

Tips for Parents by Susie Kohl

Empathy Soothes Even Two-Ice-Pack Hurts

REMEMBER HOW MUCH IT HURTS to fall on your knee? When one of our four-year-old girls was crying about a knee scrape, her friend stood nearby trying to console her. Putting her arm around her tearful playmate, she said, “Remember the day I fell down and had to have two ice packs?” The crying stopped. A smile lit the injured girl’s face at the reminder of that catastrophe.

Rudolf Dreikurs, bestselling author of *Children: The Challenge*, suggested that adults respond to children’s little boo-boos in a similar way. He noted that showing children one of our bruises or cuts when they are hurt can lift their spirits. Of course, we wouldn’t do this with an air of dismissing a child’s tears (“That’s nothing to cry about”).

The empathic girl who cheered her friend communicated tender understanding. Her story also painted a broader picture. “You’re not in this alone,” she seemed to say, “because we all get hurt.”

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