

Validating Your Child's Feelings: Reflection & Practice Worksheet

Validation means acknowledging a child's feelings, thoughts, or experiences without dismissing, minimizing, or immediately trying to fix the problem. Validation does **not** mean you agree with the behavior — it means you recognize the emotion behind it.

Section 1 — What Validation Is (Check all that resonate)

Validation means:

- ☐ Letting my child know their feelings make sense.
- ☐ Listening without interrupting.
- ☐ Naming the emotion I observe.
- ☐ Showing empathy even if I disagree.
- ☐ Helping them feel seen and heard.

Validation does **NOT** mean:

- ☐ I approve of all behaviors.
 - ☐ I fix the problem right away.
 - ☐ I tell them how they "should" feel.
 - ☐ I compare their feelings to someone else.
 - ☐ I minimize their reaction.
-

Section 2 — What Do You Typically Say?

For each emotion scenario, check the response closest to your usual style.

Your child says: *"I'm scared to sleep alone."*

- ☐ "There's nothing to be scared of. You're fine."
- ☐ "You're too old to be scared of that."
- ☐ "I understand night can feel scary. Let's talk about what might help you feel safe."
- ☐ "You shouldn't feel scared — it's silly."

Your child says: *"That's not fair!"*

- ☐ "Life isn't fair — get used to it."
- ☐ "Stop complaining and do what I asked."
- ☐ "I hear that it feels unfair to you. Can you tell me what part feels unfair?"
- ☐ "You always think things are unfair."

Your child cries after losing a game.

- ☐ "Stop crying, it's just a game."
- ☐ "There's no reason to be upset."
- ☐ "Losing is disappointing — I get that. Want to talk or take a break?"
- ☐ "You're overreacting."

Section 3 — Practicing Simple Validation Phrases

Check the ones you'd like to practice using more often:

- ☐ "I can see you're feeling ____."
- ☐ "That sounds really tough."
- ☐ "Your feelings make sense."
- ☐ "I'm here with you."
- ☐ "Thank you for telling me how you feel."
- ☐ "It's okay to feel that way."
- ☐ "Would you like help, or do you just want me to listen right now?"

Add your own go-to validating phrase:

Section 4 — Reflection

- When my child shares their feelings, my first instinct is to:

- One change I could make to better validate emotions:

- A validating phrase I commit to practicing this week:

Remember: Validation builds trust, emotional regulation, and resilience — children calm faster when they feel understood.