

EMOTION REGULATION

Helping kids identify and express feelings

Kids will experience the same complex feelings that adults do.

Unlike adults, kids do not have the words to talk about their feelings; they communicate in different ways. Kids will use facial expressions, body language, behaviour and play. They might not always express their feelings in appropriate ways.

Kids need social interactions and positive relationships with important adults to learn how to identify, express and manage their emotions. As a parent or carer, you have a role to play in helping kids develop these skills.

Help children with their emotional skills

TUNE INTO CUES

Children can give clues to their feelings through body language, what they are saying and their behaviour.

IDENTIFY FEELINGS IN OTHERS

Ask children to identify how another person is feeling. Read books and highlight facial expressions. Watch movies and shows that highlight different situations and discuss how people are feeling.

BEHIND EVERY BEHAVIOUR IS A FEELING

If you can understand why they are showing a certain behaviour, you can help children find better ways to express that feeling.

ROLE MODEL

Show children and identify how you feel in different situations. Show them appropriate ways to express different feelings.

NAME THE FEELING

Labelling the feelings is the first step in being able to identify them. It allows children to develop their emotional vocabulary.

ENCOURAGE WITH PRAISE

Praise children when they talk about their feelings or express them in appropriate ways. It shows these feelings are normal and reinforces appropriate behaviours.

LISTEN

Do not make the bad feelings go away. Support children to identify these feelings. Minimising or dismissing feelings can suggest these feelings are wrong.

If a child needs extra support



1800 55 1800

A Kids Helpline counsellor can be reached via phone, Webchat or email.

Act on your feelings

If children don't have the words to express their feelings, they might act out these feelings in problematic ways.

Child might throw a toy or hit when feeling anger or frustration. They could struggle to calm down after an exciting day. This can be a learning opportunity to teach positive, appropriate ways to express feelings.

Deep breaths.	Walking away and having some time out.	Taking time to relax before trying again.
Saying what is felt, not acting it out.	Spending time with a loved one or asking for a hug.	Asking for help.
Finding different ways to complete a task.	Trying to solve problems with words.	Talking through the situation with adults.
Describing what is happening in the body.		

To access this information in Chinese, Arabic, Vietnamese, Italian or Greek, visit:

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents/issues/helping-kids-identify-and-express-feelings>

Another great website you can visit to get more information is:

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/development/toddlers-social-emotional-development/understanding-managing-emotions-children-teenagers>

Support services



<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>



<https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/>



<https://headspace.org.au/>

