

Dealing with child anger

Anger is a normal and useful emotion. It can tell children when things are not fair or right.

But anger can become a problem if a child's angry behaviour becomes out of control or aggressive.

Why is your child so angry?

There are lots of reasons why your child may seem more angry than other children, including:

- seeing other family members arguing or being angry with each other
- friendship problems
- being bullied
- struggling with schoolwork or exams
- feeling very stressed, anxious or fearful about something
- coping with hormone changes during puberty

It may not be obvious to you or your child why they're feeling angry. If that's the case, it's important to help them work out what might be causing their anger.

Tackle anger together

Team up with your child to help them deal with their anger. This way, you let your child know that the anger is the problem, not them.

With younger children, this can be fun and creative. Give anger a name and try drawing it – for example, anger can be a volcano that eventually explodes.

How you respond to anger can influence how your child responds to anger. Making it something you tackle together can help you both.

Help your child spot the signs of anger

Being able to spot the signs of anger early can help your child make more positive decisions about how to handle it.

Talk about what your child feels when they start to get angry. For example, they may notice that:

- their heart beats faster
- their muscles tense
- their teeth clench
- they clench their fists
- their stomach churns

Anger tips for your child

Work together to try to find out what triggers the anger. Talk about helpful strategies for managing anger.

You could encourage your child to:

- count to 10

- walk away from the situation
- breathe slowly and deeply
- clench and unclench their fists to ease tension
- talk to a trusted person
- go to a private place to calm down

If you see the early signs of anger in your child, say so. This gives them the chance to try their strategies.

Be positive

Positive feedback is important. Praise your child's efforts and your own efforts, no matter how small.

This will build your child's confidence that they can manage their anger. It will also help them feel that you're both learning together.

Help and support for anger in children

If you're concerned your child's anger is harmful to them or people around them, you can:

- talk to their GP, health visitor or school nurse
- phone the YoungMinds parents' helpline free on 0808 802 5544 (9.30am to 4.00pm, Monday to Friday)