

Helping Children Handle their Emotions



Even very small people, have very big feelings! But we have to learn how to manage these big feelings. And that is not easy.

One of our most important jobs as a parent is to help our children develop the skills they need to understand and appropriately express their emotions. The sooner we start teaching children these skills, the better!



1. Give feelings a name. Help your child develop a “feelings vocabulary”. Help your child recognize what he or she is feeling in his body. As your child’s capacity to use words grows, help her or him to use these feelings words.



2. Acknowledge and accept your child’s feelings. It is important to do this with the ones you are comfortable with (such as happy or loving) as well as the ones you are uncomfortable with (such as anger or frustration).

3. Provide comfort and soothing to your child. Big emotions are overwhelming and when we comfort and soothe our children, this allows them to be more in control of their behaviour.

4. Practice good calming and soothing skills for yourself. The calmer you are, the calmer your child will be!



5. Continue to set your limits, even through your child’s distress. Acknowledge their feelings, comfort them, set the limit and provide a more acceptable way to behave.

6. Connect with your child—follow up with some loving and positive words. Even if the situation has not gone well, be sure to reassure your child of your love and tell him or her that you know things will go better next time. Maybe make a plan for how you will both handle this kind of situation the next time.



7. BE PATIENT. This is a skill they are learning and it takes time and practice to get good at it. Be willing to stick at it. Believe in yourself and your child....you will get there!