

When Words and Actions Hurt – A Restorative Response for Parents in Crisis Moments

Helping parents respond when their child lashes out with physical aggression and hurtful words.

When a Child Says, “I Hate You” or Hits a Parent

There are few things more heartbreaking than when your own child lashes out — hitting, screaming, or saying words like, “I hate you” or “I wish you were dead.”

These moments are deeply painful. But they are also moments of **emotional crisis** for the child — not clear, thought-out expressions of how they truly feel, but outbursts from a place of overwhelm, fear, frustration, or unmet need.

This blog offers a restorative script and guidance to help parents respond calmly and constructively **after** the storm has passed.

Restorative Response Script (Use When the Child Is Calm)

Parent (calm, grounded tone): "Earlier, when you hit me and said you hated me... that really hurt. Not just my body, but my heart too. I know something must have felt really big and hard for you inside to make you say and do those things."

[Pause – allow silence or any response.]

"I want to understand what was happening for you. What were you feeling just before that happened?"

[If the child doesn't answer, remain calm.]

"It's OK if you don't have the words yet. But I want you to know this: I love you. I can see you're struggling, and I'm here to help you through it — but hurting people is never OK."

"When you're ready, we'll talk about what we can do differently next time — and how we can fix things between us. I believe in you, and I know you didn't really mean those words in your heart."

What to Do *During* the Outburst

1. Prioritise Safety

- If you are being hit, create physical space safely.
- Say calmly: “I’m moving away to keep us both safe.”

2. Do Not Engage in Arguments

- Avoid trying to reason with your child while they are dysregulated.
- Keep language simple: “You’re not in trouble. I see you’re overwhelmed. I’m here.”

3. Model Regulation

- Stay calm. Slow your breathing. Your nervous system helps regulate theirs.

Why Restorative Responses Work

- They validate emotions without excusing the behaviour
- They help the child feel safe, not ashamed
- They build trust and emotional intelligence over time
- They maintain boundaries with empathy
- They avoid re-traumatising or escalating the situation

Tips for Parents

- **Take care of yourself.** These moments are draining. Decompress, talk to someone you trust, or journal.
- **Don't take it personally.** Hard as it is, your child's outburst is not a reflection of your worth or their love for you.
- **Seek support.** Repeated outbursts may signal unmet needs — emotional, sensory, or neurological. Involve professionals if needed.

Final Thought: Repair Is More Powerful Than Punishment

When children feel heard after hurting someone, they are more likely to take responsibility, feel remorse, and learn new ways to cope. Restorative parenting isn't permissive — it's powerful. It shows your child that even when things go wrong, love and repair are possible.

When Mornings Meltdown – A Restorative Approach to School Refusal

Helping parents navigate screaming, shouting, and refusal with empathy and calm.

The Morning Struggle: More Than Just Refusal

When your child refuses to get ready for school—screaming, shouting, or shutting down—it's easy to assume they're being difficult. But often, this isn't about defiance. It's about **distress**.

Whether it's anxiety, sensory overload, demand avoidance (common in PDA profiles), or simply emotional overwhelm, your child is communicating something important in the only way they can at that moment.

This blog will guide you through a restorative, compassionate approach to handling those hard mornings — with practical steps and long-term perspective.

Step-by-Step: Restorative Morning Response

1. Pause and Breathe

Before you respond, take a breath. Ground yourself.

- Stay calm — your nervous system helps regulate theirs.
- Let go of the clock for a moment. Urgency escalates panic.

2. Acknowledge and Validate Feelings

Empathy first. This opens the door to connection.

Parent: "You're finding it really hard to get ready this morning, aren't you? It seems like something feels really big inside right now."

3. Lower the Demand (Temporarily)

Instead of insisting, offer manageable choices:

Parent: "Do you want to sit with me for a few minutes first, or start by brushing teeth together?"

A little control helps reduce threat and builds trust.

4. Use Visuals or Gentle Routines

If verbal instructions are too much, use a calm visual schedule or checklist. Keep transitions soft and predictable.

After the Meltdown: Gentle Reflection

Once calm has returned (sometimes hours later), come back to it kindly:

Parent: "Earlier, getting ready felt really hard. Can we talk about what made it feel so big today?"

"Next time it starts to feel too much, what could we do together to make it easier?"

This builds emotional insight and collaborative problem-solving.

What Might Be Underneath?

If school refusal or morning meltdowns happen regularly, dig deeper:

- Anxiety about school (academic, social, sensory)
- Sensory issues (e.g., clothing, noise, busyness)
- Trauma or attachment stress
- Neurodivergence or demand avoidance profile

Work with the school. Ask about support plans, transitions, or flexible starts.

❤️ Core Principles to Remember

- **Connection before correction**
- **Empathy before education**
- **Curiosity over control**

When children feel safe and understood, their nervous systems relax—and cooperation becomes more possible.

Final Thought: Meltdowns Are a Call for Help, Not a Bid for Power

Every morning meltdown is a moment of vulnerability. When we respond with compassion instead of consequence, we show our children that even in their hardest moments, we are their safe place.

When Screen Time Ends in Meltdown – A Restorative Guide for Parents

Helping parents navigate screaming, throwing, and conflict when it's time to unplug.

The Struggle with Screens: More Than Just a Battle of Wills

We've all been there: you ask your child to come off their phone, iPad, or laptop—and suddenly it's shouting, slammed doors, or worse, items being thrown. It feels out of control.

But this isn't about defiance. It's often about **emotional dysregulation, dopamine withdrawal, demand avoidance**, or using screens as a coping tool.

This blog will walk you through how to respond in the moment and what to do after, using a calm and restorative approach that supports both your child's needs and your boundaries.

🚫 How to Respond When Screen Time Turns into a Meltdown

1. Stay Calm and Protect the Connection

Your calm is the anchor — even when everything feels explosive.

Parent (during conflict): “I can see this is really hard for you. I’m not going to fight with you — I’m here to help when you’re ready.”

Avoid shouting or threatening. Stay grounded.

2. Don't Reason Mid-Meltdown

When your child is in meltdown mode, logic won't help. Focus on safety.

“I’m stepping back for now so we both stay safe. I’ll check in when you’re calmer.”

This models emotional boundaries and regulation.

3. Reflect and Repair After Calm Returns

Once the situation has de-escalated, invite conversation.

“That screen time ending felt really intense. Can you tell me what made it so hard to stop?”

“Were you really into what you were doing, or was it something else?”

Let them talk without fear. You’re building trust.

4. Understand What Screens Are Giving Them

Ask yourself:

- Is this their only time to feel calm or in control?
- Are they escaping from school anxiety or social stress?
- Is it part of a neurodivergent profile (e.g., ADHD, PDA)?

Talk together:

“What would help you stop more calmly next time? Would a warning help? Should we create a transition plan?”

5. Set Clear Boundaries Without Shame

Boundaries are okay. It’s *how* we hold them that matters.

“I won’t allow things to be thrown. That’s not safe. But I want to work with you to make screen time easier.”

Make consequences logical — not punishments, but opportunities for repair (e.g., helping clean or fix).

Why This Approach Works

- Helps your child feel safe, not ashamed
- Supports emotional regulation and trust
- Avoids escalation and power struggles
- Addresses neurodivergent needs with compassion

Parent Tips: What Helps

- ✓ Use visual timers or gentle reminders before transitions
- ✓ Create a “screen cool-down” routine (e.g., five-minute wind-down time)
- ✓ Build alternative calming strategies together (like drawing, walking, music)
- ✓ Stay consistent, but flexible — your empathy is your superpower

Final Thought: Connection First, Then Boundaries

Screen time battles often feel like a control issue, but they're more often about **emotional safety**. When we stay calm, curious, and connected, we teach our children how to manage hard transitions — not with force, but with trust.

From Conflict to Calm – Avoiding the Daily Homework Battle

Helping parents reduce stress, build connection, and support their child through the homework struggle.

Why Homework Turns into a Daily Fight

For many families, homework feels like a battleground. Every evening ends in tears, shouting, or stand-offs. But this isn't about laziness or disobedience—it's about **overwhelm**.

Whether your child is neurodivergent, anxious, or struggling with executive function, homework may feel impossible. Let's look at how parents can reduce the daily argument and bring calm back to evenings at home.



How to Reduce Homework Battles at Home

1. Shift the Goal: Understand Before You Enforce

Start with curiosity.

“What part of homework feels hardest for you? Getting started? Knowing what to do? Sitting still?”

Once you know the struggle, you can support it—rather than push against it.

2. Connect Before You Correct

Instead of jumping straight into work:

“You’ve had a long day. Want a snack or a hug before we talk about homework?”

When kids feel emotionally safe, they’re more willing to engage.

3. Create a Predictable Routine

Consistency reduces stress. Try this model:

- Calm transition after school (snack, rest, walk)
- Short, timed homework session (start with 10–20 minutes)
- Use a visual timer or checklist
- Reward with free time, screen time, or a shared activity

4. Offer Choices, Not Ultimatums

Give your child some control:

“Do you want to do maths or English first?”

“Would you rather work at the table or on the sofa?”

This reduces the sense of being controlled.

5. Validate Their Feelings, Scaffold Their Effort

If they're upset or frozen:

“It's okay this feels hard. Do you want help starting or want me to sit nearby?”

This helps them feel supported, not judged.

6. Be Flexible with Completion

Sometimes the emotional cost of pushing through is too high. That's okay.

“You tried. That's enough for today.”

Talk to school about adjusting expectations or providing homework passes for difficult days.

7. Praise the Process, Not Just the Product

Focus on effort:

“You focused for 10 minutes—great perseverance.”

“You started even when you didn't want to. That shows resilience.”



Underlying Reasons for Homework Resistance

If it's a frequent battle, consider:

- ADHD (trouble starting, sustaining, or organising tasks)
- Autism/PDA (demand avoidance, perfectionism, sensory stress)
- Anxiety or fear of failure
- Learning difficulties

Ask the school for support or adjustments that fit your child's needs.

Final Thought: Calm Over Completion

Homework should not come at the cost of mental health or your relationship. When we focus less on completion and more on **compassion and collaboration**, the pressure lifts—and the learning grows.