



FamilyCares is a project of:

Family Communications, the producer of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, seen daily on PBS, dealing with themes important in the lives of children and families

The Office of Child Development of the University of Pittsburgh with the support of the Frank and Theresa Caplan Fund for Early Childhood Development and Parenting Education;

American Academy of Pediatrics,

Look for *FamilyCares* about:

- Bedtime
- Child Care
- Divorce
- Fears
- Learning
- Mad Feelings
- Mealtime
- Moving
- The New Baby
- Rules
- Sharing
- Toilet Accidents

FamilyCares are also available in Spanish.

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For more information on *FamilyCares* and other materials for families, visit our website at www.misterrogers.org

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FamilyCaresTM

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THE MAD THAT YOU FEEL?



From the producers of
MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD

American Academy of Pediatrics



Understanding THE MAD THAT YOU FEEL

Almost everyone gets mad sometimes. That is just a part of being human, whether you are a grownup or a child.

When do we get mad? Usually when we feel helpless or left out or frustrated. So it is no wonder children get angry a lot...and angry with people who are closest to them, like parents and friends.

When young children do get angry, they sometimes hit or bite or kick. That does not mean they are "bad." That is just how they show they are mad. They do not have words to tell us how they feel.

Human beings are not born with self-control. We have to learn what to do with the mad that we feel. Learning to control ourselves is a long, hard process. It happens little by little. In fact, it is something we work on all through our lives.



Helpful Hints

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THE MAD THAT YOU FEEL



Children learn self-control in everyday ways.

Find time to listen to your child. That says, "I want to help you talk about your feelings — the easy ones and the hard ones."

Praise your child for small moments of control, like for trying something hard, taking turns, or waiting.

Children learn from your example. When you use words to talk about your angry feelings, they see that there are things people can do when they are mad that do not hurt.

Everyday rules and routines help children develop controls.

Make rules that are simple and clear. When children can repeat a rule, they can remember it better. Some families have rules like:

"You hit, you sit."

"Use your words, don't hit."

"It's okay to be angry, but it's not okay to hurt."

Try to stick to the rules. Rules help children feel safe. But children will test and challenge rules. Somewhere deep within them, they are hoping that you will stop them from breaking the rules. Then they know you will keep them safe.

Children get scared when they are so mad they get out of control.

Try to help your child calm down. You may have to try different things to find out what works for your child. And that will change as your child grows.

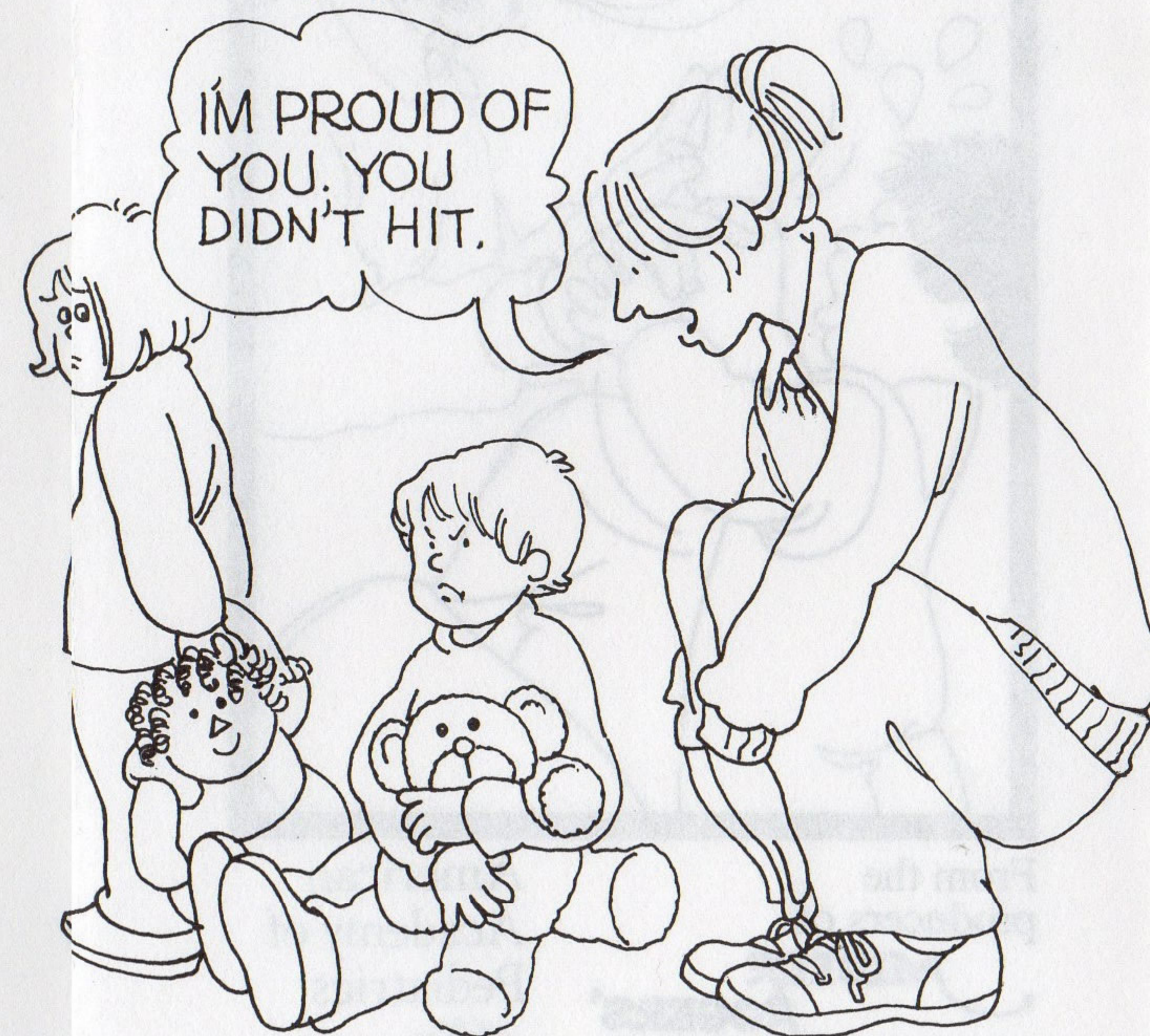
When children get angry, sometimes parents get angry, too, and that makes the children more upset than ever. If you can stay calm but firm, your child may be more able to get back into control.

When children use words, they are less likely to hit.

Children who can say, "I'm really mad!" have a good way to get their feelings out — through words.

Words help your child say what is wrong. Then you may be able to understand why he or she is angry. Just knowing you care can help your child feel better.

Talk with your child about different ways people handle their mad feelings in everyday situations, like in things that happen at school, with friends, or on tv programs.



Children feel good when they are able to stop.

If your child is ready to hurt someone, try to be right there to help him or her stop. Then your child will know what it feels like to stop.

Each time your child starts to hit or kick — but stops, your child learns how good it feels to have control.

Children can express their feelings in ways that do not hurt.

Children have lots of energy. That energy can be so bottled up inside them that it explodes into hitting and kicking. Help your child get out some of that energy in everyday ways with physical things like:

- dancing or stomping
- playing at a playground
- pounding play clay

Children can find many ways to express all kinds of feelings with creative things like:

- drawing pictures
- making music or making up songs
- making up stories or playing with toys

Knowing safe, healthy ways to show feelings will help children all through their lives.