

Becoming an Emotion Coach

Emotion Coaching begins by recognizing feelings. Many parents are able to see the positive emotions a child expresses, but drawing close to a child who is angry or sad can take some practice. While it takes effort to teach your child about feelings and appropriate behaviors, it is time well spent. Your relationship with your child will be stronger and your child will be more prepared for the challenges life can bring.



Tune into feelings

- Understand that emotions are a natural and valuable part of life.
- Pay attention to your own emotions, from happiness to sadness to anger.
- Observe, listen, and learn how your child expresses different emotions. Watch for changes in facial expressions, body language, posture, and tone of voice.

Connect with your child

- Pay close attention to a child's emotions. Do not dismiss or avoid them.
- Recognize feelings and encourage your child to talk about his or her emotions.
 - Act early before strong emotions escalate into problem behavior.

Listen to your child and label emotions

Respect your child's feelings by taking time to listen carefully.

- Take your child's emotions seriously. Avoid judging or criticizing your child's emotions.
- Show your child that you want to hear about what he or she is feeling.
- Label the feelings your child is experiencing instead of telling your child how he or she should feel.
- Set a good example by naming your own emotions and talking about them.
- Help your child build a vocabulary for different feelings.

Accept emotions, while also guiding child's behavior.

- Children need structure to help guide their behavior.
- The key is to be kind with your words and body language and firm in your action
 - *You are sad that we are leaving the park. Me too! I wish we could stay all day (while you leave)*

Find solutions together

When you are both calm, explore solutions together.

- Later, when you are both calm, reflect on your own and your child's feelings.
- Brainstorm possible solutions together.
- Always acknowledge your own role in the difficulty, if relevant.