

# A parent asked us....

**“My child is often upset on the way home after nursery. I try to help her, but we just end up with lots of emotions and sometimes tantrums. What can I be doing to help?”**

*The idea of this column is to say how we replied to a question from a parent on the spot. So, the answers are not exhaustive, but enough to respond to the query in the moment.*

Rahima is Jasmin’s key person. One day, Jasmin’s mum asked her this question at pick up time. This is how Rahima replied:

*Rahima: Yes, it is certainly difficult but, just to reassure you, it’s a natural part of young children’s development. So many other parents are going through the same thing as you- Jasmin’s doing what young children do.*

*Jasmin’s mum: Well, that’s something at least! It doesn’t make it any easier though.*

*Rahima: No, it’s not easy. Basically, young children like Jasmin can find it tricky to know how to express their feelings, so do it through their behaviour.*

*But, the good news is, there are some ways you can support her.*

*Here we talk a lot about feelings and how to manage them. Like, what we do when we’re tired or feeling hungry or upset. We try to give them words that will describe how they’re feeling – this helps them start to understand what’s going on for them. We share books too and talk about the feelings of the characters.*

*Do you think it might help for you to try this with Jasmin?*

*Jasmin’s mum: It’s hard, though, because I know Jasmin can confidently verbalise how she’s feeling, but we still end up with these big emotional outbursts.*

*Rahima: Yes, it’s a bit of an emotional rollercoaster. Even though Jasmin has the words for some of her emotions, she can’t always connect the emotions with the words. Children of this age can still feel overwhelmed by their emotions and their behaviour is how they communicate them.*

*Sometimes the simplest response can be to give her a bit of time and space to be emotional and then show her that you’re there to comfort her, maybe giving her a cuddle or having a drink together.*

*Jasmin’s mum: Yes, I think sometimes I overthink it.*

*Rahima: The rollercoaster will stop one day!*

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Jasmin's mum left saying that if she accepted it, then she might be able to help support Jasmin better using the ways Rahima suggested.

Finally, it's worth bearing in mind that often children are really tired at the end of nursery; it's tiring doing all that play, communicating, sharing and waiting their turn etc. Tired children are much more likely to get angry and upset. They will often show their feelings to the people they feel closest and safest with. So, they sometimes 'release' their emotions once they are with a parent. You get the best, and you get the worst, when you're a parent.

**By Rahima Begum**

**Useful reading:**

**The Early Years Evidence Store: *Approaches and practices to support Personal, Social and Emotional development in the Early Years***



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