

Help Children Express Themselves

Emotional literacy is the ability to understand, express and cope with emotions.

It is a skill that children will develop as they grow and can be nurtured throughout childhood with a little help from us all.

As your child grows, encourage them to express their emotions in a positive way. Try asking questions like 'How can you let me know you're angry without hitting?' or 'Can you think of a different way to let me know you're frustrated?'

For older children, talk to them about how to handle emotions. Help them see why they are feeling a certain way.

How can I help my child deal with their emotions?

When children are born, according to <https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk>, they already have emotional reactions e.g. they can cry in response to frustration, hunger and pain. As they grow and learn, they begin to experience other emotions. It can be difficult for them to understand and process their feelings at first.

Give them tools to process emotions

It can take some time for your child to learn how to deal with their emotions.

- You can help them to understand, express and cope with emotions from a [young age](#).*
- Try to be a role model for them. Think about how you handle your emotions and be aware of what your child sees you do.*
- Help them identify their emotions. They may not know how to spot them at first.*
- Set aside 'worry time'. This could be 15 minutes a day for your child to talk about anything that is bothering them.*

Help them manage difficult feelings

- Teach them how to use the [five-step problem solving tool](#). Prompt them to find the solutions rather than solving everything for them. This will help them develop and manage their feelings.*
- Teach them [breathing exercises to soothe stressful situations](#).*

- Help them choose something that can distract them when they feel bad.
- Try activities to help with emotions like [anxious feelings, stress and loneliness.](#)

Talk about emotions

Allow your child to be honest with you about how they feel. Listen to them when they tell you what they think and why they are acting in a certain way.

If your child has had a tantrum or outburst, try talking to them once they are calm. This may be the next day, and that is OK.

- Bring up the reaction by recognising what started it and how they might have felt.
- Try to show that you understand their feelings.
- Tell them it's OK to have those feelings, but that they need to express them in an appropriate way. For example, 'It's OK to feel disappointed and upset, but it's not OK to throw things at people.'
- Talk about how they might handle their emotions in the future.

Sometimes a child may have a meltdown because they feel overloaded, and these are different to tantrums.

Remember your child may be more emotional during the school holidays. Take time to try out some of these strategies and make sure you actively note the difference it has made.

Have a lovely Easter and thank you for



working together to keep our children safe and happy.