

LANGUAGE FOR **VALIDATING** **FEELINGS**

Careful listening helps kids feel heard. Language that communicates careful listening when kids have strong emotions is similar to paraphrasing, but in a way that signals you're trying to understand their feelings.



The acronym WIG, or "What I Got" from what you said, describes this kind of listening. **Try:**

- What I got from what you said is that you feel like ...
- Am I getting this right? You feel ... because ...
- It sounds like you're feeling ... because ...
- Let me see if I'm understanding. You feel like ...



Using language that expresses validation is also helpful. It shows kids they're not wrong to feel the way they feel, and that they – and their feelings – are accepted. **Try:**

- I'd also be scared if that happened.
- That must have been hard for you.
- I can see why you say you had a difficult day.
- I think most people would be upset by that, too.

Once you've done the listening and validation work, your kid will feel heard and accepted. Now you can move on to a place of curiosity, ask questions to better understand their experience, and explore ways to solve problems together!