

## More on Children and Anger



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A reader named Linda emailed me with some extra ideas for helping children with anger and anxiety. Her approach is so cool that I wanted to share it with you. She says:

“A couple of things work for me:

“1. Waking up each child (mine are eight years old and almost six) by snuggling with them in bed. It's a nice, gentle way to wake up. I started it because my daughter used to wake up snarling and growling every morning, and I knew there had to be a better way. I also end each day in bed with them saying prayers and snuggling for about ten minutes. With my son (eight), it really gives us a nice time to talk about his day and what's on his mind.

“2. I invented a silly song that goes something like this (though the lyrics often change):

*I love you when you're happy  
I love you when you're sad  
I love you when you're angry, and  
I love you when you're bad  
I love you, I love, I love, I love, I love, I love you  
I love you all of the time, I love you every day, I really love you*

“Lately my daughter--who asks me to sing this to her—ends it by reaching out and poking my nose and saying "doink, doink, doink." She just giggles endlessly

at this part. My kids both learned to like this song especially when they weren't on their best behavior, because it reassured them that, no matter what, I love them.

“3. I've used holding time with my kids. I start it by saying, “Let's get your angries out.” With my daughter, now I frequently hunt for the angries—in her nose, her ears, her mouth, anyplace I can find them. And then I make a big deal of pulling and pulling and pulling those angries out. Eventually the process turns into a game with lots of giggles.

“My son has gone through a couple of really difficult years with anxiety, including separation anxiety, that have tested us but have also really put him in touch with his emotions, so that's a good thing. I'm working hard to become a more loving, understanding mom and less of a drill sergeant, controlling mom.”

What I like best about Linda's strategies—and there's lots to like, given their warmth, nurturance, use of cuddling, and creativity—is the emphasis on relationship building and acceptance of children's feelings.

Do you have creative ideas to share about childrearing? If so, email me. We can all learn from each other here.

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