Emotions! Each of us experiences them many, many times throughout our day. In fact, all of the learning that we’ve done has been largely impacted by how we feel when we were learning that information.

We all have very strong attitudes and beliefs about our feelings that begin in childhood. The way we express our emotions, and whether or not we value emotions, was all shaped long ago and impacts the way we view emotions in others. In fact, it impacts the way we teach the children in our care how to value and process the emotions that they are just learning about themselves.

The research is conclusive. Children whose feelings are valued and guided do much better in a variety of ways. Here are just a few:

- Form stronger friendships
- Do better in school
- Handle their moods better
- Have fewer negative emotions
- Bounce back from emotional events more quickly
- Get sick less often!

Some of us are uncomfortable with our emotions and try to avoid them while others of us work hard to understand what’s caused us to feel a certain way. How we deal with emotions can have a huge impact on the quality of our lives.

This issue of the ECMH Newsletter is devoted to providing you with information on the 5 steps of emotion coaching as laid out by Dr. John Gottman.

Accepting, valuing, sharing, and guiding emotions will not always be easy. But, in the long run, the outcomes for our children will be well worth the effort; teaching children to express their emotions and to behave appropriately at the same time!
Things to Consider as You Emotion-Coach

- Guide a child’s mistaken behavior. Don’t punish her for feeling intensely.

- Encourage him to share his emotions.

- Don’t dismiss emotions as silly or unimportant.

- Listen in a way that helps children know you are paying attention and taking them seriously.

- Avoid criticizing or judging their emotions.


Teaching Children Emotional Literacy

Using varied and complex feeling words will develop powerful feeling vocabularies for children. Here is a list of more complex feeling words that 3-5 year olds who are developing language normally know (Joseph, 2001; Ridge-way, Waters & Kuczaj, 1985). Kelly’s teacher noticed her aroused state and labeled it “frustrated”. Labeling a child’s affective state allows them to begin to identify their own internal states. This is an important step in learning to regulate emotions (Joseph, 2001; Lochman & Dunn, 1993; Webster-Stratton, 1999). How many are you labeling for children each day?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affectionate</th>
<th>Enjoying</th>
<th>Peaceful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreeable</td>
<td>Excited</td>
<td>Pleasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annoyed</td>
<td>Fantastic</td>
<td>Proud</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awful</td>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
<td>Fed-Up</td>
<td>Relieved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brave</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Safe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capable</td>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td>Sensitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careful</td>
<td>Gentle</td>
<td>Serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Generous</td>
<td>Shy</td>
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<td>Stressed</td>
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<td>Guilty</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ignored</td>
<td>Stubborn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Impatient</td>
<td>Tense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Thoughtful</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>Thrilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruel</td>
<td>Jealous</td>
<td>Troubled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curious</td>
<td>Joyful</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressed</td>
<td>Lonely</td>
<td>Weary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointed</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>Worried</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The "Emotionally-Dismissive" Teacher

A teacher says:
"You don't need to be sad. It's not that bad. Put a smile on your face. There's no reason to be unhappy."

The child feels:
Ignored or disregarded when she has strong feelings. She learns that emotions are "bad" and need to be "fixed" quickly. She doesn't learn how to handle her emotions, and has trouble with other children's emotions.

These children:
- Feel diminished or dismissed
- Are reluctant to come to you when they feel sad or angry
- Begin to dismiss their own feelings and the feelings of others

The "Emotionally-Disapproving" Teacher

A teacher says:
"Stop crying! You can't join us until you stop the crying. I can't read the story with you crying. Do you want me to call Miss Becky (director) in to come and talk to you?"

The child feels:
Upset and now that you tell him that he's wrong, he feels even worse! He is criticized or punished for showing emotions even when he does not misbehave. He is never taught what to call the strong feelings he has or what to do with them.

The "Emotions-Are-Good-Let-Them-All-Out" Teacher

A teacher says:
"That's it, just let your feelings out. You can hit and kick the pillow over there."

The child feels:
Comfortable in expressing her feelings and knows that it's acceptable to show emotions, whatever they are. But, there are no limits on her behavior and little guidance as to how to deal with her strong emotions.

These children:
- Have more difficulty trusting their own judgment
- Feel something is wrong with them
- Have trouble regulating their emotions or solving their problems

The Teacher as "Emotional Coach"

A teacher says:
"Tell me how you feel. I've felt that way, too. You can't hit somebody when you're angry. Let's think together about other things you can do when you feel this way."

The child feels:
Valued and comforted when all of her emotions are accepted. At the same time, she learns that there are limits on her behavior when she has strong feelings.

These children:
- Learn to trust their feelings
- Regulate their own emotions
- Solve problems
- Have high self-esteem
- Learn well
- Get along well with others

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Announcing! The Early Childhood Mental Health ‘Warmline’ beginning January 30, 2013

"That child is always hitting everyone. Parents are complaining." "This child is out to get me."

Have you had felt like this about children in your program? When a child in our care exhibits challenging behavior we are often at a loss as to how to help her.

An ECMH Consultant will be available to discuss specific concerns and answer your questions.

The line is open the last Wednesday of the month, from 1:00-2:00pm.

Call 1-800-528-7222, ext 2349
RESOURCES

- Technical Assistance Center on Social and Emotional Intervention—http://www.challengingbehavior.org/
- The Talaris Institute—Talaris is committed to supporting parents and caregivers by sharing the latest findings and most current research in early childhood development.
- Parenting Counts—is the research-based family of products developed by Talaris Institute to support parents and caregivers in raising socially and emotionally healthy children

If you have any questions about early childhood mental health issues or would like more information about the consultation process, contact Ivy Reynolds at the number and extension below or email her at ireynolds@cscinc.org.

1-800-528-7222, ext. 2328
610-437-6000, ext. 2328

To make a referral, please fax the following completed forms to Diane Milia at 610-432-5700.

To refer a child, complete and fax the Request for Service Form along with the Parent permission, which is necessary before the ECMH consultant will become involved, to Diane Milia at 610-432-5700. (The Parent/Facility Agreement form is an agreement between the ECMH consultant, the parents, and the child care facility.)

The 5 Steps of Emotion-Coaching

1. Be aware of the child’s emotions
2. Recognize his emotions as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching
3. Listen empathetically and validate her emotions
4. Help him to verbally label his emotions
5. Help her come up with an appropriate way to solve the problem or deal with an upsetting situation

“Children who don’t have any adults who they feel “know” them or who are “there for them” have a harder time connecting with others as adults.”
