What does emotional intelligence mean for children?

- To be aware of and manage one’s emotions
- To handle interpersonal relationships
- To fully understand the impact one’s emotions have on others
- To recognize others’ emotions accurately
- To adjust and respond to the environment with empathy to achieve one’s goals

Two methods of parenting

Parents can fall into categories of emotion dismissing and emotion coaching.

Emotion dismissing are action oriented and do not want to seem emotional in front of their children because they view it as a sign of weakness. They worry it might be destructive from the child’s perspective.

Emotion coaching parents embrace emotion in themselves and their children and teach them to explore it within themselves. This helps them identify what they and those around them are feeling, to better gauge how to respond with empathy. This behavior can be taught and modeled for them starting from when they are babies.

The effects of these approaches is drastic.

Those that had emotion coaching seem to interact with the world with more security and are on different trajectories later in life. Their levels of educational achievement also vary.

Emotional intelligence in parenting begins with the self.

“It is important to understand one’s own feelings about emotions, and to learn that self-understanding comes from recognizing one’s own feelings. Emotions are our internal ‘GPS’ through life” (Gottman). One can still be rational through this process, and convey emotions around their child. When events are responded to in a positive manner, children are likely to notice and follow suit for their own experiences. Mutual respect needs to be fostered as well.

https://www.gottman.com/blog/emotional-intelligence-creates-loving-supportive-parenting/
The Do’s and Don’ts of Raising Emotionally Intelligent Kids

### Actions

**Do:**
1. Do recognize negative emotions as an opportunity to connect.
2. Do help your child label their emotions.
3. Do set limits and problem-solve.

**Don’t:**
1. Don’t punish, dismiss, or scold your child for being emotional.
2. Don’t convey judgement or frustration.
3. Don’t underestimate your child’s ability to learn and grow.

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**Exercises**

In the book *Parenting a Child Who Has Intense Emotions*, by Harvey and Penzo, they revisit the principles of effective parenting. The list of reminders to exercise is as follows:

- Do not assume the worst.
- Don’t be judgmental.
- Validate your child.
- Be responsive, not reactive.
- You can lose the battle and still win the war.
- It takes two to engage in power struggles.
- Balance your responses.
- Choose the most effective response.

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**Dr. Gottman’s Advice**

A parent can learn to “emotion coach” using five steps.

1. Be aware of a child’s emotions
2. Recognize emotional expression as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching
3. Listen empathetically and validate a child’s feelings
4. Label emotions in words a child can understand
5. Help a child discover appropriate ways to solve a problem or deal with an upsetting situation

More information on Dr. Gottman’s methods, frequently asked questions about teaching emotional intelligence, and what to avoid can be found here:

- [https://www.gottman.com/blog/3-dos-donts-raising-emotionally-intelligent-kids/](https://www.gottman.com/blog/3-dos-donts-raising-emotionally-intelligent-kids/)

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