

## "YOU'RE FINE!"

Can make your child feel unheard and invalidated.

THEY THINK: "MOMMY SAYS I'M FINE BUT I'M NOT..."

Situation: Your child falls off their bike and scrapes their knee.

When you say, "You are okay.":

Your child thinks:

"BUT I AM NOT OKAY! MY BODY IS IN PAIN, DOESN'T THAT MATTER?"

Your real message to your child:

"I DON'T BELIEVE IT HURTS, I WANT YOU TO STOP CRYING."

Instead, acknowledge your child's feelings and offer support:

"I BELIEVE THAT IT REALLY HURTS. WOULD YOU LIKE A HUG?"

Situation: Your child is upset about having a friend ignore them in class.

When you say, "It's not a big deal.":

Your child thinks:

"BUT I FEEL LOST AND UNWORTHY. I FEEL I WILL NEVER HAVE ANY FRIENDS. ISN'T THIS FEELING VALID?"

Your real message to your child:

"IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU'RE FEELING, JUST MOVE ON."

Instead, reflect their feelings and offer validation:

"I KNOW HOW HARD IT IS TO FEEL REJECTED. I'M HERE FOR YOU."

Situation: Your child is panicking about an upcoming test.

When you say, "You'll be fine...":

Your child thinks:

"BUT WILL I STILL BE LOVED AND ACCEPTED BY YOU IF I FAIL?"

Your real message to your child:

"YOU'RE OVERREACTING, IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL. YOUR FEARS ARE NOT VALID."

Instead, allow space for the fears to be discussed and shared:

"YOU'RE CONCERNED WITH WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU FAIL. LET'S TALK ABOUT IT."

In all situations when your child needs emotional support:

1. Paraphrase your child's emotion back to them offering validation of their experience.
2. Let them know you are safe for them to be vulnerable with.