

# Phrases to Calm an Angry Child

Instead of...	Try...	Why?
Stop throwing things!	When you throw the toys, I think you don't like playing with them. Is that what's going on?	Communicates feelings in a non-confrontational manner. Keeps line of communication open. You are modelling how to phrase a situation.
Other children don't do this!	Other children and even grown-ups sometimes have big feelings. It's OK, the feelings will pass.	Telling a child that others do not experience anger, frustration or anxiety is untrue. Encourages child to accept feelings and process in a healthy way.
Don't hit!	It's OK to be angry, but I won't let you hit. We need to keep everyone safe.	Gets across the message that the feeling is OK but the action is not. Separates the feeling from the action.
You're being difficult!	This is a tough one, huh? We're going to figure this out together.	When a child is digging in their heels, it's important to understand why. Reinforces that you're working towards the same goal.
That's it, you need to sit out!	Let's go to our 'calm down' space together.	Flips 'time out' to 'time in', allowing for reconnection rather than isolation.
Get your coat now!	Do you want to get your coat or your bag first?	By offering a choice, you are offering the child some control.
Eat your lunch up!	What can we do to make this food extra yummy?	Places the responsibility of finding a solution back on the child.
You need to tidy all of this up now!	How about we just start tidying this little corner first?	Rather than focusing on an overwhelming task of tidying everything, shift the goal to simply starting. This may lead to a momentum to continue.
We are going indoors now!	What do we need to do to be ready to go indoors?	Allows the child time to think through the processes for transitions in their lives. Avoids a power struggle and gives them a chance to signal to their minds that they are making a transition to a new activity.
Stop moaning!	I hear you. Can you come up with a solution?	Places the responsibility back on the child. Remind them there are no wrong answers.
How many times do I have to repeat myself?!	I can see you didn't hear me the first time. How about when I say it to you, you whisper it back to me?	Repeating back embeds your message. Varying the method / volume, adds an element of fun to your request.
Stop getting angry!	Is that too tricky right now? Let's take a break and come back to it in 5 minutes (can use timer).	By breaking, the child may return to the task ready to begin again, more focused and calmer.
(At home) Go to your room!	I'm going to stay right here by you, until you're ready for a hug.	Isolation sends the message that there's something wrong with the child. By giving space until they're ready to re-engage, you provide reassurance that you'll always be there for them.
(At home) You're embarrassing me!	Let's go somewhere private so we can sort this out.	Remember, it's not about you. It's about the child and their feelings. By removing both of you from the situation, you'll reinforce the team effort without drawing attention to the behaviour.
Sighing and rolling your eyes.	Make eye contact, remember the child's greatest strengths, and give a compassionate smile.	Practice keeping everything in perspective by seeing the child's strengths.
This just isn't working!	This is tough. Let's figure it out together.	Always, always, separate the behaviour from the child, reinforce the emotion, and work together to come up with a solution.
Stop screaming!	I'm going to pretend to blow out some candles on a cake, will you do it with me?	Deep breathing helps restore the body to a calm state. Being playful with how you encourage this creates co-operation.
I can't deal with you right now!	I'm starting to feel sad / angry, so I'm going to be right here calming down.	Teach children how to label and manage their feelings by modelling it in real life.
Calm down!	If green is calm, yellow is annoyed, and red is angry, what colour are you? What can we do to get you back to green zone? (or Tucker Turtle).	Gives the child a visual to express how they are feeling, and it may surprise you what they come up with to change their direction.
I'm not changing it!	I'm sorry you don't like how we....How can we do it better next time?	Shifts the focus from the event to the solution, which eliminates the power struggle.
Stop saying 'no'!	I hear you saying 'no' and I understand you do not want to do this. Let's figure out how we can do it differently.	By acknowledging the 'no', you are de-escalating the situation. Rather than arguing yes/no, you change the focus to the future.
Don't be angry!	I get angry too sometimes. Let's try Tucker Turtle or our warrior cry to get those angry feelings sorted out.	Tucker Turtle helps manage feelings. A recent study showed that yelling when we are physically hurt can interrupt pain messages being sent to the brain. This can work to release angry energy too, and in a playful manner.
You're overreacting!	You are having a big reaction to a big feeling. If your feeling had a face, what would it look like?	Putting a face to a feeling externalises the issue and allows children to respond with more control.
STOP!	I'm here for you and you're safe (then sit in stillness with the child and allow the feeling to rise up and pass).	When a child feels anger or panic, often their body experiences a stress response where they literally feel unsafe. Letting them know they are safe supports them until the discomfort passes.