

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage our emotions as well as the emotions of others. Developing emotional intelligence in children is essential for building healthy relationships, navigating social situations, and coping with life's challenges.

WHY IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IMPORTANT?

A strong emotional intelligence foundation helps children develop empathy, self-awareness, and effective communication skills. It also plays a crucial role in their mental health, academic performance, and future success in both personal and professional settings.

Here is a list of simple emotion words that you can use with children to help them express and understand their feelings:

- ★ Happy
- ★ Sad

- ★ Angry
- ★ Frustrated
- ★ Excited
- ★ Worried
- ★ Afraid
- ★ Proud
- ★ Surprised
- ★ Confused
- ★ Anxious
- ★ Curious
- ★ Disappointed
- ★ Grateful
- ★ Guilty
- ★ Jealous
- ★ Lonely
- ★ Embarrassed
- ★ Content
- ★ Amused
- ★ Tired
- ★ Bored
- ★ Nervous
- ★ Calm
- ★ Relieved

These emotion words are suitable for children and can help them better articulate and understand their feelings. As they grow older and develop a more extensive vocabulary, you can introduce

more complex emotion words to further enhance their emotional intelligence.

SIMPLE ACTION STEPS TO ENCOURAGE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- Encourage your child to express their emotions and feelings openly by asking them how they feel in different situations, such as after watching a movie, playing with friends, or experiencing a disappointment. Offer them a list of emotion words (happy, sad, angry, frustrated, etc.) to help them better articulate their feelings.
- Validate their emotions by empathizing with their feelings and avoiding phrases like "Don't be sad" or "There's no reason to be angry." Instead, say something like, "I can understand why you're feeling sad about that" or "It's okay to be angry when something doesn't go your way."
- Discuss various emotions and feelings in books, movies, or everyday situations. For example, if you're reading a story together, pause and ask your child how they think the characters feel and why they might feel that way.
- Model empathy and emotional regulation in your own behavior. When you're upset or frustrated, explain your emotions to your child and demonstrate healthy coping strategies like taking deep breaths or stepping away from a situation to calm down.

Quick Small Step: Share a daily "emotions check-in" with your child, asking them to express one emotion they experienced during the day and why they felt that way.

REAL LIFE EXAMPLE OF FOSTERING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN CHILDREN

Meet Sarah, a busy mother of two who was struggling to help her 5-year-old son, Liam, manage his emotions. Liam would often have emotional outbursts, and Sarah felt unsure of how to support him in navigating his feelings.

Sarah decided to implement one of the small steps suggested in the emotional intelligence section to foster Liam's emotional intelligence. She began using emotion words in her daily conversations with Liam to help him identify and express his feelings more effectively.

One day, when Liam was upset after a disagreement with his older sister, Sarah noticed a perfect opportunity to apply this technique. Instead of dismissing his feelings or trying to distract him, she sat down with Liam when he was calmer and asked, "Can you tell me how you're feeling right now?"

Liam hesitated but eventually replied, "I'm mad."

Sarah gently encouraged him to dig deeper, asking, "Can you tell me more about why you're feeling mad?"

As they continued their conversation, Sarah introduced new emotion words, such as "frustrated," "disappointed," and "hurt," helping Liam better understand and articulate the complex emotions he was experiencing. By the end of their talk, Liam was able to express that he felt hurt and left out when his sister didn't want to play with him.

This small step had a profound impact on both Liam and Sarah. Liam began to feel more understood and supported, while Sarah gained the confidence to help her son navigate his emotions more effectively. Over time, as they continued to use emotion words in their daily conversations, Liam's emotional outbursts became less frequent, and he developed a greater understanding of his feelings and those of others around him. Sarah was able to foster emotional intelligence in her son, setting him up for greater success in his relationships, self-awareness, and emotional well-being.

KEY SMALL STEPS TO TAKE FOR BIG IMPACT ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- ☐ Ask your child how they feel in various situations and offer emotion words.
- ☐ Validate and empathize with their emotions.
- ☐ Discuss emotions in stories, movies, and everyday situations.
- ☐ Model empathy and emotional regulation in your behavior.
- ☐ Daily emotions check-in.