Finding the Teachable Moment in the Middle of a Meltdown

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Image based upon the work of Barbara Avila, Synergy Autism Center
SAY WHAT?!?!?
You can teach with intention during play?!?!?!

http://www.b2kcoach.com/powerpacks

• Make the unpredictable predictable
• Problem solving, making a plan, or organizing thoughts
• Ensure mutual understanding
• Process a strong emotion and regain neutral state
1. Connect

- **Slow down and watch for “Shark” music…**
- Get within physical proximity of the child
- Watch non-verbals (face, arms)
- Touch if this is acceptable for the child
- Get below eye level when possible
- Take a few breaths

Adapted from “No Drama Discipline” by Siegel and Payne Bryson

2. Validate

- Make a simple statement about what was observed or said
  - You are upset that you have to _______.
  - You are frustrated that ________.
  - You really want ________.
  - It seems like….
  - I wonder if….
- Not a time to teach a lesson or make a request
- Validation doesn’t mean you approve or the child’s behavior was “ok”, it means you noticed

Adapted from “No Drama Discipline” by Siegel and Payne Bryson
3. Listen

- Try to just be – don’t talk, maintain proximity/comforting touch
- Notice what the child does or says
- Show that you are waiting and ready to listen
- Show compassion and continue to watch non-verbals

Adapted from “No Drama Discipline” by Siegel and Payne Bryson

4. Restate

- Say back to the child what you heard
- If child is non-verbal, restate what you saw them touch, look at, or do
- Keep the restatement brief and as close to what the child said as possible
- Not saying the child’s behavior/statements are “ok” or true, just affirming that you “heard” them

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Then What???

• Move on in some way…
  – Teach (close the learning loop)
  – Engage in collaborative problem solving
  – Redirect/re-engage/repair
  – “Kiss and make-up”
  – Let go of the small stuff

Explicitly Teach Vocabulary

Word Meaning
  – how a word is defined (ways to show, describe, tell)

Word Use
  – when to apply label (ways to address, name, identify)

1. Define meaning of words
2. Explain when to use words
3. Model word meaning/use
4. Ask questions to elicit word meaning/use
Word Gap Toolkit

- Infographic
- Case Study
- Definition of 8 strategies
- Link to Pinterest board

http://b2kcoach.com/10things

http://www.b2kcoach.com/b2k4squaresurvey/