

Emotion Coaching: Parent and Carer Guide

Emotions and Behaviour



Everyone is born able to feel different emotions, for example, anger, joy and fear. As we grow up, we learn about those emotions and how to manage them. Behaviour is the way children and young people show us how they are feeling. It's up to us as adults to help children and young people to understand and manage their emotions. There are different ways we can do this, look at the boxes below.

We might **disapprove** of the emotion the child is feeling because we want to re-gain control over the situation.

"Stop crying!"

We might **dismiss** the emotion the child is experiencing because we want to make the child feel better.



"You'll be fine, have a biscuit"

We might be **permissive**, which means we accept the emotion the child is feeling but we don't help them to learn about their behaviour.

"You kicked a wall, you were feeling angry, that's okay!"

WARNING



It's okay to do these things sometimes, but we need to be careful we don't disapprove or dismiss children's emotions all the time because children need to **feel** and **understand** their emotions so that they can learn to manage them and learn acceptable ways of behaving. To help children with this, we can use **Emotion Coaching** as an alternative approach.

What is Emotion Coaching?

Emotion coaching is a four-step process used by adults to teach children and young people to understand their emotions, why they might be feeling those emotions and how to respond to them.

What is an Emotion Coach?

An emotion coach uses a moment where a child is emotional to teach the child or young person successful ways to manage their emotions.

How to be an Emotion Coach

Step 1. Try to think about how your child might be feeling and how it might feel to experience that emotion (empathise with your child).

Remember...all emotions are normal, and their behaviour is the way the child is communicating to you how they feel.

"I think you might be feeling angry because you are shouting and kicking the wall. I would feel angry to if my brother had taken my things, it's okay to feel angry sometimes."

Step 2. Help the child to learn about the emotion they are experiencing. Name the emotion to help them to feel calmer.

Remember...you are an emotion coach; you are using this opportunity to teach the child about their emotions, to help them to learn to manage their feelings..

Step 3. Gently set limits on your child's behaviour.

Remember... state what the acceptable behaviour is, be clear and retain the child's self-dignity by not embarrassing or shaming them.

"Stop kicking the wall because you might hurt yourself."

Step 4. Help the child to learn what to do next time they feel that emotion by problem solving with them.

Remember...to explore the feelings they experienced and help them to come up with solutions, offer choices if necessary.

"What could you do next time if your brother takes your things again?"