

THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

The At-Home Life Skills Guide

Helping your child build emotional intelligence
and handle conflict — right from home

A simple, week-by-week program you can lead at your own kitchen table. No special training required — just you, your child, and a little time each week. For families with kids roughly ages 11–18.

A Youth Movement digital program · For home use

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Welcome

You already know your child better than anyone. This guide simply gives you a gentle, ready-made way to talk with them about two skills that shape almost everything else in life: understanding their feelings and working through conflict.

It comes straight from The Youth Movement program — the same lessons we use with teens — but rewritten for home. There are no lectures to give and nothing to grade. Each session is really just a guided conversation, plus a short activity and one small thing to try during the week.

You don't have to be an expert

You won't always have the perfect answer, and you don't need one. Your child mostly needs you to listen, stay calm, and show that feelings and disagreements are normal parts of life. That's the whole job.

Who this is for

- Parents and caregivers of kids roughly ages 11–18 (middle school through high school).
- Families who want these skills at home — whether or not your child is in our in-person program.
- Anyone willing to give about 30–45 minutes a week for eight weeks.

How to Use This Guide

There are eight short sessions, grouped into two parts. Do roughly one a week, in order — the skills build on each other. If life gets busy, it's fine to skip a week and pick up where you left off.

Each session follows the same simple shape

Warm up (5 min)	A quick, easy question to get talking — no pressure.
Talk together (15 min)	The main idea, explained simply, with questions to explore it.
Try it (10 min)	A short hands-on activity or the matching worksheet.
This week (1 min)	One small thing your child practices before the next session.

A few ground rules that make it work

- Make it a conversation, not a quiz. Share your own answers too — it puts them at ease.
- No feeling is “wrong.” What we do with a feeling is the part we can choose.
- Keep it private and safe. What's shared in your time together stays between you.
- Let them lead sometimes. If they want to go deeper on something, follow it.
- Pair it with the worksheets. The printable Kid Activity Pack matches every session.

Tip: pick a regular time

Many families do a session on the same evening or weekend morning each week — over a snack, in the car, or on a walk. A predictable rhythm makes it feel normal instead of like a big deal.

Setting Up Your Time Together

You barely need anything. Here's all it takes:

- A quiet-ish spot with few distractions — phones down or in another room.
- This guide (open to the week's session) and the printable Kid Activity Pack.
- Something to write with, and a folder or notebook to keep the pages together.
- About 30–45 minutes, give or take. Shorter is fine; forcing it isn't.

If your child resists

That's normal, especially with teens. Keep it light and low-stakes. You can do a session while doing something else — driving, cooking, walking the dog. Lead with curiosity ("I read something interesting, can I run it by you?") rather than "we need to talk." And it's okay to keep sessions to ten minutes if that's what they'll give you.

Go at their pace

Younger kids do best with concrete examples and quick activities. Older teens can handle deeper questions about identity, relationships, stress, and what they see online. Read the room and adjust.

Part 1

Understanding Feelings

These first four sessions help your child notice what they feel, put it into words, stay steady when emotions run high, and understand what others are feeling. It's the foundation everything else is built on.

Big question

Why do feelings matter?

What it builds

Naming emotions and seeing they're normal

Warm up (about 5 min)

Ask: "What's one word for how your day went — and why that word?" Answer it yourself first.

Talk together (about 15 min)

Feelings are signals, not problems. Just like hunger tells us to eat, emotions tell us something matters. Everyone has them, even the people who look calm. The goal isn't to get rid of feelings — it's to notice them so they don't run the show. Talk about how the same situation can stir up different feelings in different people, and that's okay.

Questions to explore:

- What feelings are easy for you to show? Which ones are harder?
- Where do you feel emotions in your body — stomach, chest, jaw?
- Who do you know that seems good at handling their feelings? What do they do?

Try it (about 10 min)

Together, list as many feeling words as you can in two minutes — go past "good," "bad," and "fine." Then each circle the three you've felt most this week. (Worksheet: Session 1.)

This week

Notice one moment when a feeling changed what you did, and be ready to share it next time.

Big question

Is “fine” really how you feel?

What it builds

A richer feelings vocabulary

Warm up (about 5 min)

Play a quick round: name a situation (lost your phone, aced a test) and each say the first feeling word that pops up.

Talk together (about 15 min)

“Fine” and “mad” are easy defaults, but the more specific we get, the easier it is to handle a feeling. There's a big difference between annoyed and furious, or nervous and terrified. When kids can name it, they can tame it. Share a time you mislabeled your own feeling and what it really was underneath.

Questions to explore:

- What's the difference between frustration and anger?
- Can you feel two opposite things at once? When?
- Why might someone say “I'm fine” when they're not?

Try it (about 10 min)

Build a family “feelings menu” — write feeling words on a page and keep it on the fridge. Point to it during the week instead of asking “how are you?” (Worksheet: Session 2.)

This week

Keep a quick feelings log for three days — jot the feeling and what set it off, using a specific word.

Big question

What's the space between feeling and doing?

What it builds

Self-control and a calm-down toolkit

Warm up (about 5 min)

Ask: "What does your body do right before you lose your cool?" Compare notes — yours too.

Talk together (about 15 min)

There's a moment between feeling something and acting on it. That tiny pause is where all our best choices live. Strong feelings are normal; the skill is learning to slow down before we react. Talk about the difference between reacting (automatic) and responding (chosen), and build a personal toolkit of things that genuinely help them cool down.

Questions to explore:

- What helps you calm down when you're upset — really?
- What makes it worse? (being told to "calm down," an audience?)
- What's one warning sign that tells you it's time to pause?

Try it (about 10 min)

Each make a "calm-down toolkit" list of 3–5 things that help (deep breaths, music, a walk, water, stepping away). Post it somewhere handy. (Worksheet: Session 3.)

This week

Use one tool from the toolkit during a stressful moment this week, then notice if it helped.

Big question

Can you really know what someone else is feeling?

What it builds

Empathy and reading people

Warm up (about 5 min)

Watch a short clip with the sound off, or people-watch for a minute, and guess what others are feeling from their faces and posture.

Talk together (about 15 min)

Empathy is feeling with someone, not just for them. We read clues — face, tone, body language, even what's not said — to understand others. It's a skill that grows with practice, and it's the heart of every good relationship. Talk about a time each of you misread someone, and what you learned from it.

Questions to explore:

- What clues tell you how someone is feeling?
- What's the difference between sympathy and empathy?
- When is it hardest to see someone else's side?

Try it (about 10 min)

Pick a recent disagreement (a low-stakes one). Each of you describe what the other person in it might have been feeling and needing. (Worksheet: Session 4.)

This week

Pay close attention to one person's mood this week and check in by asking how they're really doing.

Part 2

Handling Conflict

Now your child uses those feeling skills in the place they matter most — with other people. These four sessions reframe conflict as normal and teach how to stay calm, listen, speak up, and repair things afterward.

Big question

Is all conflict a bad thing?

What it builds

Seeing conflict as workable, not scary

Warm up (about 5 min)

Ask: "When you hear the word 'conflict,' what comes to mind?" Notice if it feels negative.

Talk together (about 15 min)

Conflict just means two people want different things — it's a normal part of every relationship, even good ones. The problem isn't having conflict; it's how we handle it. Talk about the difference between a disagreement, an argument, and a fight, and where conflict tends to show up in your child's world (home, friends, school, online).

Questions to explore:

- Where does conflict happen most for you?
- Can a disagreement actually make a friendship stronger? How?
- What usually starts conflict for you?

Try it (about 10 min)

Together, name a fictional or low-stakes conflict and dig under the surface: what does each person really want or need? (Worksheet: Session 5.)

This week

Notice one small conflict this week — yours or one you witness — and what it was really about underneath.

Big question	Do you fight, freeze, flee, or fix?
What it builds	Self-awareness in conflict

Warm up (about 5 min)

Ask: "When something bugs you, do you speak up right away, go quiet, or let it build?"

Talk together (about 15 min)

Most of us have a go-to move in conflict: avoiding (staying silent), competing (pushing to win), accommodating (giving in), or collaborating (working it out). None is all good or all bad — the skill is noticing your pattern and choosing on purpose. Share your own style honestly; kids learn a lot from seeing you reflect.

Questions to explore:

- Which style do you use most — and does it change with different people?
- What's good about your usual style? What does it cost you?
- When has giving in or staying quiet backfired?

Try it (about 10 min)

Each map your style: which do you use with a friend, a parent, and over text? Talk about why they differ. (Worksheet: Session 6.)

This week

Catch yourself in your usual conflict style this week — just notice it, no need to change anything yet.

Big question

Are you listening, or just waiting to talk?

What it builds

Cooling down and listening to understand

Warm up (about 5 min)

Try a 20-second test: one of you talks about your day while the other listens without interrupting at all. Switch. How did it feel?

Talk together (about 15 min)

When we're upset, our thinking brain goes offline — that's why we say things we regret. The fix is a deliberate pause to cool down, then real listening: trying to understand the other person before explaining ourselves. Practice "saying it back" — restating what you heard — which instantly lowers the temperature in almost any disagreement.

Questions to explore:

- What does it feel like to be truly heard?
- What stops you from listening when you're upset?
- What's one question you could ask instead of arguing back?

Try it (about 10 min)

Role-play a tiny disagreement. The only rule: before you reply, you have to restate the other person's point fairly. (Worksheet: Session 7.)

This week

In one disagreement this week, try to fully understand the other side before explaining yours.

Big question

What happens after the argument?

What it builds

Assertiveness, problem-solving, and repair

Warm up (about 5 min)

Ask: "What makes an apology actually feel real to you?"

Talk together (about 15 min)

Standing up for yourself doesn't mean putting others down. An assertive approach is clear, honest, and respectful — the "I feel ___ when ___ because ___" formula works wonders. Then comes the part people skip: repair. A real apology, a small step to rebuild trust, and knowing when a problem is too big to handle alone. Wrap up by celebrating how far your child has come.

Questions to explore:

- What's the difference between passive, aggressive, and assertive?
- What are the parts of an apology that feels genuine?
- When is a conflict too big to handle on your own — and who can you turn to?

Try it (about 10 min)

Practice an "I feel" statement out loud about a real (small) frustration, then brainstorm one win-win solution to a current conflict together. (Worksheet: Session 8.)

This week

Use one clear "I feel" statement this week, and take one small step to repair a relationship if you'd like to.

When Something Feels Bigger Than You Can Handle

These conversations sometimes open the door to harder things. That's a good sign — it means your child trusts you. Most of the time, listening calmly is exactly right. But some situations are bigger than a weekly chat, and getting help is the strong, loving choice.

Reach out to a professional if your child

- Talks about wanting to hurt themselves or someone else, or about not wanting to be here.
- Mentions abuse, threats, or feeling unsafe at home, school, or online.
- Shows a lasting change — withdrawing, big mood shifts, sleep or appetite changes — over weeks.
- Is dealing with something you simply don't feel equipped to handle alone. That's okay.

You're not overreacting by getting help

Start with your child's doctor, a school counselor, or a licensed therapist. In the U.S., you can call or text 988 (the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) any time, day or night. If someone is in immediate danger, call 911. Asking for help models exactly the skill you're teaching.

Tips for Tough Moments & Keeping It Going

If a session falls flat

- Shorten it. Ten honest minutes beats a forced hour.
- Do it side-by-side — in the car or on a walk — so there's no pressure of eye contact.
- Share your own story first. Vulnerability invites vulnerability.
- Skip ahead to whatever's most relevant to their life right now.

Make it stick after the eight weeks

- Name feelings out loud in daily life: "I'm feeling frustrated, so I'm going to pause."
- When conflict happens at home, narrate the skill: "Let's both say it back before we answer."
- Catch them doing it well and say so — specific praise beats general praise.
- Revisit a session anytime a real situation makes it relevant again.

The conversations are the point

You won't do this perfectly, and you don't need to. Every time you sit down and try, you're showing your child that feelings and conflict are things we can face together. That message lasts far longer than any single lesson.

Thank you for investing this time in your child. — The Youth Movement