

Has Strong Emotional Reactions

(Emotional Self-Knowledge)

It takes a while for children to learn how to regulate the intensity of their emotions. When children display strong anger, discouragement, anxiety, or unhappiness, it is often an indication that self-regulation is not taking place. This makes them more vulnerable to what other people do and may result in extreme reactions that harm someone. This activity will help your children increase their understanding of their own emotions and how to help regulate what they do.

1. A Time I Felt...

Ask your child the following questions:

When was a time you felt happy?
When was a time you felt sad?
When was a time you felt angry?
When was a time you felt scared?

2. What Makes Me Feel...

You can either write the following questions on a piece of paper and have your child answer them, or if your child is too young, just ask the questions out loud.

What makes me feel bashful?
What makes me feel frightened?
What makes me feel happy or excited?
What makes me feel angry?

3. Tie It Together

Point out that as human beings, we are more powerful than we sometimes think. Instead of thinking that events or other people are responsible for our emotions, we can change what we are feeling. This doesn't mean that we can't ever feel sad. But it does mean that we don't have to feel sad all the time or for an extended period of time. Help your children practice this by changing negative emotions into those that are more positive. Teach them to focus on the positive parts of their lives instead of the negative. Remind them that they are in charge and can determine what and how they will feel.

Children who can talk about their feelings appropriately usually communicate more accurately with other people. This communication skill helps them seek

out conversation with others, which is often necessary to successfully manage dilemmas where choices must be made. This activity will help your children communicate about themselves, which typically improves their relationships with others. It will also help them seek help from others when they are faced with questions about right and wrong or how to help and not harm others