



The Mind Hub

By



Topic: Promoting Emotional Intelligence in Children

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to recognise, understand, and manage one's emotions while also being able to empathise with and respond to the emotions of others.

Research has shown that children with higher EQ tend to perform better academically, build stronger relationships and handle stress more effectively. Unlike IQ, which remains relatively stable throughout life, EQ can be developed and strengthened over time..

❖ **Why is emotional intelligence important?**

- Improved academic success: emotionally intelligent children are better able to focus in class, manage frustration, and work through challenges. Studies suggest that students with high EQ perform better academically than those who struggle with emotional regulation.
- Better social skills: EQ helps children navigate friendships, resolve conflicts and work cooperatively with others.
- Stronger mental health: understanding and managing emotions can reduce anxiety, depression, and behavioural problems.
- Resilience in difficult situations: children who can regulate their emotions are better equipped to handle setbacks and stress in a healthy way.

❖ **Tips for Promoting Emotional Intelligence in Children**

1. Teach Emotional Awareness

Help children identify and label their emotions instead of simply saying they feel “bad” or “good”, encourage them to use more precise language such “frustrated”, “excited” or “nervous”. A simple way to do this is by using an emotions chart with different facial expressions and words to describe feelings.

2. Model Healthy Emotional Expression

Children learn emotional regulation by observing the adults around them. Express your own emotions appropriately and talk through how you handle feelings. For example, if you're feeling stressed, you might say "I am feeling overwhelmed right now, so I'm going to take a deep breath before I respond".

3. Teach Coping Strategies

Give children practical ways to calm themselves when emotions become intense. Techniques like deep breathing, counting to ten, drawing, or using positive self-talk can help them manage their feelings in the moment.

4. Encourage Empathy

Help children understand and respect others' emotions. When they witness someone upset, ask questions like "How do you think they feel? What could you do to help?" reading books that explore different emotions and perspectives is also a great way to promote empathy.

5. Allow Space for Emotional Expression

It's important for children to know that all emotions are valid. Instead of dismissing or minimising their feelings ("you're fine, stop crying"), acknowledge their emotions ("I see you're upset. Do you want to talk about it?"). This helps children feel heard and understood.

6. Encourage Problem-Solving

When children face emotional challenges, guide them toward finding solutions rather than fixing problems for them. Ask open-ended questions like "what do you think you could do differently next time?" or "how can we make this situation better?"

7. Strengthen Social Skills

Teach children how to express their emotions in a respectful way, listen to others, and work through conflicts. Role-playing different social situations can help them practice these skills in a safe environment.

8. Set Realistic Expectations

Children are still learning how to manage their emotions, and it's normal for them to struggle at times. Praise their efforts when they demonstrate emotional intelligence, and be patient as they grow in this area.

➤ **FAQs**

1. *Q. How can I help my child if they frequently have emotional outbursts?*

A. Frequent emotional outbursts can be a sign that a child is struggling with emotional regulation. Instead of punishing them, try to understand what is triggering their reactions. Encourage them to use calming strategies, such as taking deep breaths or using words to express their feelings. If the outbursts persist, consider whether they are caused by underlying stress, unmet needs, or a lack of emotional vocabulary. Providing consistent routines, clear expectations and a safe space for expression can also help. If emotional outbursts become severe or impact daily life, consulting a specialist may be beneficial.

2. *Q: My child gets frustrated easily and gives up quickly. How can I help them develop resilience?*

A. Children who struggle with frustration often need support in developing a growth mindset – the belief that challenges help them grow. Encourage your child by praising their effort rather than just their achievements (“I love how you kept trying even when it was tough”). Teach them to break tasks into smaller steps and remind them that mistakes are part of learning. Modelling resilience yourself by calmly handling setbacks can be powerful too.

3. *Q: What should I do if my child has trouble understanding others’ emotions?*

A. Some children naturally struggle with empathy and reading social cues. Help by discussing emotions regularly – point out how characters in books, TV shows, or real-life situations may be feeling. Ask open-ended questions like “why do you think they reacted this way?”. Role playing different scenarios

can also help them practice recognising and responding to emotions appropriately.

4. *Q: How do I teach my child to manage anger in a healthy way?*

A. Teach your child that anger itself is not bad, but how we express it matters.

Encourage them to recognise early signs of anger (such as racing heart or clenched fists) and use calming techniques, like taking a break. You can also help them express their feelings using “I” statements (“I feel upset when...”) rather than reacting aggressively.

5. *Q: My child shuts down and avoids talking about emotions. How can I encourage them to open up?*

A. Some children find it difficult to talk about their feelings, especially if they feel judged or misunderstood. Create a safe and non-judgemental environment by being an active listener – avoid interrupting, minimising their feelings, or rushing to give advice. Sometimes, engaging in activities like drawing, playing, taking a walk together can make it easier for a child to open up. If they continue to struggle with emotional expression, journaling or working with a professional may help.

❖ **Final Thoughts.**

Promoting Emotional Intelligence in children takes time, patience, and consistency. By modelling healthy emotional regulation, providing opportunities for self-expression, and encouraging empathy, we can equip children with the skills they need to navigate their emotions effectively. Emotional intelligence is not just about managing feelings – it’s

about building resilience, forming strong relationships, and developing the tools to thrive in all areas of life.

Together we can create an environment that nurtures emotional growth for all children.

If you have any concerns about your child or would like further resources, don't hesitate to reach out to the school psychologist.

- The Mind Hub, by Marina Stavrou

