



ALL ABOUT FEELINGS

Welcome to the wondrous world of kids' feelings!

Hello, parents!

I believe one of the most important jobs we have as moms and dads is to help our children understand their emotions.

The ability to recognize, understand and manage one's emotions is known as emotional intelligence, or EQ. With EQ skills, kids can explain what they're feeling, learn to express feelings appropriately, and recognize those feelings in others. A child with a strong EQ is better equipped to develop positive relationships, show empathy for others, and have higher self-esteem.

Decades of research shows that with strong EQ skills, children are more likely to do well socially, academically, psychologically, and even physically.* But, surprisingly, teachers report that more than 30% of children entering kindergarten lack the social and emotions skills to be successful.*

So it's never too early to begin teaching children about feelings, giving them the emotional building blocks they'll need as they navigate their ever-changing world.

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Parenting and child development expert



ANGRY

Anger can be one of the hardest emotions for parents to face—especially when it's accompanied by a full-scale meltdown!

It's important to remember that anger is a perfectly natural emotion, and it serves an important function: It tells the child that they need to act in order to stop whatever caused them to feel angry, or to right a wrong.

Anger signals that something has happened that they do not want, do not like or that they think is unfair. The physiological changes that accompany the experience of feeling anger give children the energy to act.

Children can learn to express their anger in socially appropriate and constructive ways – ways that help them to solve the problem that caused the anger and maintains positive relationships.

As parents, we can validate their feelings so children feel they are being understood. Tell your child it's okay to feel angry, but it's not okay to lash out at people around them and it's never okay to hit, kick or bite!



Learn these feelings words:

Angry
Mad
Frustrated
Annoyed
Cranky
Irritated
Grumpy
Mean
Upset

strategies

The first step is to help your child reduce the feelings of anger so they can find a solution to what caused those feelings in the first place.

Learn calming techniques

Help your child 'let out' the energy that accompanies the feeling of anger—by taking a deep breath or closing their eyes for a few minutes, for example.

Talk about it!

Encourage your child to put into words what is making them feel that way. Lead by example, using a calm voice to help soothe the situation.

Now, problem solve!

Encourage your child to think about the situation from the other's perspective or figure out how things could be done differently next time to avoid getting angry.





HAPPY

Learn These Feelings words:

Happy
Excited
Silly
Surprised
Friendly
Cheerful
Jolly
Delighted
Glad

What parent hasn't said, "I just want my child to be happy"? In an ideal world, this would be the emotion we'd see most often on our kids' faces.

Happiness is a positive state of being often experienced after achieving a goal or mastering something. These feelings of accomplishment inspire optimism and creative thinking, and help grow a child's problem-solving ability. Happy kids are more open to new experiences and may have more energy and enthusiasm.

Joyful feelings are often contagious. When children express happiness, those around them 'catch' the emotion and feel happy as well. Children that express their happiness with a full-face smile communicate to others around them that they are approachable and friendly - which serves to promote and strengthen their social connections.

strategies

Feeling happy is like a vitamin that wards off other negative feelings, such as sadness or anger.

Find your friends and play!

Surrounding yourself with people that you like and engaging in physical play is one of the best ways to create and enhance feelings of happiness.

Do something nice for someone.

If we can make someone else feel good, that gives us a sense of well-being, too. Happiness is even better when it's doubled!

Think happy thoughts!

Picture yourself in a place that makes you happy or doing an activity you love or with people who make you laugh.



AFRAID



Learn These Feelings words:

Afraid
Scared
Frightened
Shaky
Startled
Fearful
Anxious
Timid
Worried

A small child can easily feel vulnerable in the big world, so it's not surprising that there are many childhood fears to face: bugs, thunderstorms, things that go bump in the night.

The threat can be real or imaginary, but the physical and psychological effects on the child are the same: they may tremble, feel helpless, freeze up, or imagine a worst-case scenario.

Sometimes when young children show fear, it can signal that they are becoming more aware of the world around them. And fear can actually lead to positive action: directing a child to show caution where needed.

You don't want children's fears to stop them from doing things they need or want to do, whether it's visiting the dentist or enjoying a sleepover at a friend's house. It's important to help them learn how to conquer these worries.

strategies

Even small children can learn to manage their fears. It starts by calming yourself down, which reduces the feeling of stress.

Let's investigate!

Help your child find out what's causing the fear. For example, that scary noise outside their window is just a tree branch moving in the wind.

Read about it!

Read a book about an activity that is making your child anxious, such as the first day of school, so they know what to expect.

use self-talk

Reinforce positive thinking by speaking affirming phrases to yourself—out loud! "I'm not afraid!" or "I can do it!" or "Be brave!"



LOVING

What more important role do we have as parents than to love our children and encourage them to be loving toward others?

Love is a “pro-social” emotion that helps children create and foster positive relationships and can lead to an overall sense of happiness and contentment. As parents, we want to foster and validate these positive emotions.

That begins with what for most parents is the most natural thing in the world: hugging, kissing, and cuddling your kids! Studies have shown that infants and children are more likely to thrive when they receive plenty of physical affection. So keep the hugs coming!

Being kind and considerate of others is another way we teach our children to show love. Empathy is a key element of emotional intelligence and a much-needed and valuable skill to develop and nurture. Be a role model for your children by taking time to help family, friends or neighbors to show how much you care.



Learn These Feelings words:

Loving
Kind
Friendly
Warm
Snuggly
Affectionate
Calm
Proud
Helpful

strategies

Unlike other emotions such as anger or fear that need “managing,” loving feelings just need a warm environment in which to grow.

Reinforce it

At bedtime, have your child send out “good-night” messages to all the people they love, mentioning each by name.

share it

Share a cuddle to cheer someone up if they’re feeling sad.

Act on it

Build empathy skills with simple acts of kindness. Volunteer to help a sibling clean up their room, join someone who’s alone at the playground, or share toys with a classmate.



SAD

As parents, we do everything in our power to prevent our children from being hurt or feeling sad—yet one of the most essential lessons we can teach them is that it’s completely normal to feel sad sometimes.

Expressing unhappiness can actually serve an important purpose: It lets others know the child needs, or communicates the loss of something meaningful to them. Lots of things can cause a child to feel down—misplacing a favorite toy, an argument with a friend, or experiencing a disappointment, as when a much-anticipated outing is canceled.

Kids who are sad may have a negative outlook and want to withdraw from social interactions. Sadness can even affect children physically, causing them to feel tired or listless.

Children (boys included, of course) should know that it’s okay to cry when they’re sad. But they should also be encouraged to tell someone what’s going on inside—talking about it can help them with their feelings. The key is to help children understand what they’re feeling and why and what they can do when they’re feeling down.



Learn These Feelings words:

Sad
Unhappy
Blue
Worried
Disappointed
Jealous
Lonely
Sorry
Discouraged

If you're feeling sad,
unhappy or blue,
talking to a friend
is a good thing to do!



STRATEGIES

While you never want to tell a sad child to simply, “Cheer up!” or “Get over it!”, you do want to help them reduce the sadness they’re feeling. Getting a little distance from the emotion can make it easier to talk about the cause of the sadness.

Get a hug from someone you love.

Being with friends is one of the most effective ways to reduce sadness.

Do something positive.

Search for the item you lost, draw a picture of the loved one you miss, or engage in an activity that will generate positive energy – like a trip to the park.

Look on the bright side!

Encourage them to think about things in a different way—“I’m sad about the toy I lost, but look at all these other toys I still have.”

Learning about feelings can be fun!

color MY MOODS

Drawing is an effective outlet to help your child express their emotions.

Encourage your child to draw a picture of how they're feeling (yellow for happy; blue for sad; red for angry; green for afraid; pink for loving).



MOODS-on-a-stick

Create hand-held "mood masks" by gluing photos or drawings of faces onto popsicle sticks.

Take turns acting out the different moods they represent.



Picture This!

Flip through magazines with your child and help them pick out pictures of people expressing different emotions.

Talk about why the person in the photo might be feeling that way.



I created The Moodsters – five lovable little mood detectives: Coz, Snorf, Razzy, Quigly, and Lolly – to help children learn the fundamentals of feelings.

The Moodsters use their sleuthing skills to solve the mysteries of feelings while teaching kids simple EQ strategies to handle the everyday challenges of growing up!

GUIDELINES FOR GROWNUPS!

- 🔍 Teach children a vocabulary for emotions so they have names for the feelings they are experiencing.
- 🔍 Avoid telling your child how to feel.
- 🔍 Use empathetic listening; validate kids' feelings without minimizing their emotions. Remember, all feelings are okay.
- 🔍 Be a role model in how you express your feelings. Model the behavior you would like to see in your children.

www.themoodsters.com
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