Emotional Intelligence and Coping Skills Across Childhood

Audience: Parents of Early Years, Primary, and Secondary

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Welcome

Why We're Here

- Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the foundation for healthy relationships, learning, and resilience.
- Research shows EI predicts long-term success more strongly than IQ (Goleman, 1995).
- Today we'll explore how EI develops, why it matters, and how to nurture it at home.



Workshop Overview

Today's Goals

1

Understand what emotional intelligence (EI) means.

2

Learn how EI and coping skills develop through childhood.

3

Recognize common emotional challenges at each stage.

4

Discover practical, age-appropriate tools for parents.

Core Idea: EI isn't fixed — it grows through modeling, connection, and practice. □



What is Emotional Intelligence?

Definition:

EI is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's emotions — and respond effectively to others' emotions.

Five Core Skills (Goleman, 1998):

- 1. Self-awareness
- 2. Self-regulation
- 3. Motivation
- 4. Empathy
- 5. Social skills

Why EI Matters

Children with strong EI have better mental health, academic performance, and social adjustment. Emotional regulation predicts longterm resilience and well-being. EI can be taught through everyday interactions, not special lessons.

Key Thought: Children learn *how to feel* by watching how adults *handle feelings*.

The Science of Emotional Development



Emotional Brain

The emotional brain (amygdala) matures early.

Logical Brain

The logical, regulatory brain (prefrontal cortex) develops into the mid-20s.

Co-Regulation

This explains why children — and even teens — need co-regulation from adults.

Co-Regulation Before Self-Regulation: Children learn calm by *borrowing* yours first.



The Power of Co-Regulation

- **Definition:** Co-regulation is when a caring adult helps a child manage their emotions by modeling calm, supportive responses.
- Practical Strategies for Parents & Teachers:
 - Stay calm: Your calm response helps the child feel safe.
 - o Acknowledge feelings: "I see you're upset, and that's okay."
 - **Guide coping:** Offer simple strategies: deep breaths, counting, or grounding activities.
 - **Model regulation:** Demonstrate managing your own emotions in real situations.
- **Tip:** Co-regulation works best when consistent repeated supportive interactions build emotional resilience.

Research Insights

Age 5 to Age 10

Children who can label emotions at age 5 show fewer behavior issues and stronger friendships at age 10 (Denham et al., 2012).

Emotion Coaching

Emotion coaching from parents lowers stress hormones and strengthens empathy (Gottman, 1997).

Reflection: When your child is upset, what emotion do *you* feel first — frustration, worry, or helplessness?



Emotional Intelligence Across Ages

Overview

Emotional intelligence unfolds differently across childhood. Each stage brings its own strengths and challenges — and each requires a different kind of parental support.



Early Years (Ages 3–6)

Milestones:

- Identify and name basic emotions (happy, sad, angry, scared).
- Begin showing empathy and imitate adult emotional responses.

Challenges:

 Tantrums, fear of separation, frustration, sharing difficulties.

Parent Tips:

- Label emotions out loud ("You're sad because your toy broke").
- Stay calm, model breathing.
- Validate before correcting ("It's okay to be sad, let's fix it together").

Primary Years (Ages 7–11)

Milestones:

- Expanding emotional vocabulary.
- Start linking thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- Begin understanding different perspectives.

Challenges:

• Peer conflict, perfectionism, frustration with failure.

Parent Tips:

- Encourage problem-solving ("What could you do next?").
- Praise effort over outcome.
- Normalize mistakes as learning moments.

Secondary Years (Ages 12–18)

Milestones:

- Complex emotions, identity exploration, empathy deepens.
- Seek autonomy but still need emotional anchors.

Challenges:

Stress, self-image, peer pressure, mood swings.

Parent Tips:

- Keep communication open.
- Normalize stress ("Everyone feels overwhelmed sometimes").
- Encourage coping tools —
 journaling, exercise, setting
 digital limits.



Key Research on Adolescence



Emotional Intensity

Emotional intensity increases ~40% in adolescence (Steinberg, 2014).



Brain Development

The reward system is more active than the control system — explaining impulsivity.

Takeaway: Patience, modeling, and consistency matter more than perfection.

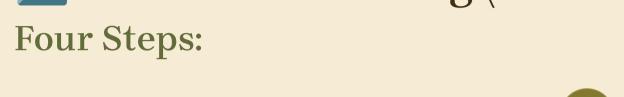
Practical Tools

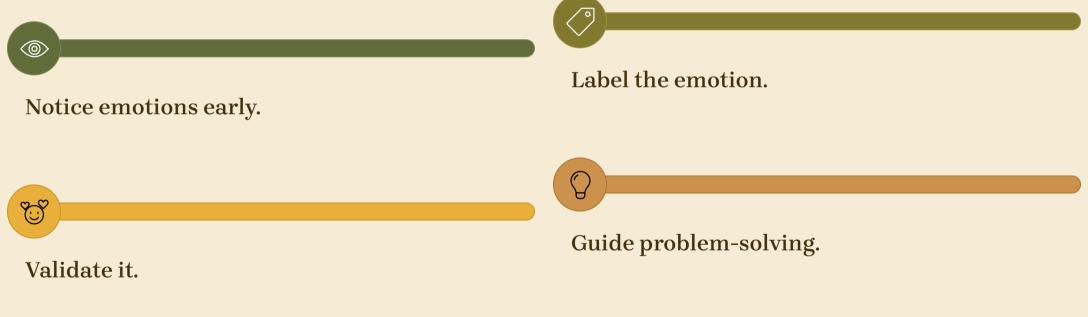
Overview

Here are 5 research-based strategies to nurture EI and coping at home:

01	02		03
Emotion Coaching	Calm-Down Toolbox		Family Check-Ins
04		05	
Modeling Emotional Honesty		The Coping Equation	

Emotion Coaching (Gottman, 1997)





Example: Child says, "I hate school." → "It sounds like today was tough. Want to tell me what happened?"



2 Calm-Down Toolbox

Create a personal kit to help your child self-soothe:



Stress ball, soft toy, headphones, coloring items, photos.



Let your child choose what goes inside.



Use it when emotions feel "too big."

3 Family Check-Ins

Hold a short family meeting once a week:



(something good)

One Low

(something tough)

One Goal

(something to work on)

This builds empathy, emotional vocabulary, and trust.



4 Model Emotional Honesty

Children copy what we *do*, not what we *say*.

Try narrating your own regulation:

"I'm feeling stressed, so I'll take a deep breath before I continue."

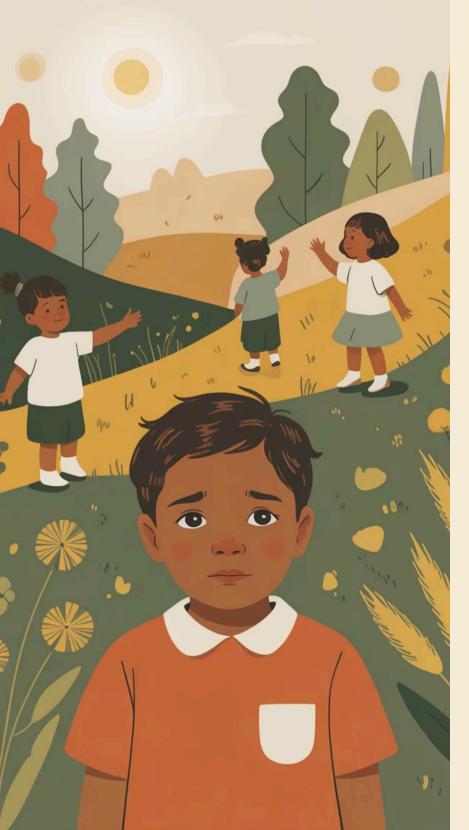
Modeling emotional awareness teaches them that feelings are normal and manageable.

5 The Coping Equation

Teach this simple formula:

Example: "I feel angry + I listen to music = I feel calmer."

Helps children link emotions with healthy actions.



When Friends Don't Want to Play Supporting Your Child Through Social Exclusion

Key Points:

- Validate Feelings: "It sounds like you're sad that your friend didn't want to play."
- **Label the Emotion:** Helps your child understand what they are feeling "You feel left out and disappointed."
- **Normalize the Experience:** Everyone faces rejection sometimes; it's part of learning resilience.
- **Problem-Solve Together:** Brainstorm alternative solutions: invite another friend, play solo, or practice asking peers to join.
- **Build Resilience:** Celebrate small successes and bravery in social situations.

Age-Specific Tips:

- EY: Use stories or role-play to practice sharing and inviting others.
- Primary: Encourage peer negotiation and group problem-solving.
- Secondary: Discuss perspective-taking and alternative social groups.

Understanding Bullying Why Kids May Stay Silent

Key Points:

- **Fear of Retaliation:** Worry bully might escalate if they tell.
- **Fear of Social Consequences:** Afraid of being labeled a tattletale.
- Fear of Adults Overreacting: Concern adults will punish excessively.
- **Internalizing Blame:** Sometimes children think the bullying is their fault.

Counsellor Insight:

"Many students don't tell anyone for weeks because they fear making things worse. Parents can help by creating a safe, judgment-free space."



Guiding Your Child Through Bullying

Steps:

- 1. **Listen and Validate:** "It's understandable you feel scared and angry."
- 2. **Empower Choices:** Offer options report together, self-advocate, or use coping strategies.
- 3. **Collaborate With School Calmly:** Ask for supportive interventions, not just punishment.
- 4. **Practice Coping Skills:** Role-play assertive responses, teach calming techniques.
- 5. **Monitor Recovery:** Check in regularly to reinforce safety and self-worth.

Parent Strategies Without Escalation

Age-Specific Tips:

- EY: Use calm-down tools and storytelling to illustrate assertive behavior.
- Primary: Role-play scenarios, encourage verbal expression.
- Secondary: Teach journaling, peer-support strategies, and mindfulness.



Understanding the Bully

Not Excusing Behavior

Understanding the bully doesn't mean tolerating harm — it means seeing the full picture.

School's Role

Schools are learning environments. Part of their role is to teach **coexistence**, **empathy**, **and healthy social habits**.

Balanced Approach

Combine support for the targeted child **and** interventions for the child exhibiting bullying.

Behavior Often Reflects Unmet Needs

Bullies may be struggling with emotional regulation, family stress, or social challenges themselves.

Long-Term Perspective

Expelling or harshly
punishing may remove
immediate conflict but does
not teach emotional skills or
prevent future harm
elsewhere.

Counsellor Insight:

"In my experience, children who bully often need guidance as much as the child being bullied needs protection. Our goal is to teach everyone how to navigate conflict, manage emotions, and co-exist safely."



Quick Age-Specific Ideas



Early Years:

Emotion stories, "feelings thermometer," comfort corners.



Primary:

Gratitude journaling, emotion word-of-the-day.



Secondary:

Journaling, physical outlets, mindfulness apps, peer discussion.

Summary — 3 Big Takeaways

Emotional intelligence grows through modeling and practice.

Coping skills develop gradually—through connection, **not control**.

Parents' emotional literacy shapes children's future resilience.

Parent Resources

Raising Emotionally Intelligent Children — Quick Guide

Early Years

- Label emotions
- Stay calm
- Read stories about feelings

Primary

- Encourage "I feel..." language
- Praise effort
- Teach coping tools

Secondary

- Normalize stress
- Discuss emotions
- Encourage balance

Recommended Reading

- Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child John Gottman
- The Whole-Brain Child Daniel Siegel & Tina Bryson
- Emotional Intelligence Daniel Goleman

Thank you!

and see you in November 😀

