



Emotionally Intelligent Children



Children need to master their emotions to succeed in school and in life. In fact, emotional intelligence, or E.Q., has proven to be a stronger indicator of life success than I.Q. Children who have mastered their emotions demonstrate increased self-confidence, greater physical health, better performance in school, and healthier social relationships. Parents can support children's E.Q. development by becoming an "emotion coach" and following these steps:

Be aware of a child's emotions.

When children get angry or upset over an issue that seems minor, put yourself in their shoes and see the world from their perspective.

Recognize emotional expression as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching.

A child needs his parents most when he is sad or angry or afraid. Acknowledge feelings, talk about them and label them. As your child reveals her feelings, reflect back what you hear and notice. Assure your child that you think her feelings are valid.

Label emotions in words a child can understand.

Providing words can help children transform a scary, uncomfortable feeling into something that is a normal part of everyday life. Anger, sadness, and fear become experiences everybody has and can handle.

Help a child come up with an appropriate way to solve a problem or deal with an upsetting situation.

This process can include setting limits on inappropriate behavior, identifying goals or what the child wants to accomplish related to the problem at hand, thinking of possible solutions, evaluating those solutions based on your family's values, and helping your child choose a solution.

By becoming your child's emotion coach, you and your child will become more aware of feelings and more willing to express them.

Source: "Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child," by John Gottman, Ph.D.

— EVERYDAY —

Parent to Parent



Everyday Parent to Parent Forum is a bulletin board for Minnesota parents to ask questions or to share what they have learned. Join the discussion forum at www.MNParentsKnow.info.

Responsive Parenting

Everything you do with your infant matters. Responsive parenting is learning that as you respond to your baby's needs, you are teaching him how to ask for and receive help and how to calm and regulate himself. Your sensitive response also gives your baby a clear message that he is important and that he can trust you to be there when he needs you.

In the first year of life, don't worry about spoiling your infant. Instead, be intentional. Pause and allow yourself to think about what she may need. For example, when your baby stirs or when you hear her in the night, listen and give yourself a chance to get a "feel" for what's next. Babies stir and/or awaken briefly a number of times each night. Sometimes your baby may need to be changed or fed, repositioned or re-covered. Sometimes your baby will settle and go back to sleep on her own. And, sometimes, as she is learning the day and night cycle she may awaken and just need to be close to you.

Babies thrive on routine. The exact time is not as important as the over and over and over again that babies need to learn in order to trust that their needs will be met. Responsive parenting is learning your baby's favorites.

Each baby arrives with his own pre-disposition and temperament, and he will let you know what he likes best.

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When you figure out what comforts and settles your baby, respond in the same way each time. Responsive parenting also means telling other adults who share in loving and caring for your baby, what his preferences are, what he likes and dislikes. Responsive parenting ensures that your baby gets the message that he is in a safe place and that he can count on getting his needs met.

The first year of life is a big investment. It is the investment of time. It is the holding, cuddling, rocking, singing, talking, rhyming year. It is the year of getting to know each other, getting in tune, and getting connected for a lifetime.

Source: http://parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/Newborn/topicsAZ/PKDEV_001245

Oral Health for Kids



The American Dental Association (ADA) advises parents to teach children the importance of oral health at an early age. Just like diet and exercise, oral care is an important part of learning how to keep healthy.

The American Dental Association offers these age-by-age tips:

- When teeth start to appear, brush them with a child's size toothbrush and plain water.
- Begin flossing when at least two teeth begin to touch.
- Start dental visits by the child's first birthday. Make visits regularly.
- Help your toddler learn to brush her teeth by using a gentle, short, back-and-forth motion.
- Brush teeth of children over age two with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste and floss daily. Look for toothpastes that have been evaluated by the ADA for safety and effectiveness.
- Supervise children while brushing to keep them from swallowing the

toothpaste. Swallowing too much fluoride toothpaste can lead to fluorosis (a mild discoloration of the teeth).

To prevent tooth decay it is important that you practice good oral health. Bacteria that cause a cavity in young children can be passed from you to your child through your saliva so do not wet the pacifier with your saliva, or pre-taste food for your child.

For more information on young children's oral health visit http://parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/age3_5/topicsAZ/PKDEV_000418

Test Your Knowledge of Emotional Intelligence

- T F Being a sensitive, emotionally aware parent means you will always find your child's emotions easy to understand.
- T F When children feel emotionally connected to their parents, children have fewer behavior problems and are better able to bounce back from distressing experiences.
- T F The first step parents can take toward raising emotionally intelligent children is to understand their own style of dealing with emotion and how that affects their kids.

Answers: 1) F, 2) T, 3) T



If you have concerns about your child's growth and development, please talk to your child's health care provider or call 1-866-693-GROW (4769), to talk to a professional and find out how you can get connected with various resources in Minnesota.

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