CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF OMAHA
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The Power of Validation: "I Hear You" Goes a Long Way

What is Emotional Validation?

Validation is recognizing and accepting another person's thoughts, feelings, and experiences as understandable, even if you don't necessarily agree with their perspective or actions. This helps with establishing trust, emotional regulation, de-escalates conflict and promotes growth/development.

How to Validate Your Child

Pause & Tune In
- Look past the behavior to the underlying emotion.
- "What's really going on here?"

Name the Emotion
- Help your child identify what they're feeling.
- "You seem really frustrated right now."

Reflect Back
- Let them know it's okay to feel that way.
- "That makes sense. I'd be upset too if I couldn't go."

Hold Space Without Fixing
- Avoid rushing in with advice or distraction.
- Just be there. "I'm here. Take your time."

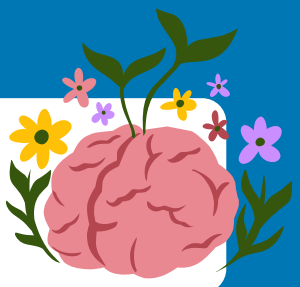
Set Boundaries Gently (if needed)
- Validation and limits can co-exist.
- "I understand you're angry, and it's not okay to hit. Let's find another way to let that out."

Why it Matters

- Improves emotional regulation
  - Validated kids are better able to manage their emotions over time.
- Strengthens connection
  - Children who feel understood are more likely to turn to you when things get hard.
- Reduces power struggles
  - Kids don't have to escalate if they feel heard.
- Builds self-esteem
  - Knowing their emotions are valid helps kids trust themselves.

Tips for Parents

Validation doesn't "spoil" kids — it equips them. You are helping your child feel emotionally safe, which is the foundation for all learning, cooperation, and self-regulation. One way to connect with your child is to ask them what they need in the moment. Do they need a solution, someone to simply listen, or a hug?



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