

The Heart to Heart Families program helps parents care for themselves as they care for their children. We offer materials, workshops, and ongoing support for parents, caregivers, teachers and children.

For more information, go to www.heart2heartinc.org/h2hfamilies



Heart to Heart Families

P.O. Box 1441
Merchantville, NJ 08109

h2hfamilies@heart2heartinc.org

www.heart2heartinc.org

From
CHAOS

to
calm
in



Four Simple Steps



Heart to Heart Families



Based on Marshall Rosenberg's *Nonviolent Communication*

STAR[©]

Caring for Ourselves: Self-Empathy

When caught off guard and ready to react...try **STAR** for self-empathy

STOP Pause before speaking or acting. Your initial reaction is likely to stick with your child and has the potential to do more harm than good.

TAKE A BREATH Breathing calms the nervous system and allows clarity of thought.

ACCEPT WHAT IS It may take a moment to accept what is happening. Accept how you are feeling. Give your feeling a name..."I am shocked, angry, frustrated." Allow yourself to feel. An upset involving your child may create a sense of urgency and the thought that you must fix or alter the situation.

Acceptance is the key to responding rather than reacting.

RECOGNIZE NEEDS What really matters to you in this moment? What is the essence of what you are wanting... peace? Appreciation? Cooperation? Respect? Care?

Identifying your needs in the moment connects you to yourself. It is from this place of understanding and self-empathy that you are more able to relate compassionately to your child.

All of the above is done on the inside, helping you to shift to a place of calm.



PLAY[©]

Caring for Our Children: Empathy

When you are in a place of calm and your child's emotions are big...try **PLAY**

PRESENCE Aim to be open and receptive to your child by focusing on what's happening here and now. Be physically present at their level.

LISTEN Listen with your ears, eyes and heart. You can check for understanding by repeating back a little of what you hear them saying.

AFFIRM Affirm your child's needs. You can do this even if you can't support the direction they want to take in meeting them. You can guess a feeling, a need or both. Example: "Are you feeling frustrated?" or "Are you wanting more play time?" or "Are you feeling frustrated because you really want to play?"



Your child's desires are the 'Yes' behind their 'No'. Now you can honestly say, "Yes, that makes sense. I understand." You can also say 'Yes' by helping them imagine what they don't have in reality: "I wish we could have stayed too. How long would you like to stay next time?"