**Why teach self-talk to kids?**

Self-talk is the foundation strategy to teach kids to shift their thinking about a negative event.

Let me explain.

A negative event happens such as a child’s sibling won’t share a much-loved toy.

The child immediately feels anger.

He thinks, “Not again! I hate her! She never shares and it’s not fair.”

This thinking feeds his anger, which starts to spiral. In a heartbeat he’s lashed out at his sister for inflicting such an injustice on him.

Here’s what happens…….

Our thoughts, often reflected through self-talk, change when we experience an emotion.

We tend to focus on the event that caused the emotion.

Anger shifts our attention **outward** to the thing, person or event that caused it. Sadness shifts our attention **inwards** toward the loss.

Our emotions change how we see the world. We are usually more optimistic when we are happy and more pessimistic when we’re sad.

**The key is to change your self-talk.**

By changing the chatter in your brain from something negative, catastrophic or unhelpful to something more realistic, positive and helpful can help get you through a challenging situation.

Positive self-talk examples include:

“Stuff happens. I can cope.”

“It’s no big deal.”

“I’ve put up with worse than this.”

“I may want it but I don’t need it.”

Help children develop age-appropriate self-talk scripts for a variety of common situations they meet so they can avoid an escalation of their emotions. Then encourage them to change the monkey-brain tape in their heads when they catch themselves saying negative, catastrophic or down-right regretful things.