

Notes from Dr. Jane Nelsen (Corrected Version)

1. It is important to teach children that what they feel is always okay. However, what they do is not always okay. It is okay for Sophia to feel angry at Noah, but It is not okay to hit him.
2. Helping children create an Anger Wheel of Choice is one way to help them learn self-regulation.
3. Do not create an Anger Wheel of Choice for your children. They feel more ownership when they create the wheel themselves—or at least most of it.
4. Invite your child to brainstorm ideas for how to manage his or her anger. If they have a difficult time thinking of something, you can say, “What about _____ , singing a song, drawing a picture (or one of Sophia’s ideas)?”
5. Modeling is the best teacher. How do you handle your own anger? You might want to make your own Anger Wheel of Choice.
6. Don’t expect perfection. Most of us are still learning to manage our anger. Remember that mistakes are opportunities to learn.
7. When you make a mistake, apologize. “I’m sorry I lost my temper. Can we work together to solve this problem?”
8. You may have read “Jared’s Cool-Out Space,” which is another way to help children learn self-regulation. Hopefully you have your own Positive Time-Out space.
9. Another Positive Discipline way to deal with anger is to put the problem on the Family Meeting Agenda. Just putting it on the agenda allows for some calming down time before the family meeting when everyone can brainstorm for solutions.
10. This story is about helping children create a Wheel of Choice, but what about Noah? What should happen to him when he destroys Sophia’s things? Another ending to this book could have been an illustration of Sophia teaching Noah to create his own wheel of choice, but anger isn’t Noah’s problem. The illustration showing Noah being purposely mean when he pulls the head off Sophia’s doll might make you laugh, but it is unlikely that Noah is being mean on purpose. It is more likely that he is a curious little 2 or 3-year-old boy that didn’t understand that he was destroying Sophia’s doll. Still, it is important to “teach” socially appropriate behavior to young children even when they don’t have the maturity and judgment to control their behavior without supervision. So, what could Mother do?
11. Punishment is not helpful; and it is not helpful to “demand” that Noah apologize. However, Mom could help him develop empathy by asking “Curiosity Questions” that might help him decide to apologize on his own.
12. Mom could take Noah on her lap and ask, “How do you think Sophia is feeling about her broken doll?” Noah is likely to say, “I don’t know.” Mom could continue, “How would you feel if someone broke one of your toys?” Noah might say, “I would feel mad,” or “I would feel sad.” Mom could then ask, “Would you like to help Sophia feel better?” (Making a demand usually invites resistance. However, inviting a child to help usually invites a desire to help.)
13. Mom could continue, “Do you think Sophia would feel better if you told her you are sorry?” Noah is very likely to say, “Yes. I say sorry.” Then Mom could give him a choice. “Would you like to tell Sophia by yourself, or would you like me to go with you?” She could then let him follow through with his choice—by himself or going with Mom.
14. Following up with Noah illustrates several Positive Discipline Tools. The first is “Connection before Correction.” Instead of scolding Noah, she sat him on her lap.
15. The second was to kindly ask Curiosity Questions to help Noah develop empathy and responsibility.
16. It is important to note that these Kind and Firm Positive Discipline tools will need to be used over and over to help children develop the Characteristics and Life Skills they need to serve them well when they are ready to go out into the world on their own.

From *Sophia's Anger Wheel of Choice* available at www.positivediscipline.com