

Anger management, so children can feel safe and secure.

- "I don't want to!"
- "You have to!"
- "No, you don't decide over me. You're ruining me, you're the meanest person in the whole world!"
- Thinking: Here we go again, she's not allowed to talk to me like that! She always wants to have it her way; soon I can't take any more of this.
- "Now that's the end of your nonsense. You can have your own opinions. I'm the adult and I decide».
- "Oh, you're so stupid!"

Anger is one of our most important emotions. Anger can give us the strength we need to stand up for ourselves and for others. Expressing anger can also be completely appropriate. Small children should be allowed to shout in anger. Those of us who are older are often better served by calming down our feeling before saying or doing something. When we as adults manage to do that, we are also being good role models for children, and children can feel safe and secure with us.

Managing to be calm, good and kind, even if you feel angry, is not easy for everyone. Some adults behave threatening to children when they get angry. Some get so angry that they hit, kick, punch, pinch or do other harmful things to children. Or they do this against others while the child watches. This affects children's learning, their psychological development, and their health. Speaking to children in a mean way is in fact defined as violence. Mental violence. This is because it is very harmful.

Life with children can offer a lot of frustration, which means that it can be difficult to not become too angry. If you feel like shouting or grabbing a hold of the child when you get angry: take responsibility, leave the situation, and do something that helps you calm down.

As adults it is often when we feel small and powerless that the situations we are ashamed of arise. We might think that the child doesn't respect us, that the child is out to hurt or attack us. These thoughts are perceived to be truer the more annoyed we become, and the more likely we are to use force or say hurtful things to the child. However the child is now in a situation in which they cannot master, and reacts normally to this. The child doesn't mean to hurt or attack you. It is not about the child being disrespectful or that you are not good enough. When you remember this and your pulse has calmed down, go back to the child, and talk to him in the way you want the child to talk to you.

It is not always possible to leave a situation. If we must stay, we need other strategies to calm ourselves down. Long exhaling and inhaling breaths can tell our alarm system that the situation is not dangerous. Counting can reconnect our thinking brain so that feelings are not allowed to rule alone. At this point I can remind myself that I am allowed to feel angry, but that the child needs me to appear calm, good and kind. Then I can show the child that I understand, and help the child to cope with the situation.

Example:

- "I don't want to!" "You have to!" "No, you don't decide over me. You're ruining me, you're the meanest person in the whole world!"
- Thinking: It's no wonder I get angry and worried now, that's completely normal. I also know that it is normal for children her age to be like that. I understand that she finds herself in a difficult situation now, and that she is worried about my reaction. (Long exhale, and inhale.) What is the right thing for me to do now?
- "Now I notice that you are getting angry and that you do not want to do this. I understand that. This is something that needs to be done now, but we can do it together. Come".

Many parents experience becoming an angrier and more punitive version of themselves than they would like. Littsint.no is a website that provides free self-help material for parents who want to work with anger management. If

you would like more help, you can contact your nearest family welfare office where you can receive free anger management help without a referral.