

# Big Deal, Little Deal

(adapted from Ylvisaker, M., & Feeney, T. (2008))

This is an approach that introduces children to the concept of 'Big Deal, Little Deal.' It can be used when appropriate to help children distinguish what is important from what is not important. This might help children be less anxious about little deals and take big deals seriously.

The Big Deal little deal concept can be introduced to a class, small group or individual children. Introduce it at a time when the children are not upset / distressed so they can process it and reflect on it for use at another time.

## **BIG DEAL**

**A big deal can be something that:**

- you cannot get over quickly
- you cannot ignore
- affects your safety or other people's safety
- changes something important for a long time
- means you lose something you cannot get back

### **Some Examples of Big Deals**

- Your pet dies
- There is no food in your house for a week
- You fell and broke your leg
- Your house was broken into.
- A family member is very ill

## **Little Deal**

**A little deal can be something that**

- is mildly annoying
- you can ignore
- involved small change in plans
- does not really change anything important
- is a temporary problem
- you can put up with until you get what you really want

### **Examples of Little Deals**

- You forgot your homework
- You fell and scraped your knee
- Someone pushed in front of you in the line
- You didn't get invited to a party
- You had an argument with a friend

## **Words, Phrases and Questions for Big Deal Little Deal Discussion**

**Ask the child to identify / label the issue and ask :**

- Is this a big deal or a little deal?
- If child is unsure how to label the issue, scaffold their response
- Remember what we meant by big deal / Little deal?
- This is a little deal because it..... and you / we can.....
- When something is a big deal to the child, prompt them to problem solve.
- Can we make this big deal into a little deal? What if we.....?