

# Cultivating Emotional Intelligence in Kids

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# The goal

- **Dismissing parents** see children's emotions as unimportant and attempt to eliminate them quickly, often through the use of distraction.
- **Disapproving parents** see negative emotions as something to be squashed, usually through punishment.
- **Laissez-faire parents** accept all emotions from child, but fail to help the child solve problems or put limits on appropriate behaviors.
- **Emotion coaching parents** value negative emotions, are not impatient with a child's expression of them, and use emotional experience as an opportunity for bonding by offering guidance through labeling emotions and problem-solving the issue at hand.



# Before we talk about kids....

- What emotions did you see expressed in your family?
- Who was allowed to express different emotions?
- What happened when strong feelings of anger or sadness were expressed?
- How were problems solved?
- How do you see yourself following the same default patterns in your own life (that might also be reflected in your kids' management styles)?
- What would you like to see change for yourself?

# Identifying Emotions

- “I” Statements
- Accept that children will feel big feelings about things that we see as petty or small. But they are NOT small to them
- All emotions are acceptable, none are “good” or “bad”
- **“I FEEL... (STATE YOUR *EMOTION*) WHEN YOU....(DESCRIBE THEIR *BEHAVIOUR* OR UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS YOU FEEL THIS WAY) *BECAUSE I WANT/I NEED*... (EXPLAIN *WHY* THEIR BEHAVIOUR OR THE CONDITIONS LEADS YOU TO FEEL THIS WAY).**
- Identify the feeling(s) with words or emotional vocabulary sheets

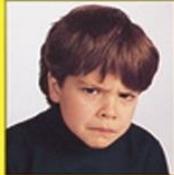
# Emotions



happy



sad



angry



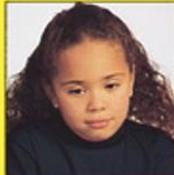
excited



afraid



shy



guilty



tired



jealous



loved



hopeful



bored



proud



sorry



embarrassed



surprised

## HOW DO I FEEL RIGHT NOW?





# Modeling & Describing

What do you do to cope with your emotions?  
How do you problem solve?

Demonstrating healthy coping as well as describing own problem solving to kids is the strongest way to help kids cultivate awareness and problem solving



# Other Activities

- Feeling charades
- Create your own pictures
- Write out emotions/situation, then once a solution or peace is felt, cut them up or throw them away
- Draw emotions
- Mandala
- Avoid “calm down” or “you shouldn’t feel that way”
- Read books or watch movies, stopping to ask what the child thinks the characters feel and think (there is a difference!)
- Work together to build a list of activities that help your specific child calm down. Post this in a place that is accessible to you both when you need to “take a break”.
- Exercise!

# Questions that encourage reflection and incorporation of emotions

- 1. What was the best thing that happened at school today? (What was the worst thing that happened at school today?)
- 2. **Tell me something that made you laugh today.**
- 3. If you could choose, who would you like to sit by in class? (Who would you NOT want to sit by in class? Why?)
- 4. Where is the coolest place at the school?
- 5. Tell me a weird word that you heard today. (Or something weird that someone said.)
- 6. If I called your teacher tonight, what would she tell me about you?
- 7. How did you help somebody today?
- 8. **How did somebody help you today?**
- 9. Tell me one thing that you learned today.
- 10. When were you the happiest today?
- 11. **When were you bored today?**
- 12. If an alien spaceship came to your class and beamed someone up, who would you want them to take?
- 13. Who would you like to play with at recess that you've never played with before?
- 14. Tell me something good that happened today.
- 15. What word did your teacher say most today?
- 16. What do you think you should do/learn more of at school?
- 17. What do you think you should do/learn less of at school?
- 18. Who in your class do you think you could be nicer to?
- 19. Where do you play the most at recess?
- 20. Who is the funniest person in your class? Why is he/she so funny?
- 21. What was your favorite part of lunch?
- 22. If you got to be the teacher tomorrow, what would you do?
- 23. **Is there anyone in your class who needs a time-out?**
- 24. If you could switch seats with anyone in the class, who would you trade with? Why?
- 25. Tell me about three different times you used your pencil today at school.

# Empathy building

- Do not solve the problem for your child!
- Describe what you hear them saying: the situation, thoughts, and feelings
- Let them know they are not alone (hold, hug, words)
- Share a similar situation you've been in if it seems appropriate

## ALTERNATIVES TO THE PHRASE



## "CALM DOWN"

1. I SEE THAT YOU ARE HAVING A DIFFICULT TIME, LET ME HELP YOU.

2. TAKE A DEEP BREATH.

3. IF YOU NEED TO HIT SOMETHING, HIT THIS PILLOW.

4. THAT CAN BE SO FRUSTRATING, LET'S FIGURE THIS OUT TOGETHER.

5. I SEE THAT YOU ARE MAD, HOW DOES THAT FEEL IN YOUR BODY?

6. COUNT TO 10.

7. WANT TO SQUEEZE MY HAND?

8. HOW ABOUT A BIG HUG.

9. LET'S FOCUS ON FIXING THE PROBLEM TOGETHER.

10. IF YOU ARE FEELING SAD, YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT IT.

Click through to see  
more alternatives

-- AND--

get your Action Plan  
for how to use them!



# 5 Steps to Managing Big Emotions



**HELPING CHILDREN LEARN TO COPE**  
*printable poster*



# Empathy Bingo

# Scenario

- Eric (age 10) comes home from school, quieter than normal, and retreats to his room. When asked if he is okay, he says that while playing basketball at recess, there were some kids stealing the ball and playing unfair. He gets more animated and frustrated while telling the story, saying that the other kids were not listening to or following the rules.

# Scenario

- Veronica, 15 years old, wakes up on a Sunday morning and does not want to go to church. She drags her feet getting ready, and begins making remarks like “church is boring” and “I hate it there”.

# Scenario

- Sarah, age 5, is told that her friend is not able to come for the playdate that they have planned for a couple weeks. She bursts into tears, throws herself on the floor, and says, “we NEVER get to play!”