

Emotional Intelligence Tips for Parents

Emotions are everywhere. Developing emotional intelligence is related to:

- Academic success
- Interpersonal relationships
- Wellbeing & resilience
- Communicating and listening well
- Creativity and problem solving
- Leadership
- Sporting success
- Empathy and pro-social behaviours

Visit www.aristotle-ei.com/resources for access to research papers relating to these outcomes

1. EMOTIONAL VOCABULARY BASICS

The words we use to describe our emotions shape how we understand our world and our experiences. A better developed emotional vocabulary is like seeing the world in colour as opposed to black and white.

- Talk about emotions often!
- Start with extending the range of basic emotions (fear, joy, sadness, disgust, anger, surprise).
- Try to find more words to describe basic emotions so that you and your child can practice identifying varying levels of intensity of a certain emotion (eg. Fear; worry, unease, panic etc.).

2. REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE A POWERFUL ROLE MODEL

Remember that your child is watching the way in which you express and manage emotions.

- The way in which you display your own emotions (words, tone of voice, behaviour and body language) provides an example for your child's emotional expression.
- Don't be afraid to acknowledge the experience of challenging emotions. It's important for children to learn this is a normal part of life that can be managed successfully.
- Talking about your experience of different emotions and how you dealt with them can be an important learning opportunity for your child too.



3. CONSIDER THE MESSAGE OF EACH EMOTION

- All emotions have their place – even the ones that don't feel so nice!
- Emotions give us information about the world around us – they are a critical part of navigating day to day life. Emotions are most useful if we pay attention to their cause and/or the meaning behind them.
- Consider the table below:

POSITIVE EMOTIONS (usually the ones that feel good)	NEGATIVE EMOTIONS (usually the ones that can feel unpleasant)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markers of thriving wellbeing • Indicate that things are going well • Suggest no immediate threat • Open our mind to new ideas and options • Increase dopamine, associated with interest and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More readily triggered • Focus our attention / narrow our thinking • Help to keep us safe by directing our attention to threat (both real or perceived) • Cause reactionary behaviour (fight or flight response) • Reduce performance and linked with poorer wellbeing when experienced over extended periods

The words "positive" and "negative" seem to imply that emotions are either "good" or "bad". This is not the case. In day to day practice, we should seek to understand if an emotion is helpful or unhelpful to you in the current situation.

4. CONSIDER DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

- As a parent, you can help your child to manage their emotions by assisting them to assess the way in which they think about events or experiences. The A-B-C model of emotions shows how modifying the way in which a person thinks about an event or experience influences the emotional consequence.
- Unhelpful thinking can sometimes be referred to as negative self-talk – or as we say in the junior school – listening to our Thought Thug!

