

*Heartache to Happiness Box

Some kids love boxes, maybe heart-shaped, filled with marbles or beads, to give a representation of how their heart is feeling.

The full box indicates a heart full of happiness and love.

If something distresses them, and they start to feel heartache, they can empty some beads out of the box. Little ones will usually empty the whole box, and that's fine. Having to stop playing when they have to take a sibling to school, or go shopping, can be literally the end of the world when you are 3, as can a carrot tasting different, the cat not sitting where they want, their bricks falling over, a friend not turning up.

The idea is for the child to empty the box before needing a meltdown, or hiding away, or crying hysterically, or screaming, or trashing the place, or kicking the dog, or giving you a nosebleed.

As they empty the box, you then leap into focused listening, and try to enable them to say what is wrong. You don't have to agree! Any discussion can be later.

Then always have something ready from the Feeling Better Plan to trigger feeling better, and lessen the heartache. As your kid feels a bit better, they add a few beads back to the box, until it is full again. Sometimes this might take all day, but it would be good to have it filled before bedtime.

This is the practical building of inner resilience! It teaches aiming to self-regulate back to feeling OK. It can be lighthearted and fun!

As time goes by, or if you are out, the box can just be talked about, but it's best if it is fully experiential for as long as necessary. But kids need to do their feeling better plan for a long time, usually for a lifetime, as with most of us!