



Preparing. Protecting. Empowering.

Emotional Intelligence

Understanding emotions in yourself and others is important for managing relationships, handling frustration, achieving goals, showing self-control, and communicating well. When parents understand the importance of emotions, they:

- *connect with their children,*
- *are aware of what their children are going through, and*
- *effectively handle difficult behavior.*

Taken together, these skills contribute to a person's emotional intelligence. Research shows a strong connection between emotional intelligence and a person's success in school, work, and life (Cherniss, 2000). For example, Lopes et al. (2006) found that higher emotional intelligence was related to higher job performance and a better attitude towards work overall.

Tips for Raising Emotionally Intelligent Kids

1. Be sensitive to your child's emotions. Observe your child and ask how he or she is feeling.
2. Help your child find words to name the emotion he or she is feeling. Being aware of your own emotions is helpful because your child will look to you for cues when they are unsure about how to feel about something.
3. Listen empathetically, by putting yourself in their place, to understand how your child is feeling. Let him or her know it is ok to feel happy, sad, angry, and afraid.
4. Teach your children that even though it is ok to feel frustrated or angry, it is not ok to act out.
5. If the emotion your child is experiencing is not a pleasant one, help him or her find ways to feel better.

Activity: Emotion Detective

Emotion Detective is a fun guessing game to practice expressing and recognizing emotions.

1. Review and practice the attached *Emotions Chart* with your child.
2. Once you have gone over the emotions, choose an emotion from the list.
3. Show the emotion (without using words) while your child guesses.
4. Switch roles. Start with the following basic emotions: happy, sad, angry, afraid, and surprised.
5. Once your child has mastered the basic emotions, try more complex emotions such as frustrated, and excited.

References

- Gottman, J., & DeClaire, J. (1997). *Raising an emotionally intelligent child: The heart of parenting*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.
- Lopes, P. N., Grewal, D., Kadis, J., Gall, M., & Salovey, P. (2006). Evidence that emotional intelligence is related to job performance and affect and attitudes at work. *Psicothema*, 18(132-138).
- Cherniss, C. (2000). Emotional intelligence: What it is and why it matters Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, New Orleans, LA. www.eiconsortium.org