

Why Kids Are Hurting

Clear, Doable Practices that Parents, Teachers, and Caregivers Can Use in Daily Life

By Dr. Michael Obsatz – video ¹

Why Kids are Hurting video translated into **clear, doable practices** that parents, teachers, and caregivers can actually use in daily life. Think of these not as rules, but as **relational habits**—small, consistent actions that quietly heal.

I'll organize this into **six practical pillars**, each with concrete steps.

1. Start With Unconditional Belonging

“You matter because you exist, not because you perform.”

What this looks like in practice

Parents & Caregivers

- Say *daily*, not just when things go well:
 - “I’m glad you’re here.”
 - “Nothing you do can make me stop loving you.”
- Separate **behavior from worth**:
 - “That choice wasn’t okay—but *you* are.”
- After discipline, always reconnect:
 - A hug, eye contact, or a calm check-in later.

Teachers

- Greet students by name.
- Notice effort, kindness, curiosity—not just results.
- Use phrases like:
 - “I see you trying.”

¹ *Why Kids Are Hurting* video by Dr. Michael Obsatz

on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEyqoxY7LsY>

Using ChatGPT to create *Love Heals the World* - Clear, Doable Practices that Parents, Teachers, and Caregivers Can Use in Daily Life.

- “You belong here, even on hard days.”

Why this matters

Belonging calms the nervous system. A regulated child can learn; a frightened one cannot.

2. Help Kids Discover Their Gifts (Not Just Fix Weaknesses)

What this looks like in practice

At home

- Ask different questions:
 - ✗ “What did you get?”
 - ✓ “What did you enjoy today?”
 - ✓ “What felt natural or fun for you?”
- Watch what they do *without being told*.
- Protect time for play, creativity, and exploration.

At school

- Offer multiple ways to show learning:
 - Talking, drawing, building, writing, moving.
- Publicly value different strengths:
 - empathy, humor, persistence, leadership, imagination.

Key mindset shift

Every child has gifts.

Some just haven’t been *named yet*.

3. Teach Emotional Literacy by Modeling It

What this looks like in practice

Adults go first

- Name your own feelings appropriately:
 - “I’m feeling overwhelmed, so I’m taking a breath.”
- Apologize when you mess up:
 - “I raised my voice. That wasn’t fair. I’m sorry.”

With kids

- Help them name feelings before solving:
 - “Are you feeling frustrated, sad, or left out?”
- Validate before redirecting:
 - “That makes sense—and we still need to find a safer way.”

Simple daily practice

At dinner, bedtime, or circle time:

- “One feeling I had today was...”
- “One thing that helped me was...”

Why this matters

Feelings that are named don’t have to be acted out.

4. Replace Control With Connection

What this looks like in practice

When kids are dysregulated

- Lower your voice instead of raising it.
- Get physically closer if safe (not farther).
- Say less. Be calm more.

Before correcting

Ask yourself:

- “Is this child needing guidance—or comfort right now?”

Use curiosity instead of interrogation

- ❌ “Why did you do that?”
- ✅ “What was going on for you?”

Important reminder

Connection is not permissiveness.

It’s the *pathway* to cooperation.

5. Give Kids Real Ways to Matter

What this looks like in practice

At home

- Give meaningful responsibilities:
 - Feeding pets, helping cook, caring for younger siblings *with support*.
- Let kids contribute ideas:
 - Family plans, rules, problem-solving.

At school

- Create roles:
 - classroom helper, peer mentor, greeter, materials manager.
- Invite service projects:
 - Helping others, caring for the environment, community kindness.

Say explicitly

- “What you do helps.”
- “The world is better because you’re in it.”

Why this matters

Purpose heals emptiness faster than praise ever will.

6. Take Care of the Adults So Kids Don’t Carry the Weight

What this looks like in practice

For parents & caregivers

- Admit when you’re stretched thin.
- Ask for help without shame.
- Take breaks *before* burnout.

For teachers

- Set boundaries.
- Find at least one place where *you* are supported and seen.
- Remember: you cannot regulate 25 nervous systems if your own is depleted.

One grounding practice

Ask yourself daily:

“What do *I* need to stay connected and human today?”

Kids should not have to absorb adult exhaustion.

A Simple Daily Checklist (Not Perfection—Intention)

At the end of the day, ask:

- Did this child feel **seen**?
- Did they feel **safe**?
- Did they feel **valued beyond performance**?
- Did they experience **connection**?

If the answer is “yes” even once—that day mattered.

A Gentle Closing

Children don’t need more pressure, programs, or perfection.

They need **anchored adults** who are willing to:

- slow down,
- listen deeply,
- repair honestly,
- and love consistently.

That is how cups get filled.

And filled cups grow into people who can give back.