



Relate to the Limbic System

1. Unequivocally believe in the child
2. Acknowledge child's feelings of being unheard, misunderstood, or rejected.
3. Expect child to have episodes of emotional and behavioral challenges and be ready to co-regulate. Trust that the child will be able to regulate with your support.
4. Remember that the most challenging behaviors are not a deficit in the child's understanding but are a result of misperceptions and overreactive survival responses.
5. Encourage child to notice body sensations. Begin by having them notice safe sensations such as cold hands or feet, textures of food, and progress to asking them to notice head, chest, back, muscles during times of distress. Label sensations with emotional language to help child develop the correlation between sensations, emotions, and behaviors.
6. Express acceptance of all that makes up the child and a desire for connection.
7. Acknowledge that you accept and want to know about all emotions. Child should not feel that some emotions are not to be expressed. Teach child how to express negative emotions.
8. Develop a proactive crisis plan. What is acceptable behavior when child is escalated.
9. Admit you may be confused about a situation or do not have all the facts.
10. Say you're sorry.
11. Use humor and playfulness appropriately. Sharing fun and laughter creates connection.
12. Gently challenge misinterpretations of the world. Do not minimize or reject these misinterpretations because to the child they are the truth.
13. At least 10 hugs a day that each last a minimum of 7 seconds.