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## *Simple Steps*

*to a more PEACE-FULL  
family life with young children*

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# *Remember P.E.A.C.E.*

- ① Play
- ② Empathize
- ③ Appreciate
- ④ Clarity
- ⑤ Express



## 1 Play

Lead with play. As much as you can. Especially when doing the mundane tasks. The sillier the better.

**EXAMPLE** When you are getting your little one dressed, try putting the shirt on your head first in a silly way. *“Hmm, seems like you don’t want to get dressed so I think I’LL wear your shirt today!!!”*

## ② Empathize

Mirror back the feelings that are being expressed.

**EXAMPLE** If your child is frustrated make a frustrated face and say, *“Arrrgghhh, I see that you’re frustrated. You want to go outside and I said we couldn’t.”* Match the emotion with your expression and tone. Be genuine and respectful. Reflect emotionally and non-verbally. And then ZIP IT.





## ③ *Appreciate*

Tell your child all that you are appreciating about who he/she is and does.

**EXAMPLE** *“Wow, you are growing and changing every day. Thanks for being so clear with your desires. I appreciate you putting up with all of these errands today. Thank you for your patience.”*

## 4 Clarity

Be clear with your boundaries. The boundary lies within YOU. Be strong and clear before you lose it. It's better for the child to have the melt down then for you to allow something that evokes your meltdown which is often coupled with anger or resentment.

**EXAMPLE** *"I know you want to throw stuff right now. And I can't let you do that. If I let you, I'm going to LOSE it! So, I'm going to help you/your body since you are having a tough time doing it yourself. You'll get there."* And then calmly follow through.





## 5 Express

Be transparent with your feelings.  
Say how you are feeling.  
Be honest.

**EXAMPLE** “Grrrrr” Then get up and walk away. Turn back to the child and say “*It’s hard for me to stay around you when you say “I hate you.” I need to take care of myself because I’m feeling hurt and sad.*” Take a moment to calm down and then comfort and reconnect. Your actions and emotions speak way louder than your words.

# More Ideas and Examples

Young children love to know what's going on. When you're transitioning into anything new, whether it's getting dressed or diapered or bedtime or **WHATEVER**, always tell them the story.

**EXAMPLE** "In just a few minutes we're going to finish playing with the blocks and then... we'll go into the kitchen for snack.... I'll make the snack and you can get your plate out and help me..... Then we'll sit together at the table and have a snack and then we'll sing some songs."

Narrate the day. They LOVE that. And give them warnings when things are about to shift. They tend to melt down when you don't warn them of what's about to happen and give them time to adjust to the shift in their brain. And remember, they are working on independence so it is their job to resist what you want.

Young children want to know that you see them.

**EXAMPLE** Before leaving the house make eye contact and say, "Oh, I see you and I LOVE YOU!" When you are getting out of the car to go somewhere make eye contact and say, "I'm so happy to be with you!"

Young children have and need to express big feelings. Let them have them. And mirror their big feelings.

**EXAMPLE** If your child is upset that it's bath time, instead of saying, "Oh don't cry, you'll be alright, you love your bath. Don't be so sad." Try making a sad face and saying "You're sad. You aren't ready for your bath. I really see that...It's ok to feel that way... And, in just a few minutes we are going to get in the bath and I'm going to bring in something really special."

Take a little break from the interaction. Go get something from the kitchen that doesn't normally go in the tub and put it in the tub. Calmly help your child get in the bath.

"OH, I SEE YOU!"

MAKE EYE CONTACT

"I'm so **HAPPY** to be with you"

# More Ideas and Examples

Find the yes in the no.

**EXAMPLE** If your child is climbing on the table instead of saying, “Don’t climb on the table. Stop climbing on the table. GET OFF THE TABLE!!” Subtly give your child a little “uh uh” and a look of, *what are you doing?* Then look away.

If that doesn’t change the behavior say, “Tables aren’t where we put our feet! We need to keep our feet on the floor, silly! You’re welcome to climb on the couch.” And gently help the child down. And let him feel what he feels.

Appreciate the things you want more of from them.

**EXAMPLE** “I’m really appreciating what an easy time we just had getting in the car. I also appreciate how you are growing and communicating with me. Thank you so much.”



# What Young Kids Like To Do

Simple crafts such as drawing, cutting, gluing, stickers.

Blocks.

Dirt and water (outside of course) in bowls or buckets.

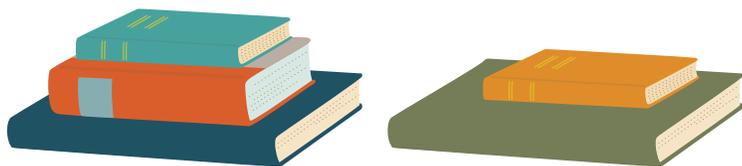
Nature walk around the yard and then a collage.

Scavenger hunt (find 5 different leaves or something in red, yellow, green, brown, black, etc.)

Challenges. Give them a few things to do *“Run to the tree, spin in a circle three times, walk backwards to me and give me a high five!”*

Pillow and blanket forts.

The pushing game. *“Let’s see if you can push me over...wow, you are so powerful!”*



Books, books and more books.

Playing with water. At the kitchen sink, in the tub or in buckets outside.

Floor time. Just sit on the floor and be there. Let the child lead the play. Mirror back what you see them doing.

Give them choices within the structure of what needs to happen. *“Do you want to wear your sandals or your sneakers to go play outside?”*

Tell them stories about when you were little.

Tell them stories about when they were babies.

Puppets or characters.

Setting up lines of animals or characters—stuffed, wooden or plastic.

Yoga or just stretching.

Simon Says or Follow the Leader—let them be the leader sometimes.

*Do you have a favorite activity that your young one loves? Share it with me.*

# Thank you

For taking the time to learn more about young children and the PEACE-FULL 5 steps. Visit my blog and do stay in touch!

I welcome your feedback and questions anytime. [carrie@carriecontey.com](mailto:carrie@carriecontey.com)

