

# Acknowledge Feelings

If your child opens up and tells you about what is going on in their life it is helpful to first listen to what is going on rather than trying to fix the situation.

We often do not want our children to experience pain or discomfort so we jump into “fix it” mode.

It can be hard for children to think clearly or constructively if someone is questioning or advising him or her. There is time for helping the child solve the problem. The first step is acknowledging what is going on inside the child’s head and heart. Here four steps to acknowledging feelings.

1

**Listen Attentively-** put away distractions and focus on what your child and what they are saying.

2

**Paraphrase-** use your own words to restate what your child said. Some examples are: So in other words.... What I hear you saying is.... What happened was that.... So you are saying.....

3

**Acknowledge thoughts and feelings-** This sends the message that you are engaged in the communication and you care about your child and their situation. You can sometimes acknowledge with just a word or a sound (Oh, Wow, Ugh).

4

**Offer feedback-** add your personal reaction. Share your point of view without arguing or advising. Your feedback should be immediate, honest and supportive.