

A WORLD OF EMOTIONS

WORKSHOP
GUIDE

Help your kid to understand and manage their emotions by:



TALKING ABOUT CHARACTER'S EMOTIONS FOUND IN BOOKS, TV SHOWS OR FILMS

TEACH YOUR CHILD WAYS TO CALM DOWN FROM STRONG EMOTIONS LIKE COUNTING TO 10 OR TAKING 5 DEEP BREATHS.

WORK WITH YOUR CHILD ON A LIST OF THINGS THEY COULD DO WHEN THEY NOTICE STRONG EMOTIONS BUILDING UP, LIKE GOING FOR A RUN, LISTENING TO LOUD MUSIC ON THEIR HEADPHONES, OR CUDDLING THE DOG.

SHOWING YOUR CHILD HOW YOU RECOGNISE YOUR EMOTIONS. E.G. 'WHEN I STOOD ON THAT LEGO, I SHOUTED REALLY LOUDLY. DOES THAT HAPPEN TO YOU WHEN YOU FEEL ANGRY?'

HELP YOUR CHILD WORK OUT HOW THEIR BODY FEELS WHEN THEY'RE EXPERIENCING AN EMOTION. FOR EXAMPLE, 'YOU LOOK NERVOUS. HAVE YOU GOT BUTTERFLIES IN YOUR TUMMY?'

SUGGEST WAYS TO REACT TO STRONG EMOTIONS - FOR EXAMPLE, ASK FOR A HUG WHEN YOU'RE SAD, OR SQUEEZE YOUR CUSHION REALLY HARD WHEN YOU'RE ANGRY.

WHEN YOUR KID IS VERY UPSET THEY MIGHT SHOUT, HIT THINGS OR BEHAVE IN OTHER INAPPROPRIATE WAYS. WHEN CALM, HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THAT STRONG EMOTIONS ARE OK, BUT BEHAVIOUR LIKE SHOUTING AND HITTING ISN'T.

HELP YOUR CHILD NOTICE EARLY BEHAVIOUR SIGNS OF STRONG EMOTIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, 'YOU'RE STARTING TO HIT THAT KEYBOARD A BIT HARD. DO YOU NEED TO STOP AND HAVE A BREAK?'

REMEMBER TO TALK BEFORE OR AFTER THE EMOTION HAS PASSED.

HELPING CHILDREN CALM DOWN: FIVE STEPS

TIP # 1

NOTICE AND IDENTIFY THE EMOTION

Pay attention to what your child's behaviour is telling you about their feelings before you do or say anything else. Watch their body language and listen to what they are saying.

TIP # 2

NAME AND CONNECT THE EMOTION

Label the emotion and connect it with the event. This teaches your child to understand what they are feeling and why, and that you understand how they feel and that this emotion is OK, even if their behaviour isn't OK. Label the emotion rather than ask about it. 'You seem really angry' rather than 'Are you feeling angry?'

TIP # 3

PAUSE AND SAY NOTHING

Pausing and saying nothing for a few seconds gives your child time to take in what you've just said. They might solve the problem for themselves. It's hard not to jump in and start talking. You might find it helps to count slowly to five in your head while you wait.

TIP # 4

SUPPORT YOUR CHILD WHILE THEY CALM DOWN

If your child is very upset, they might take more time to get their emotions under control. For example, they might keep shouting or they might shut themselves in their room. Here are some things to try if your child needs longer to calm down:

Make sure that they're safe and you're safe.

Stay calm and close to your child.

Go back to step 1 – for example, 'I can see you're really furious about this'.

Wait for the strong emotion to pass. Be patient. Your child is more likely to calm down if you stay calm and accept their emotions.

Give your child some space if they want it but let them know you're close by – for example, 'I'm just going to sit outside your door'.

If your child leaves the house, match your response to your child's age and maturity. For example, you could follow them, let them 'walk it off' for a few minutes then call them, or just wait for them to come back.

It's important to let your child know that it's OK to feel strong emotions. When your child is calm, you might need to help your child understand the difference between the emotion and the behaviour. For example, 'It's OK to feel frustrated and disappointed. But it wasn't OK to shout at me and kick the wall'.

TIP # 5

ADDRESS THE BEHAVIOUR OR SOLVE THE PROBLEM

When your child is calm you can help them change a behaviour you don't like. For example, you might need to:

Suggest some other ways to react to strong emotions – for example 'If you feel angry, go into your room and squeeze your pillow hard. Come back when you're calm'

Set some limits – for example, 'I know you were angry, but hitting is never OK. You'll have to miss the party tomorrow'.

Suggest some solutions for the problem – for example, 'You could ask for your toy back'

Reassure or comfort your child – for example, 'That was a scary thing that happened' or 'I'm sorry to see you so sad. Let's have a hug'

If your child is upset about a rule that you won't or can't change, acknowledge your child's emotions but avoid a debate. For example, 'I know you're angry because you can't go to that party. But we're not comfortable with you attending parties where there's no adult supervision'.

If your child is behaving in physically or verbally harmful ways, let them know this behaviour is unacceptable. For example, 'It's not OK to speak to me like that', or 'We'll have to patch and pain that hole in the plaster this weekend. The cost of the materials will come out of your pocket money'.

TODDLERS: TIME IN WHEN THEY TANTRUM

- Squat down next to your child. Gently put an arm around your child, or rest your hand on your child's shoulder.
- Take your child somewhere quiet, if you can.
- Tell your child you understand. For example, 'I know you really want cake, and you're angry because today's not a cake day'.
- Hug your child or hold your child on your lap if they want you to.
- Firmly but gently stop your child from hurting other people or breaking things.
- After children have calmed down talk about the behaviour 'Did you throw the puzzle because you were angry when it wouldn't fit? What else could you have done?'

RUPTURE AND REPAIR

When you lose your mind and have a meltdown with your kid. It is okay for our children to learn that grownups don't always get it right, and what is most important is that when ruptures happen, they need to be repaired.

A repair is when you acknowledge the rupture to your child. A repair might be 'I really shouted. I am sorry for scaring you. I don't want to raise my voice at you, next time I will take some deep breaths. I love you.'

If you are struggling, contact Maggie's for free psychological support.