

Emotional

Milestones



Children's brains are wired for feelings and grown-ups have the power to shape healthy emotional development by creative safe, loving environments.

0 to 24 Months

- Smile or giggle to show happiness
- Cry to show they're unhappy, uncomfortable, or need something
- Fear of strangers
- Strong attachment which may make separating difficult

You Can

- Use feeling words to help teach emotions
- Show them their faces in the mirror to help recognize expressions

2 Years Old

- More aware of their emotions
- Begin to comfort themselves and others
- May still show strong emotions with body language instead of words.

You Can

- Use words to describe their emotions: "You're feeling frustrated because..."
- Read together and point out emotions

3 Years Old

- Give hugs to friends to comfort them
- Show concern for others' feelings
- Begin to remember the names for simple feelings

You Can

- Play doctor with stuffed animals; show how they can comfort someone
- Play feeling charades to show ways to express emotions

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FAMILIES



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4 Years Old

- Understand others' feelings and why: "He's sad because..."
- Develop more self-control
- Able to use coping skills: taking deep breaths instead of screaming
- Putting big feelings into words: "I feel sad because..."

You Can

- Make a poster showing strategies to manage feelings: deep breathing, asking for a hug, etc.
- Let them feel like superheroes: "This sounds like a job for Super [child's name!] He can figure it out!"

5-6 Years Old

- Begin to understand that friends may have different feelings than they do
- Manage feelings using coping skills: taking slow, deep breaths, asking for help, asking for a break, etc.

You Can

- Practice ways to help focus attention: fidgeting, standing instead of sitting, making a schedule, making binoculars, etc.
- Practice managing emotions: give yourself a hug, ask for a hug, tell someone how you feel, etc.

When little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it is our job to share our calm, not to join their chaos."

- L.R. Knost