



## Five Steps for Helping Your Child Handle Emotions

Developing skills to help your child manage his or her behavior, relate better to others, and cope with situations of all kinds is a great benefit to your parent-child relationship, as your child grows in his capacity to explain his disappointments or frustrations with words, rather than acting out.

What You Can Do:

- 1 Give feelings a label and talk about them.** For your younger child, these names will be as basic as mad, sad, and happy. As your child grows, those terms will become more specific and refined, such as frustrated, disappointed, or anxious. Identifying and naming feelings is essential to learning how to cope with them.

Talk about your child's emotions by having regular conversations about feelings and using emotion picture cards to help kids identify what they're feeling.
- 2 Find the trigger.** Help your child back up and identify what led to feeling this way.
- 3 Teach specific coping skills.** It may be helpful to your child to learn to remove herself from a situation or take some time to think before responding. For a younger child, it might be as simple as counting to 10 before reacting.
- 4 Don't try to fix everything. Be the safe spot.** Being there for your child gives him safety and lets him know you're on his team. It also tells him you're a safe place to share his feelings with once the meltdown has passed.
- 5 Give emotional support.** Often, all our children need is a good hug and an acknowledgment that we know how they feel. When your child is working through something, keep the standards of behavior high, but show lots of affection to help them along.
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