

10 POSITIVE RESPONSES

to common child complaints



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| 1. | "I DON'T LIKE MYSELF." | → | "YOU DON'T LIKE YOURSELF... THAT SOUNDS LIKE IT DOESN'T FEEL VERY GOOD." |
| 2. | "I'M BORED." | → | "YOU WISH THIS WAS MORE INTERESTING." |
| 3. | "I'M NOT GOOD AT THIS." | → | "YOU THINK YOU'RE NOT GOOD AT THIS. DO YOU WANT ME TO HELP?" |
| 4. | "I MISS MY OLD FRIENDS." | → | "YES, YOU MISS THEM SO MUCH. YOU WISH YOU COULD GO BACK AND SEE THEM." |
| 5. | "THIS IS DUMB." | → | "YOU WISH THIS WAS MORE ENTERTAINING." |
| 6. | "HE ALWAYS GETS HIS WAY." | → | "YOU WISH THINGS TURNED OUT DIFFERENTLY." |
| 7. | "I DON'T WANT YOU TO....." | → | "YOU'RE SAYING NO TO ME DOING THIS. I HEAR THAT." |
| 8. | "I DON'T LIKE THIS." | → | "YOU WISH YOU GOT SOMETHING DIFFERENT." |
| 9. | "BUT I WANT IT NOW!" | → | "YOU WISH YOU COULD HAVE IT RIGHT NOW." |
| 10. | "WHY DOES SHE ALWAYS GET BETTER STUFF THAN ME?!" | → | "YOUR SISTER GOT THE GIFT YOU WANTED. I SEE. YOU WISH YOU HAD HER GIFT." |

Acknowledging their feelings and letting them be.

7

POWERFUL WAYS TO RESPOND WHEN YOUR CHILD COMPLAINS

by Big Life Journal

1

DEFINE IT

- Discuss the “nice voice” or “**calm voice**” inside everyone. How does that voice sound? Practice asking for things with a calm voice.



2

LISTEN AND VALIDATE

- Make eye contact, do not interrupt, and accept without judging.
- Use the “**I hear you...AND**” method: “*I hear that’s not what you wanted...AND we have no control over the weather.*”



3

GIVE A CHOICE

- When your kids start to complain, clarify **what they want to happen** as a result. Say, “*It sounds like you’re frustrated right now. Do you need to vent or do you want to make a plan?*”
- Encourage them to switch from complaining to **problem-solving** mode. Say, “*Let’s think about what we can do to fix this situation.*”



4

REPHRASE AND REFRAME

- Rephrase complaints as a “**want**” or a “**wish**.” Say: “*You want a different toy*” (The message: you’re a child who knows her likes and dislikes).



5

SET LIMITS

- Give a **time limit** for complaining. Say, “*You can say one more negative thing, but then say 5 positive things that happened today.*”
- Set aside a **daily “complaint time”**.



6

RESPOND PLAYFULLY

- Once kids know about their “strong voice” and how to use it, playfully offer to find it when it disappears.
- Say, “*Hey, where did your strong voice go? It was here a minute ago...Help me look. HEY! You found it! Now let me hear you use it!*”



7

FIND THE GOOD

- Empathize and then help **notice** the positive.
- Empower with questions: What can you learn from this? How would you like things to be? How can you take it there?

