

# CONNECTING WITH *kids*

A step by step guide to effective emotion coaching.

## What to do for YOUR CHILD

### 1. Become aware of your child's feelings.

Only 7% of a person's communication comes from the words they speak. Pay extra attention to their non-verbals!

- Observe body language and behaviour.
- Note the tone of voice.
- Listen to their words.

### 3. Connect through empathy.

Soothing words and affection are great ways to show you care.



### 4. Encourage your child to talk about their feelings and listen without judgment.

- Allow them to speak.
- Use open ended questions to encourage sharing.
- Seek clarification.
- Paraphrase.

### 6. Help them name their emotions and show you understand.

Naming emotions helps kids identify each different feeling they experience. This helps them understand themselves better.

### 7. Help your child problem solve.

- Use open ended questions to provoke thought & discussion.
- Help them expand their thinking to take other people's feelings into account.
- Set limits on unacceptable behaviour.

Move to this step only when your child feels validated and has calmed down. Otherwise, problem solving will not be effective.

## What to do for YOU

### 2. Become aware of your own feelings in response to your child's emotions.

Trigger alert! The way your child displays their emotions can impact how you feel. Pay attention to how you react to your child when they express their feelings.

Stay present in the Moment. Look past their behaviour to focus on the feelings behind. Extreme behaviour signals strong emotions.

Did you know: when you are angry, you can't be empathetic. The empathy part of the brain shuts down during anger, making it almost impossible to connect with your child.

### 5. Maintain awareness of, and focus on, your child's feelings.

If your emotions start to interfere with your ability to connect empathetically with your child, use strategies to calm down and re-centre yourself, such as:

- Re-read these steps.
- Get yourself a drink of water.
- Take some deep breaths.

If you find yourself repeatedly triggered by your child's emotions, it is useful to discover *why*. Understanding the real cause of your triggers will bring you greater self-awareness.

### 8. Resist the temptation to solve the problem for them.

If you try to solve the problem for them it sends a message you don't trust them to solve their problems. This can leave them feeling insecure in their own abilities.

The result: kids who regulate their emotions better, are more confident and have higher emotional intelligence. Your home will be more peaceful too!

