

**Tips for Parents** by Susie Kohl

## *Starting the Day In Peace*

**N**EVER GO TO BED ANGRY. This old adage for married couples holds special wisdom for parents getting their children off to school. When we get behind the clock, it's easy for everyone to get frustrated and start the day on a wave of anger and resentment. We don't need to feel guilty about these conflicts or pretend that anger doesn't exist. What matters most is being able to repair frayed emotions and say good-bye in a peaceful way.

Children find it unsettling to come to school after an angry exchange with a parent, even if they initiated it. We can start to heal the tension by noticing "You look like you're still feeling bad because we had a hard time this morning" and suggest a walk through the garden or hug. The idea of "making up" has nice connotations—taking the time to smooth the threads that connect us by making up for what previously went wrong.

When we take the time to reset feelings, we prevent anger from being carried to other situations: "I want to hit someone because I'm mad at my mom." Repairing situations right away gives children the chance to learn what regulating feelings after a big upset feels like, a process that they can use in conflicts with others.

We can usually feel the moment when a child lets go of tension and love starts flowing again. Commenting on the positivity of that letting-go process will allow the child to recognize the internal process and tap into it again and again in the future.

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