

Words That Calm, Connect & Guide


Helpful Phrases for Calmer Kids & Stronger Connections


This handout is a collection of practical, compassionate phrases to help parents/carers connect with their children. These sayings are neuro-affirming and support emotional regulation, reduce challenging behaviours, and build trust.

1. When Big Feelings Show Up

Use these to help children feel safe and understood.

- “It’s okay to feel that way. I’m here with you.”
- “You’re having a hard time, not giving me a hard time.”
- “Big feelings can feel scary. Let’s take a breath together.”


 **Why it works:** These phrases support co-regulation, which helps children develop self-regulation skills over time.


 **Reference:** Siegel & Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child* (2012)

2. When Things Go Off Track

Gentle redirection without blame or shame.

- “Let’s try that another way.”
- “Looks like your brain was in protect mode. Let’s reset.”
- “That choice didn’t work. Let’s make a new plan.”

 **Why it works:** Behaviour is communication. These phrases help children feel safe enough to learn and reflect.

 **Reference:** Greene, *The Explosive Child* (2016); Delahooke, *Beyond Behaviors* (2019)

● 3. When Boundaries Are Needed

Set clear limits while preserving the relationship.

- “I can’t let you do that—but I can help you feel better.”
- “It’s okay to want that. It’s not for now.”
- “You’re safe. I’m here while you calm down.”

💡 *Why it works:* Boundaries delivered with calmness help reduce anxiety and increase a child’s sense of safety.

📖 *Reference:* Perry & Szalavitz, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog* (2017)

👉 4. When You Want to Build Connection

Foster trust, confidence, and secure relationships.

- “We’re a team. Let’s figure this out together.”
- “Thanks for telling me. That was really brave.”
- “You matter. I’m so glad you’re here.”

🌱 *Why it works:* Children learn best when they feel connected and valued.

📖 *Reference:* Siegel & Hartzell, *Parenting from the Inside Out* (2003)

💬 Need some more support?

If you and your child are feeling overwhelmed, unsure or stuck. Things feel out of control? Capaz is here to help so reach out and work with our child expert Kristin Burns. We are here to help and support. Stop merely surviving and start Thriving.

