



## Assisting your Child with their Emotional Development

### What is emotional development?

Emotional development is a complex task that begins in infancy and continues into adulthood. As children's sense of self develops, more complex emotions like shyness, surprise, elation, embarrassment, shame, guilt, pride and empathy emerge. School aged children are still learning to identify emotions, to understand why they happen, and how to manage them appropriately.

### Emotional Expression Aspects

Types of Emotional Expression	Influences on Emotional Expression
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>physical responses (like heart rate, breathing and hormone levels)</li> <li>behavioural displays of emotion</li> <li>feelings that children recognise and learn to name</li> <li>thoughts and judgments associated with feelings</li> <li>action signals (for example, a desire to approach, escape or fight).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>values and beliefs about appropriate and inappropriate ways of expressing emotions that children learn from families</li> <li>how effectively children's emotional needs are usually met</li> <li>children and young people's temperaments</li> <li>cultural norms</li> <li>emotional behaviours that children have learned through observation or experience</li> <li>the extent to which families are under various kinds of stress.</li> </ul>



Every child is unique and will go through emotional development at different rates. Children may show a high level of emotional skill development while quite young, whereas others take longer to develop to manage their emotions well into adolescence.

### Emotional Development and Sense of Self.

**A person's sense of self is strongly influenced by their perception of themselves.**

Knowing that they can be successful at what they do allows children to feel competent and confident, which in turn affects their emotional development. Children who don't have many experiences of success, more often have to cope with disappointment, which can lead to the development of a negative sense of self. By being supported to learn to value their own strengths and efforts, as well as those of others, children develop resilience to bounce back from challenges and hardship.



### How can I Support my Child with their Emotional Development?

Providing effective support for children's emotional development starts with paying attention to their feelings and noticing how they manage them.

<p><b>Tune in to children's feelings and emotions.</b> Look at their body language, listen to what and how they are saying things and observe their behaviour. Then respond and offer more specific guidance to help them manage their emotions.</p>	<p><b>Set limits on inappropriate expression of emotions.</b> Let them know that it is OK to have a range of emotions and them skills to use for dealing with difficult emotions in a positive way. Set limits on aggressive, unsafe or inappropriate behaviours.</p>
<p><b>Help children recognise and understand emotions.</b> Talk to them and teach them about different emotions.</p> 	<p>Be a role model. Show your children different ways you manage your emotions in a positive way to help them learn from example. If you lose your temper, apologies and show how you might make amends.</p>