
3 Tips for Using Books to Help Process Trauma

Sharing books interactively can help children impacted by trauma by allowing them to talk about fictional characters instead of themselves, creating a safe distance between the child and the intense emotions or experiences they’re discussing.

A book-sharing routine that feels positive and safe can also build trust between a child and adult, and even help rewire a child’s brain to respond differently to images and feelings that might have been overwhelming before.

1) Develop emotion vocabulary by reading and acting out emotions: “How is stone feeling? Can you make a scared face like stone?”

2) Practice emotion coaching by allowing the child to give the characters advice: “What do you think stone could do to feel better?” “What would you do next if you were stick and you saw pinecone making fun of your friend?”

3) Give the child a chance to control the story by allowing them to choose the book and set the pace, or even tell the story themselves. “What page should we turn to next?” “Did you like that ending? Want to write a different one?”

from Stick and Stone by Beth Ferry