



Dialoguing is a method we use when kids are having a hard time managing their emotions (positive or negative emotions). It is a way to let kids get their feelings out in the open and have the feelings validated by an adult. Kids learn how to express their emotions appropriately.

It involves three processes:

- **Mirroring**
- **Validation**
- **Empathy**

**Mirroring** is the process of accurately reflecting back the "content" of a message from someone with whom you are talking. The most common form of mirroring is paraphrasing. A "paraphrase" is a statement - in your own words - of what the message a child sends means to you. It indicates that you are willing to transcend your own thoughts and feelings for the moment and attempt to understand the Wings child, from her/his point of view. Any response made prior to mirroring is often an "interpretation" and may contain a misunderstanding. Mirroring allows a child to send a message and permits you to paraphrase until you understand.

**Validation** is a communication to the Wings child that the information being received and mirrored "makes sense." It indicates that you can see her/his point of view and can accept its validity--it is "true" for the child. Validation is a temporary suspension or transcendence of your point of view that allows the child's experience to have its own reality. Typical validating phrases are. "I can see that..."; "You make sense to me because..."; "I can understand that ...." Such phrases convey to the child that their subjective experience has its own logic and is a valid way of looking at things. To validate a child's message does not mean that you agree with her/his point of view or that it reflects your subjective experience. It merely recognizes the fact that in any communication between two persons, there are always two points of view, and every report of any experience is an "interpretation" which is the "truth" for each person. It also recognizes that no "objective view" is possible.

**Empathy** recognizes the "self" in the other. It is the process of reflecting, imagining or participating in the feelings the child is experiencing about the event or the situation being reported. This deep level of communication attempts to recognize, reach into and, on some level, experience the emotions of the child. This **empathy** allows both you and the child to transcend your separateness, even if only for a moment, and to experience a

genuine “meeting”. Such an experience has remarkable healing power. Typical phrases for empathic communication include: "and I can imagine that you must feel...", "and when you experience that, I hear...", "I understand that you feel...", and "that makes sense to me."

Dialoguing Steps:

**Mirror-say exactly what you have the kid say, “So, you are telling me...”**

**Accuracy check—Have I got that right?**

**Is there more?**

**Summarize**

**Accuracy check II**

**Validate and name a feeling**

