

**Tips for Parents** by Susie Kohl

## *Upset Feelings? Put Them in Writing*

**W**ANT A TRICK TO HELP A CHILD let go of upset feelings? Offer to write them down. Recently a four-year-old boy was screaming in frustration in his classroom again and again. Another student had told him he couldn't join a group drawing with chalk on the sidewalk, and he was crushed. His teacher was very sympathetic and tried to get him to go ahead and draw. However, anger had taken hold of him and he couldn't stop yelling.

When there was a lull, I went over and asked if he would like me to write down his feelings. I wondered how he would respond since he doesn't know me very well. However, he immediately said yes, jumped up, and followed me to the art table. I took a crayon and asked, "What do you want me to write?" He was very straightforward and told me to say that someone had told him he couldn't draw, and he was angry. After getting his words down, I handed him the piece of paper. He walked off with a look of calm satisfaction.

I've had the experience of writing children's feelings down and watching their happy reactions more times than I can count. As children get older, taking time to record on paper the events that led to an upset can put children in touch with their emotions and help them communicate them to a parent or friend. Even adults can clarify their emotions by writing them down. That's why journal writing is so healing. And when we go to the manager of a company with a complaint, aren't we glad when she writes our feelings down?

*December 3, 2014*

© 2014 The Meher Schools