

# Strategies for Leading Supportive Conversations

If Prevention strategies are consistently presented, explosive situations should be minimized.

Safe and Supportive Practices + Boundaries = Self-Awareness and Emotional Control

**Notice and Validating:** helps a kid feel heard, increases feelings of safety and connection, and helps them shift from reactivity to regulation.

“It seems like something doesn’t feel good to you.”

“I see that this feels hard.”

“I’m here, you are safe.”

“You didn’t want that to happen.”

**Set Boundaries:** Setting loving limits around behaviors especially ones that are destructive or harmful to the child or others is critical. Stay calm and keep a flat effect. Some children are reinforced by facial expressions of shock or anger.

“It’s okay to be mad. It’s not ok to hit.”

“I know you don’t want to hurt me or your friend. I will keep us safe.”

“I won’t let you throw things at your friend. Let’s find a new way.”

**Recognize differences in Emotional Releases:** Each child has their own meltdown language and their nervous system's way of releasing emotional tension from their body. Instead of making these needs wrong, we can redirect the behaviors, helping our kids channel feelings in helpful ways. Low language is often a primary reason for:

Biting: introduce chewlery, carrots, or wooden toys.

Hitting: Invite wall pushups, squeeze a stuffed animal, crash into a crash pad, or go outside to run and play.

Spitting: create spit games in a cup, can, toilet, or outside.

Destroying classroom items: Encourage tearing paper, popping bubble wrap, or snapping dry noodles (maybe even putting noodles in a parmesan container.)

Use your words, you can say, “I don’t like that.” Or “That’s mine!”

**Affirm your love for them:** It’s important to know that while they are feeling bad, it doesn’t mean they are bad.

“You’re a good kid having a hard time and I’m here with you.”

“I can handle your big emotions. It is safe to let them out.”

“This won’t last forever, and I will stay with you while it’s hard.”

**Process What happened.**

1. How they felt and
2. How did my peer feel?
3. Calming strategies for the next time
4. Lead them to make amends (say sorry or will you forgive me or pick up chair or crayons.)