



Your Child's Feelings

Even before they learn and understand language, children feel emotions. They know if their parent is happy and relaxed or tense and upset. They are aware of the people, emotions expressed around them, and the environment in which they live. Children have the same feelings as adults. They may not know the words angry, sad, happy, or scared, but they will experience these feelings.

Value Children

You are your child's mirror. They will value themselves in direct relationship to how you value them. It is very important to show your child that you love them all the time – even when you get angry with them.

Let your child know you love her by smiling, touching, talking, listening, watching and being there and taking care.

If you are feeling angry or sad, tell your child and tell them why. Children may feel your emotions and think they are the cause. Own your own feelings and say these are temporary.

Challenges

Children face challenges in daily life, such as developing new skills and abilities. They have to learn everything – how to crawl, walk, talk, and be respectful towards others.

While learning new skills, children may experience frustration. At times, children may even have tantrums. Have patience and stay calm. A child's sense of security depends on knowing she is safe so soothe or comfort her. Once children master the new skill, they will usually become more content. Anticipate how your child will feel in particular situations and what you can realistically expect of them. If they have been shopping in the mall with

you all day, they will be exhausted and overexcited by dinner; this may cause tears and tantrums.

Some suggestions to help your child:

- Whenever possible, give your child choices
- Avoid placing the child in situations difficult for him or her
- Have healthy snacks, activities and toys available
- Communicate and explain yourself - for example, "In five minutes we need to go because Daddy will be home."
- Do not sweat the small stuff

If a child behaves aggressively, look for the reasons and offer help. Keep your voice calm and be respectful and let your child tell his side of the story. "I can see how angry you feel. Please tell me why you are so angry." Being treated with respect teaches children to solve problems by talking, rather than by using aggression or physical force. In clear, simple language, talk about behaviours and consequences as well. "If you throw sand, you will have to leave."

Time outs are also helpful for aggressive behavior. A time out means that a child is removed from whatever he or she is doing for a short period of time. Time outs work best as follows:

- Use a time out right away
- Keep time outs short and let your child return to the activity or group when ready
- Make time outs very boring
- Do not use time outs too often. For more information about positive discipline, see www.caringforkids.cps.ca/behaviourparenting/PositiveDiscipline.htm

Express Feelings

Help your child express emotions. Give your child words for his feelings so he can tell you how he feels. By teaching children language or words, you

are showing your concern and giving them tools for expressing themselves.

You can also assure your child that crying or feeling other emotions can be natural. Tears are an emotional release, and sometimes children or adults just need to cry. At times, it is okay to be mad or angry or hurt or frustrated as well. However, it is not okay to be destructive or to hurt anyone, including themselves.

Build Self-Esteem

The definition of self-esteem is ‘belief in one’s self’. We know that children’s ability to handle themselves and participate in the world depends on their sense of self-esteem. It is very important that parents create an environment to help their child’s self-esteem and confidence grow.

Set the Stage for Success

Help your child learn and succeed. Create an environment that makes success more possible. For example, place a stool in front of the sink so she can wash her own hands, or choose slippers easy for her to put on.

Let Them Do It Themselves

Plan your activities with enough time for your child to do some things for themselves. If your child asks for help, you can offer support or guidance but avoid taking over. They may not do the task as well or as quickly, but they will have a sense of achievement by putting on their own shoes or clothes.

Choice is Power

People need to have some power over their own lives. Children need to make age-appropriate decisions:

- If a six-month-old baby refuses strained beans, he does not want them.
- A two-year-old child can decide which shirt to wear.
- A three-year-old child knows which cereal she wants for breakfast.

Whenever possible, allow your child to have some choice or control over his or her own life. Children will make some mistakes, but this is how most of

us learn. Making good decisions is a skill. Children can develop this skill if they practice.

Show Respect

Encourage your child to speak up and give his or her point of view, and then carefully consider it. Children can be very creative and solve problems. Show respect and treat them with the same courtesy you expect of them. By modeling good manners, you make your child feel respected and set a standard for behaviour in your home and for your family.

Children Like Routine

Children are most comfortable with routine and when they know what to expect. You can prepare your child and talk about a new experience, such as the first visit to the dentist. Tell your child about changes in routine. For example, “Instead of going to playschool tomorrow, you will play with Jessie.” Children like routine.

For more information about child health and development see Best Chance website at www.bestchance.gov.bc.ca

More HealthLink BC Files on child development series:

[92a Your Child and Play](#)

[92b Your Child’s Development From Birth to Three Years](#)

[92d Toilet Training](#)

[92e Time for Bed](#)

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