

Patterns, Not Excuses

A Guide for Supporting ADHD Kids with Accountability + Compassion

Kids with ADHD aren't always in control of what they say or do in the moment.

That's not an excuse — it's a neurological reality.

Saying "That's not an excuse" doesn't teach self-awareness. It teaches shame.

What helps?

- Naming patterns
- Creating safety
- Offering better ways forward — with support

When a child feels understood, they're more able to reflect, regulate, and repair.

That's accountability. That's growth.

What to Say Instead of "That's Not an Excuse"

Instead of saying...

"That's not an excuse."

"You know better."

"We've talked about this!"

"You can't act like that."

"Say sorry properly."

Try saying...

"That was hard for your brain. Let's figure out what happened."

"I know you *can* do better — but it's okay if you needed help this time."

"Yep, and learning takes repetition. Let's look at it again."

"That didn't go well — but I know that's not who you are."

"You're allowed to feel big things. Let's fix it together when you're ready."

⚠ ADHD is not an excuse to hurt others.

But it is a clue that a child might need help managing something their brain struggles with.

Compassion and boundaries aren't opposites.

They're teammates.

