

Scripts for Difficult Conversations with Kids



1. When Your Child Says: "I hate this! This is so unfair!"



What to Say:

- "It sounds like you're really frustrated. Do you want to tell me more about what's upsetting you?"
- "I hear you. That does sound really hard. Let's figure out how to handle it together."
- "I get that this doesn't feel fair. What do you think would help right now?"



Avoid:

- "Life isn't fair, get used to it."
- "Stop overreacting."
- "You need to calm down right now."

2. When Your Child Says: "I'm so worried. What if something bad happens?"



What to Say:

- "I hear that you're feeling really worried. Let's take a deep breath together."
- "What's the worst that could happen? What's the best? Let's think through it together."
- "I'm here to help. Let's come up with a plan for what to do if that happens."



Avoid:

- "You have nothing to worry about."
- "Just stop overthinking it."
- "You'll be fine, don't make a big deal out of it."

3. When Your Child Says: "I'm so stupid. I can't do anything right."



What to Say:

- "It sounds like you're feeling really down on yourself. I know that's hard."
- "Mistakes don't mean you're not smart—they mean you're learning."
- "I believe in you. Let's look at what's hard and figure out how to work through it."



Avoid:

- "That's not true, stop saying that."
- "You just need to try harder."
- "Don't be so negative."

4. When Your Child Says: "Nobody likes me. I have no friends."



What to Say:

- "That sounds really painful. I'm sorry you're feeling this way."
- "Do you want to talk about what happened? I'm here to listen."
- "I know this feels really big right now. Let's think about who in your life makes you feel good."



Avoid:

- "That's not true, you have plenty of friends."
- "Just go talk to someone, it's not that hard."
- "You're overreacting."

5. When Your Child Says: “I hate school. I don’t want to go.”



What to Say:

- "I hear you. School feels really tough right now. What part is the hardest?"
- "I wonder if something specific happened to make today feel extra hard."
- "Let's talk about some ways to make it a little easier. I want to help."



Avoid:

- "You have to go, stop complaining."
- "School is easy, you'll be fine."
- "If you don't go to school, you'll never be successful."

6. When Your Child Says: “You never listen to me!”



What to Say:

- "I really do want to hear what you're saying. Let's slow down and talk."
- "You're right, I should listen better. Tell me again, and I'll really focus." "I'm here, and I care about what you have to say. Let's figure this out together."



Avoid:

- "That's not true, I listen all the time."
- "Don't talk to me like that."
- "I don't have time for this right now."

7. When Your Child Says: “I don’t want to talk about it.”



What to Say:

- "That's okay. You don't have to talk right now, but I'm here when you're ready."
- "I can tell something is on your mind. Would you rather write it down or do something together instead?"
- "I love you no matter what, even when you don't feel like talking."



Avoid:

- "Fine, ignore me then."
- "You have to tell me what's wrong right now."
- "You're being difficult."



Tip for Parents:

- **Validate feelings** before trying to solve the problem.
- **Use open-ended questions** instead of yes/no.
- **Stay calm and patient**, even if your child is emotional.
- **Model emotional regulation**—kids learn from what they see.



Remember:

- Your child doesn't need every problem fixed—they need to feel seen and understood first.