

Developing Child's Emotional Skills through Play



Emotional Skills Include:

- Noticing and identifying different emotions
- Talking about and expressing your own emotions
- Regulating your own emotions
- Understanding other people's emotions



All emotions are allowed.

A child can practice emotional skills together with an adult through conversation, play, and following the adult's example.

Parents Supporting Children's Emotional Skills

Children practice regulating emotions with the help of parents.

The child needs a safe parent who nurtures and comforts.

It is important that the parent remains calm even in difficult situations. The child follows the parent's reactions and learns from them.



The parent's positive facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, and touch are important. Then a child feels that the parent understands his/her feelings. The parent helps the child to name different feelings and understand them.

Babies (0-1 yrs)

Learning to regulate emotions begins as a baby by interacting with parents. When a baby feels safe and parents pay attention to his/her needs, the baby learns to trust other people and to express his/her emotions more easily later in life.

A newborn baby communicates by crying. It is important for a parent to respond to baby's cry.



A Baby Learns from Early Interaction:

- ❖ What am I like?
- ❖ What are other people like?
- ❖ How do other people treat me?
- ❖ How are my initiatives responded to?

Interaction with a Baby

"You are sad. Don't worry,
I am here for you."



Comforting baby creates a sense of security and supports emotional regulation. If the baby is crying or restless, hold the baby in your arms and comfort him/her. Use a calm and soft voice.

Sound and Facial Play

Helps babies to recognize their own emotions and facial expressions.

1. Be with your baby so that you are looking at each other.
2. Show your baby different facial expressions. Name them aloud.
3. If your baby imitates the facial expressions, encourage him/her.

"You are smiling! You
are happy!"



Toddlers (1-3 yrs)

- It is common for a child's emotions to change quickly and for the child to express them strongly.
- A child may get angry when a parent sets limits. He /she may also get frustrated if his/her skills are not yet sufficient and he/she fails at something.
- Child's strong emotions also challenge the parent.
- It is important for the parent to understand the child's behavior and feelings.

- ❖ Help your child to regulate his/her emotions and disappointments.
- ❖ Explain to your child why something is forbidden.
- ❖ Be calm and firm in setting boundaries.
- ❖ Hold the child in your arms. It calms he/she down and makes he/she feel important even when he/she is angry.



Interaction with Toddlers



Reading

1. Read books to your child that show different emotions.
2. Use gestures and facial expressions while reading.
3. Talk to your child about what different emotions mean.

Emotional Images

1. Look at pictures and images together that show different emotions.
2. Ask your child what emotion it is.
3. Help your child to name emotions.



Children in Playing Age (3-6 yrs)

Children's shared play teach interaction and emotional skills. While playing children practice taking turns and sharing toys. They learn to be considerate of others.



Children's play also involves conflicts and strong emotions. In this case, children need adult's support and guidance.

Children have a vivid imagination and therefore they may also have imaginary friends.

Interaction with a Child in Playing Age

Role Plays

1. A child plays doctor and a parent is the patient. How does a patient feel when they are nervous about going to the doctor? What about when they are scared about getting vaccinated? What other emotions can be associated with a visit to the doctor?

2. Let's play with stuffed animals. They are going to daycare. One of them is happy, the other is sad, and the third one is angry. What causes these different emotions? How can stuffed animals help regulate emotions?



Drawing Emotions

Let's paint with watercolors or draw with colored pencils different emotions. What emotion do you want to paint or draw? What does this emotion look like? What color is it?

Parent's Memory List:

1. Name emotions aloud.
2. Accept all emotions - also the unpleasant ones.
3. Be calm - a child watches how you react.
4. Be physically present - touching and eye contact are important.
5. Repeat - learning takes time.





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