Hampshire Virtual School: Adapted Emotion Coaching Scripts
– for young children and those with language/communication needs

Connect → Limit → Teach

Hampshire County Council Virtual School

Emotion Coaching Steps	Standard scripts	Reduced language scripts	Non-verbal/very low language prompts
Steps 1 and 2: Empathise, validate and label *e.g.* *"You wanted that… cross… that's hard… I'm here"*	**(Respond in the moment - commentary)** 'I see…' 'I hear….' 'Are you feeling..?' 'I imagine that feels…' **(Connect)** 'Tell me about that' 'What happened?' 'Oh no – I can see this is really hard for you' **(Empathise)** 'It's okay to be sad – your feelings are okay' 'I think you mean…' 'I've noticed that…' / 'You seem…' 'You didn't like that'	**(Respond in the moment - commentary)** *Label what you see/hear; *'Loud voice' 'Fast body' 'Big cry'* *Label suspected feeling: e.g. '*Bobby sad' 'Big feelings…sad'* 'Sad or angry?' **(Connect)** 'Show me' 'Tricky for you' 'I'm here' 'Stay with me' **(Empathise)** 'It's okay' / 'You're safe' 'You wanted…' 'Finished…cross' / 'No turn…sad'	*Label feeling using picture, symbol or gesture e.g. *'Sad'* (showing sad visual) *Choice of 2 using visuals: e.g. Show sad and angry visual, point and label; '*Bobby sad, Bobby angry?'* *Offer hug, hand on arm/back, sensory item. *Match child's body position, come alongside child. *Calm breathing/model using calming resources *Reduce talk, give time/pause
Step 3: Set limits (if needed and when calm enough) *e.g. "You're cross… I won't let you hit… gentle hands"*	'It's okay to feel angry but it's never okay to…' 'These are the rules that we have to follow, doing that is not okay' 'Even when we are annoyed, we can't behave like that because it's not safe' 'It's ok to feel sad. The problem is…'	'You're cross – I won't let you hit' 'Angry is okay – hitting not okay' 'Not for throwing' 'Chairs stay down' 'Kind hands' / 'Gentle hands' 'Not safe' 'Hands down'	*Block action gently (hand over hand, move object if appropriate) *Point + model action: "hands down" *Show "gentle" with touch *Move children/object to safe space *Use consistent gesture (e.g. stop hand signal ✋ or visual)
Step 4: Problem solving (when calm enough) *Keep it simple: Offer 1-2 choices + show what to do*	'Tell me what happened to make you feel this way' 'What can you do to solve the problem?' 'What could you do differently next time you feel this way' 'Let's take a look at some different choices' 'Is there anyone who could help you with this?' 'How can we resolve this?'	'Help' 'My turn' 'First calm… then snack.' 'Wait…then turn' 'Movement break' 'Next time…say 'stop'' 'This way' / 'Like this' *Adult-led, offer 1-2 choices; *'This or this?' 'Which one?' 'Cushion or chair?'*	*Offer concrete choices; real objects or visuals e.g. *'Cushion or chair?'* *Model physically, e.g. demonstrate or use hand over hand (if appropriate) *'This way' / 'Like this'* *Use gesture + consistent cues e.g. *'Stop', 'My turn, your turn'* *Adjust environment (quiet space, lights down, calming sensory input)

Keep language: 1–5 words, concrete not abstract, mostly statements, slow + calm tone, pause + wait, match with gesture/visual