

Reflection Guide

Understanding Your Reactions and Growing With Your Child

This guide is meant to support reflection—not judgment. You can complete it all at once or return to it over time—whatever feels most helpful for you. There are no right or wrong answers.

Part 1: Past-Present Awareness Map

Noticing Where Reactions May Come From

Our past experiences can shape how we react during stressful moments with our children. This section helps you notice possible connections between your experiences and your current reactions.

Step 1: Think About a Recent Moment

Think of a recent moment with your child that felt especially hard or emotional.

What was happening? _____

How did your child behave? _____

How did you feel in that moment? _____

Step 2: My Reaction

What did I do or say?

How did I feel afterward? _____

Step 3: Looking Back

Does this remind me of something from my own childhood?

☐ Yes ☐ Maybe ☐ No ☐ Not sure

If yes or maybe: What feels familiar?

How were hard moments handled when I was growing up?

Part 2: Trigger to Choice Guide

Notice Triggers → Pause → Choose Your Response

Step 1: Identify Your Triggers

What moments quickly bring up strong feelings for you?

☐ Crying or whining ☐ Tantrums ☐ Not listening ☐ Messes ☐ Feeling rushed

☐ Other: _____

Step 2: Notice My Automatic Reaction

When this trigger happens, what automatic response do I tend to have first?

☐ Raising my voice ☐ Correcting ☐ Shutting down ☐ Rushing to fix ☐ Freezing

☐ Other: _____

Step 3: Creating a Pause

What could help me pause next time?

(Examples: taking deep breaths, silently telling myself "I'm learning to do things differently," taking a moment to step back/away if safe and able)

Step 4: Choose a Supportive Response

What does my child need in this moment?

What do I need in this moment?

Part 3: Strengths Passed Forward Inventory

Notice Positive Patterns You Want to Continue

Step 1: Support I Remember

What helped me feel safe or valued growing up?

What did adults do that I appreciated?

Note: *You may reflect on your own caregivers or other adults in your life growing up.*

Step 2: Strengths I Use Today

☐ Comforting my child ☐ Listening ☐ Encouragement ☐ Patience

☐ Apologizing & repairing ☐ Creating routines

☐ Other: _____

Step 3: Strengths I Want to Pass On

What values or strengths do I want my child to grow up with?

What do I hope my child remembers about how I responded?

Remember: *You already carry strengths worth continuing. Each day is a new chance to pass them forward.*

Closing Reflection

Growing Together

One thing I'm learning about myself as a caregiver:

One kind reminder I want to hold onto:

“

”

(Example: I'm learning, and I'm doing the best I can right now.)

Remember:

Caregiving is a journey. Awareness grows slowly, one moment at a time. Your past is part of you—but it does not control you. Each pause, reflection, and caring response helps build connection, understanding, and growth for both you and your child.

