

BIG FEELINGS

big feelings are...

- big. the child experiences them as very intense, and might not know when they will end or what to do to manage them
- part of human development
- opportunities to help our children navigate a range of emotions

stay connected during big feelings...

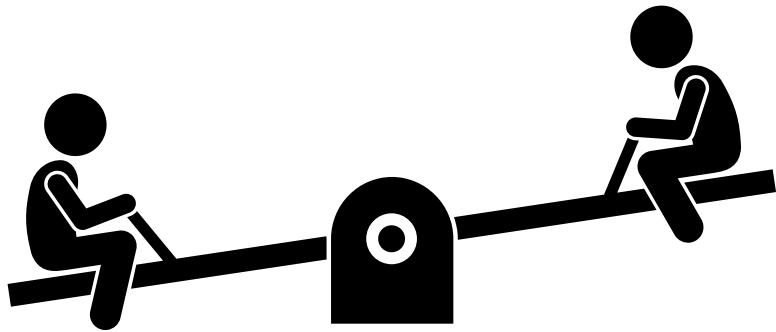
- many want to disconnect (time out, thinking time, ignoring) but your child needs you to stay connected through and with the feeling
- big feelings on the part of our children can be activating for us, make sure you have a self-care plan in place
- children learn how to be with frustration, sadness & other emotions during big feelings

co-regulation

Co-regulation is how we attune ourselves and our interactions to the people around us, to maintain regulation. Parents co-regulate with their children in every interaction: each time you provide an instruction, mediate an argument, or tuck a child in for bed you are co-regulating. Your emotions, and the way you carry yourself-matter. Co-regulation is key for children's social and emotional development.



*sharing energy
& the teeter-totter*



BIG FEELINGS WITH THE THREE YESSES

big feelings can show up as...

- hitting, kicking, biting, throwing
- arguing, resisting, refusing, challenging
- eye rolling, door slamming
- bickering, fighting
- whining, laying on the floor, dawdling
- disengagement, withdrawal

feeling felt

- sometimes what our children (and adults around us!) need is to feel felt- do you remember ever feeling like your parents just did not get it?
- feeling felt generates connection so that the child can calm down and move through the upset

The Three Yes'

- **communicate to your child that you are with them by acknowledging their feelings**
- **offer you a structure for talking about big feelings with children**
- **allow children to feel felt, which supports increased cooperation**

examples

Child upset
about not
getting a
particular
item.



You really like that *item*?
You want to have the
item right now? You
wish your sibling could
share?

Teen sullen
about being
home without
knowing when
it will end.



You wish your friends were
here? You're counting the
days till we can see
others? It feels boring to
play board games with
your siblings?

practice

Consider the last time your child or teen was upset, frustrated, mad, or sullen about something. What could you have said, using The Three Yes tool?

What happened?

What would your Three Yes questions have been?

BIG FEELINGS WITH I'LL WAIT

the tunnel metaphor

- feelings are like tunnels: in order to get through them, the person experiencing them must go through the tunnel.
- when a child is in a feeling-tunnel, they may need the adult to hold that the tunnel will end



it's too much to process

- during a big feeling, your child is not capable of cooperating with you
- this means, they probably need fewer words and more presence
- avoid teaching, explaining, rationalizing, and moralizing
- sometimes, it's enough to simply wait quietly until the child moves the feeling through

I'll Wait

- **let your child know that you are present, available, and will simply, wait- until they are ready to cooperate**
- **mentally check off anything you *were* going to do. sit down, and say simply, "I'll wait" during a meltdown. do not tend to antics, provocative language, etc.**
- **wait to reconnect until the child is ready to connect**
- **praise effusively when the child comes back into relationship with you**

important!

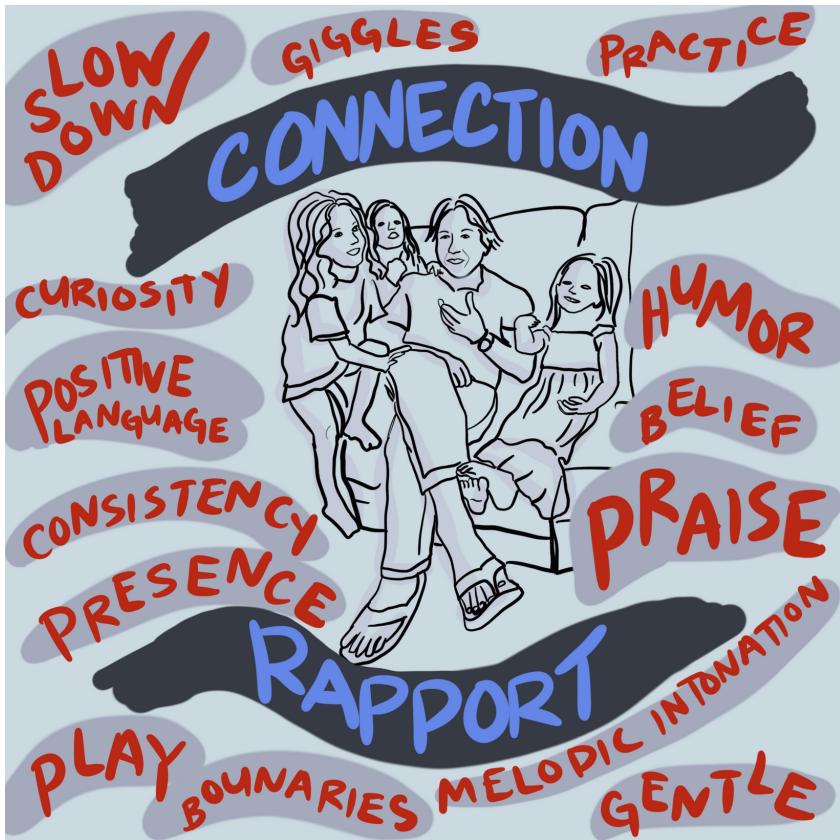
Avoid looking like you are waiting or impatient.
Wait quietly, calmly, and with a warm affect.

Allow the child to re-engage when they are ready.
Praise the child warmly when they re-engage.
If you say anything, you might say "that was tricky! I know next time it will be easier."

notes

GETTING AHEAD OF THE BIG FEELINGS

this means front-loading connection & building rapport



The ways my child and I like to connect most are.....

our family plan

Decide on what kinds of shifts your family will make, both in the moment of an upset and proactively before an upset occurs in order to increase connection and decrease tricky moments.

One way I will take care of myself
I can stay calm with my kids is....

One way I will build connection &
rapport before the tantrum is....

When responding to big feelings, I
commit to....