Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

The story shows the frustrations and disappointments experienced by Alexander throughout the day. The detailed pictures help to start discussions about the many emotions shown by each character. This book helps the reader see what leads to a bad day as well as what Alexander could do differently to express his anger and disappointment..

By Judith Viorst

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6rp0SZX7lg>

**LET’S BEGIN!**Having a solid family routine is helpful in managing daily activities. The story of **Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day** provides an opportunity to talk about your family’s daily routine. Remember that routines help children to prepare, and help to decrease stress and frustration.

**Introduce the book** by engaging your child to look at the picture on the cover and take turns describing what they see in the picture. Tell your child that the boy’s name is Alexander and ask your child to imagine how Alexander might be feeling.

**Read the book** and take a few moments to talk about Alexander’s daily routine. Is it similar to your family routine? At each part of the day discuss what happened and how Alexander felt. Then ask what happened next?

**Explain to your child** that events and we all experience disappointments that make us stressed. For example, Alexander was disappointed to wake up and with gum in his hair, and his feelings of disappointment led him to think that his day was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. Alexander’s thoughts led him to feel sad and angry, which got his day off to a bad start! Continue this discussion by inviting your child to talk about a time they were sad or disappointed. Help your child with statements such as “I felt disappointed and angry when...”. Listen to your child’s responses with love. Allow your child to discuss times they were angry and to identify strategies to cope with anger.

**Next begin a conversation** about the times of day that are enjoyable by telling your child to express “I look forward to...” or “I feel happy and excited when...”. Let your child know that getting angry about frustrated will happen, and that family and friends can help with feeling better and being more positive. Think back to a time when you or your child were angry and managed the situation by asking for help or support. Is there a time in the past that seemed very hard, and you now find humorous? What helped change your thoughts about this event? Talk to your child about these strategies, and imagine different ways to cope with future frustrations.

**Alexander experienced a number of disappointments and frustrations throughout the story.** However, the problems he faced were short and part of daily disappointments.

**Family Time:**   
Support your child express a range of feelings and emotions by engaging in an energetic game of Blowing Feeling Bubbles. This game allows families a playful approach in expressing a variety of descriptive terms for different feelings and emotional states. After reviewing the book, all that is needed for this game is bubbling making solution, a bubble wand, and lots of deep breaths! Invite each member of the family to think of two feeling words in response to the following questions:

1. How did Alexander feel when he woke up with gum in his hair?
2. How did Alexander feel during carpool?
3. How did Alexander feel when he was left out of playing with friends?
4. How did Alexander feel when his mother forgot his dessert at lunch?
5. How did Alexander feel when the night-light burned out?

Begin the game by allowing one person to ask a feeling question while another person blows a full breath of bubbles.

**Final Activity-Fostering Teamwork and Cooperation:**   
Ways to talk to your child to encourage positive behaviors:

**OKAY: Prompting Questions**Are you ready to wake up?   
What do you want for breakfast?   
Why are you watching TV before school?   
Do you want a healthy snack?   
Are you sleepy and ready for bed?

**BETTER: Prompting Declarative Statements** Good morning, it is time to wake up.   
You have two options for breakfast today. Please get dressed so we will be on time.   
We have oranges and grapes for snacks.   
It is bedtime now, so let’s read a story.