



Hindlip First School
Tibberton First School



Emotional Intelligence

This guidance has been written by our partners at
Perryfields Primary PRU.



Perryfields Primary PRU

Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to express and manage emotions appropriately while respecting the feelings of others. Children can learn these skills at any age.

Label Your Child's Emotions

Children need to know how to recognise how they are feeling. You can help them by naming their emotions or the emotion you suspect your child is feeling.

When your child is upset that they lost a game, you could say, "It looks like you feel really angry. Am I right?" If they look sad, you might say, "Are you feeling disappointed that we are not going to the park today?"

Emotional words such as "angry," "upset," "shy" and "painful" can all build a vocabulary to express feelings. Also share the words for positive emotions, too, such as "joy," "excited," "pride" and "hopeful."

Show Empathy

A child needs to be able to identify and understand other people's emotions i.e. imagining yourself in someone else's shoes. They also need to understand how their own emotions have an impact on others and how it makes them feel.

Help your child notice when someone else has behaved kindly. Try saying, "Remember that girl from Class 2 who helped you when you fell over? She was really kind to you and made you feel better when you were upset." Also help them notice when someone has been unkind or aggressive and how it makes them feel.

Books can also give good examples, so choose a story to talk about, and ask your child how they think the characters feel. Talk about how you'd feel if you were them, and ask how they'd react. This helps them to understand that other people's feelings are just as real as her own.



When a child is upset it can be tempting to dismiss how they are feeling but this will teach the child that the way they are feeling is wrong and may lead to them not sharing such emotions.

A better approach is to validate their feelings and show empathy even if you don't understand why they are so upset. If your child is crying because you told them that they can't go to a friend's until they have done their homework, say something like, "I feel upset when I don't get to do what I want to. It's hard sometimes to keep working when I don't want to."

When your child sees that you understand how they are feeling on the inside, they will be less likely to show how they are feeling through their behaviour. So rather than scream and cry to show you they are angry, they will feel better when you've made it clear that you already understand they are upset.

Model Appropriate Ways to Express Feelings

Children need to know how to express their emotions in a socially appropriate way. Instead of screaming or throwing things, they could say, "My feelings are hurt," or draw a picture of a sad face.

The best way to teach your child how to express feelings is by modelling these skills yourself. Use feeling words in your everyday conversation and practice talking about them. Say things like, "I feel angry when I see children being unkind in the park," or "I feel happy when we get to have our friends come over for dinner."

Teach Appropriate Coping Skills

Once children understand their emotions, they need to learn how to deal with those emotions in an appropriate way. Knowing how to calm themselves down, make themselves feel better or face something they are worried about can be very difficult for them.

You could teach specific skills. For example, your child may benefit from learning how to take a few deep breaths when they are angry to calm their body down. A way to teach this involves telling them to take "bubble breaths."



where they breathe in through their nose and blow out through their mouth as if they are blowing through a bubble wand.

You may also help your child create a 'Calm Box' that helps them regulate their feelings. You could add a colouring book, bubbles, calm down bottle, emotion cards, weighted or soft blankets or any items that can help engage their senses and calm their emotions so when the child is upset, remind them to go get the box to help them self soothe and to help manage their emotions.

Develop Problem-Solving Skills

Part of building emotional intelligence involves learning how to solve problems. After the feelings have been labelled and addressed, it's time to work through how to fix the problem itself.

Perhaps your child is angry that his sister keeps interrupting him while he's playing on an X-box game. Help them identify at least five ways he might solve this problem. All of the solutions might not result in good ideas, the goal is to just brainstorm.

Once they identify at least five possible solutions, help him assess the pros and cons of each one. Then, encourage him to pick the best option.

When your child makes mistakes, work through what could have been done differently and what your child can do to resolve any lingering issues. Try to act as a coach, rather than the actual problem-solver. Provide guidance when necessary but work on helping your child see that he has the ability to solve problems peacefully and effectively on his own.

Incorporate skill-building into your everyday life

There is always likely to be difficulties throughout childhood. As they grow older, they are likely to face obstacles that will challenge their skills. So encourage building the skills into everyday life. Talk about feelings every day.

Discuss the emotions of characters in books or in films. Talk about better ways problems might have been solved or strategies that the characters have used. Talk about real-life situations and make it an ongoing conversation.



When the child gets cross or has hurts someone's feelings, take time to talk about how they improve their approach in the future. This will help your child to develop the emotional intelligence and mental strength they will need to succeed in life.

Strategies for Teaching Emotional Literacy

Tune in

Connect with the child on an emotional level. Remove any distractions and actually connect with the child every day.

Look face-to-face

For good communication, eye contact is very important. Come down to the child's level and show them that you are interested.

Focus on feelings

Children need to learn not only are feelings important, but how to express those feelings. Give them the vocabulary to use e.g I-statements: "I feel upset when you shout at me." Give them words to describe how they feel e.g angry, embarrassed, frustrated, shocked and excited. Ask questions: "You seem really upset. What are you feeling right now?" Help children connect their physical reactions to the underlying emotions: "I see you are clenching your fists. Are you feeling angry?"

Express the feelings

Before children have developed their emotional vocabulary, you will need to help them express their feelings, like "You must have been so excited when you were told that you were invited to David's party." Once children have learned the words necessary to express their emotions, you can ask them "How do you feel?" It's also important to ask your children how they think other people feel: "How do you think he felt when she kicked his leg?"



Strategies to support in the classroom

- **Create a non-confrontational classroom environment by always using a calm, quiet voice that is genuine and complimentary and not using finger pointing or over prolonged eye contact. Avoid a patronising voice at all times. To support children, demonstrate what the difference is between being patronising and complimentary.**
- **Emotions fans can help children express how they are feeling in a non-verbal way. It could be particularly useful for children with SEN and those who struggle to express their feelings and needs.**
- **Help children to understand and increase their emotion vocabulary. Pupils knowing the meaning and difference between “sad”, “disappointed” and “upset” acts as lever to develop appropriate strategies for each. Understanding emotive language words is a new tool for future emotional intelligence.**
- **The Emotions Alphabet game using the alphabet to see how many emotive words the children can think of for each letter. Following on from the Alphabet game, ask the children what do the words mean and the difference between the emotions.**
- **It may be useful to create a poster showing images of emotions with the words underneath, in the classroom, this may also support as a starting point.**
- **Point to the words regularly during the day, naming the emotions as often as you can.**
- **Using reflection time to see another person’s point of view helps to make the other person feel understood. Children develop empathy by watching others – this includes teachers and parents.**
- **Create images for the board using photographs of the children. Ask them to see if they can show you the different emotions with their bodies and faces and take a photo.**



- **Have a clear jar labelled kind and caring jar. Each time a child uses an emotive word, ask them to write it down and put it into the jar.**
- **Use the emotive jar to demonstrate how children have been kind to each other either in class or on the playground. Cue in the children using their name and what they have done i.e. “David has been kind to Lucy today by asking her to join a game.**
- **Start the day with the Emotions jar linked to the display of emotive words and photos so it becomes daily practice for the children.**
- **Using “I statements” ie “I understand/can see/realise,” supports empathy in showing others that you can see things from their perspective.**
- **Asking pupils to notice if their friends are unusually quiet or looking downward? Or are they sitting upright and looking interested? These indications can help children see beyond the words the person is saying.**

