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# Emotion Regulation

**HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD UNDERSTAND THEIR EMOTIONS AND REDUCE TANTRUMS**

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## Goals of Emotion Regulation

- Why should your child learn to manage his or her feelings?
- How can we manage our feelings?
  - Understand the emotions we experience
  - Reduce emotional vulnerability
  - Decrease emotional suffering of uncomfortable emotions



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## Understanding the Importance of Emotions

Why do we need emotions?

- They give us information about the world
  - Provide a signal that something is happening
  - And they are NOT facts
- They are useful communication tools
  - Expressed by words and body language
- Emotions are connected to action urges
  - Emotions help us react fast to danger without thinking the situation through
  - Sometimes our urges can get us in trouble

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## Emotions: Observe and Describe

- Learning to identify and understand which emotions we experience
  - How do we feel different emotions in our body?
  - How do emotions affect our thinking?
  
- How can we teach children about emotions?
  - Talk about them more
  - Use stories or games

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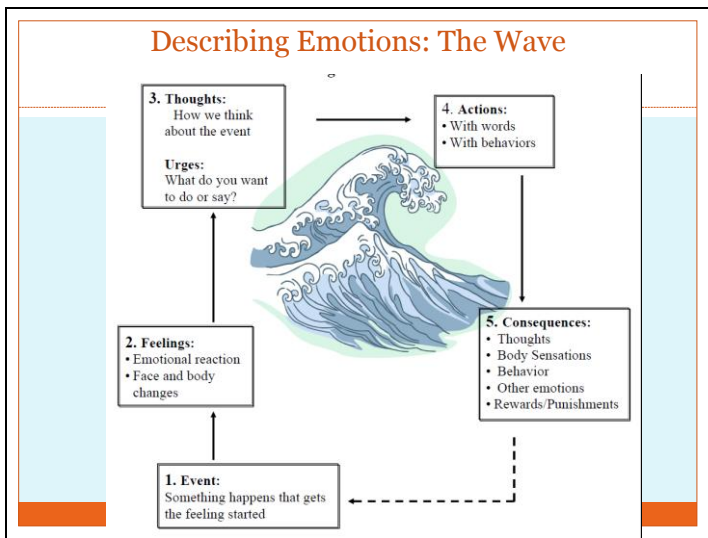
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## Emotion Essentials: Teach children to...

**...Remember:**

- You are not your feeling!
- You don't have to do what your feeling wants you to do!
- You don't always feel like this!
- You won't feel like this forever.
- Sometimes you need to feel all your feelings.

**...Notice:**

- How the feeling comes and goes like a wave

**...DON'T:**

- **Try to push the feeling away**
- Feed the feeling by doing what it wants
- Try to hold on to the feeling

**...Always:**

- LOVE YOUR FEELINGS- they are a part of you!

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### Responding with Opposite Action

Remember: You can change your feeling by **ACTING OPPOSITE** to how you feel

feeling ↔ action

Feeling	Action Urge	Opposite Action
<b>Fear</b> 	Run away, hide, avoid	Face what you fear
<b>Anger</b> 	Fight, attack, be mean, call names	Avoid or be gentle, nice, kind, understanding
<b>Sadness</b> 	Shut down, hang your head low, crawl in bed	Get active, exercise, talk to family, play with friends
<b>Shame/Guilt</b> 	Hide, avoid	Be open about what happened. Apologize and make repairs if you were wrong

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### PLEASE skills

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**Physical Health:** Take care of your health and body (brush teeth, wash hands, shower). Treat physical illness, tell your parents when you don't feel well and see a doctor when needed.

**Eat Healthy:** Eat healthy foods (fruits, vegetables) Avoid fast food and soda. Don't eat too much or too little

**Avoid Drugs:** Avoid drugs, alcohol, cigarettes

**Sleep:** Get a good night sleep. Try to get the amount of sleep that helps you feel good, not too much or too little.

**Exercise:** Exercise every day. Even if it's just walking. Do sports, play active games with friends.

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### Validation and Mindfulness

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- Let the child know that you understand his or her feelings
- Remember you can disagree about his/her behavior and still understand the emotion
- Be non-judgmental out loud by observing and describing without judgment
- No BUTS
- Be mindful of your own emotions when your child (or the child you're working with becomes upset).
- Validation is not as easy as it sounds

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## Tips for Parents: curbing tantrums

- Use of **consistent** and effective discipline that is fitting to the misdeed (time outs, privilege loss)
- Try not to be angry with your child
- Validate him/her
- No threats
- The behavior you want to see less of (tantrum) will get worse (temporarily) because it's no longer working for the child this is a last ditch effort to get it to work
- For two parent households, presenting a unified front to the child or teen
- PRAISE positive behaviors, effort and steps toward positive behaviors and notice when the child is behaving the way you would like them to

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## Recommended Treatments

### Cognitive Behavioral Therapies

- For children and parents
  - Parent Child Interaction Therapy
  - Parent Management Training
  - Incredible Years Program
- For children or teens and parents
  - Parent Management Training
  - Functional family therapy
  - Dialectical Behavior therapy
  - Multisystemic therapy
- When co-occurring with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
  - Medication for the treatment of ADHD along with Cognitive Behavioral Treatments have been found effective

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## Resources

### Literature

- The Explosive Child: A New Approach for Understanding and Parenting Easily Frustrated, Chronically Inflexible Children, by Ross Green, Ph.D.
- Parenting a Child who has Intense Emotions: Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills to Help Your Child Regulate Emotional Outbursts and Aggressive Behaviors, by: Pat Harvey, LCSW-C & Jeanine Penzo, LICSW

### Websites

- Fairleigh Dickinson University Center for Psychological Services- <http://view.fdu.edu/default.aspx?id=339>
- NYU Child Study Center – [www.aboutourkids.org](http://www.aboutourkids.org)
- Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies - <http://www.abct.org>

### Services

- Fairleigh Dickinson University Center for Psychological Services, Hackensack main line: (201) 692-2645
- Julie L. Ryan, Ph.D., 156 Fifth Ave, New York, NY 10010, (646) 543-7492 or [julieryanphd@gmail.com](mailto:julieryanphd@gmail.com)
- NYU Child Study Center (Manhattan, Long Island, Hackensack) – main line (212) 263-6622

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