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Does your child lash out when they’re sad? How can you teach them to process emotions safely? Children often struggle to verbalize sadness, leading to crying, hitting, or even aggression. This article reveals the psychological reasons behind these reactions and offers simple yet effective techniques for parents to help their child express emotions without harming themselves or others.

# Children`s Sadness

## Cry, But Don’t Hit: How to Teach a Child to Deal with Sadness

### Why Do Children Often Not Know How to Express Sadness Properly?

Children may experience deep sadness, disappointment, or hurt, but they don’t always know how to express it properly. They often react physically to such feelings because their emotional intelligence is still developing. When a child is sad, they may start crying, biting, or even hitting others, as they don’t understand how to cope with the internal tension.

The brain areas responsible for self-control and the ability to name emotions are still developing in young children. As a result, their reactions often go beyond what we consider socially acceptable, but this doesn't mean they are "bad" or "aggressive"—they simply don’t know other ways to express themselves.

### Sadness Without Aggression: How to Help a Child Express Their Feelings?

It is very important to teach a child that sadness is a normal feeling. When a little one cries or starts behaving aggressively, the adult’s task is to show the child that their emotions are heard and offer alternative ways of expressing them.

"I see that you are very upset. Let’s talk about it. You can cry, you can stomp your feet, but you cannot hit someone."

These words help the child realize that their sadness is important and deserves attention. At the same time, clear boundaries are set: emotions are normal, but hitting someone is not allowed.

### Practical Steps for Parents: How to Replace Aggression with Words?

When a child is overwhelmed by sadness, it is important not to demand immediate "calming down," but to offer ways to safely release the accumulated emotions. At this moment, the child is not ready for complex explanations, but simple, understandable actions can be suggested.

• **Come up with a phrase that helps the child express their emotion with words.** For example, instead of screaming or hitting, suggest that the child say: "I’m sad because..." or "I’m angry because..." This teaches them to transform physical aggression into words.

• **Physical activity.** If emotions are overwhelming, encourage the child to run, stomp their feet, or hug a soft toy tightly. These actions help redirect their internal energy and relieve tension.

• **Creative expression of emotions.** It’s very effective to encourage the child to draw their sadness or the situation that upset them. Drawing allows the child to go beyond words and release their feelings onto paper.

### The Role of Parents in Teaching How to Express Sadness

Parents are the main role models, and how they handle sadness has a huge impact on the child. When an adult openly talks about their feelings, the child understands that it’s normal to be vulnerable. However, if parents suppress their emotions or avoid talking about them, the child may interpret this as a prohibition on expressing their own feelings.

An important aspect is the calm reaction of parents to the child’s emotional outbursts. When the adult remains balanced, it helps the child gradually learn how to cope with their emotions.

### 3 Main Rules for a Child:

1. Crying is okay, hitting is not. This simple but important principle should be the foundation for teaching a child.
2. Emotions can’t be wrong, but their expression must have boundaries. The child should know that sadness is valid, but the ways to express it can be adjusted.
3. Create a safe space for expressing feelings. It is important for the child to feel that they can talk about their emotions, be heard, and understood.

### Conclusion

Teaching a child to express sadness properly is not a one-time action but an ongoing process. It requires patience, involvement, and attention from parents. Boundaries and support are the two pillars that will help the child develop emotional self-regulation skills. "Cry, but don’t hit" is an important lesson that gradually leads the child to a deeper understanding of their emotions and the ability to express them in a safe way.