

# Teaching Your Child About Feelings

Helping your child recognize and name how they feel can help them better express their feelings, and this can make a big difference in their behavior. Accepting your child's feelings can be a powerful strategy to help your child feel seen, heard, and understood. You can take steps to teach your child how to express how they feel.



## Let your child know their feelings are OK.

- Help your child learn about feelings: Share that all feelings are OK.
- Notice and name how your child is feeling. This shows them that feelings are part of who they are and their feelings matter to you.
- Tell your child you understand and respect their feelings.



## Listen to what your child is saying.

Repeat back what your child has said.

## Try to understand how your child is feeling.


Let them know you understand their feelings and you are there to help.

## Name your own feelings.

Model how you have many different feelings during the day.

## Help your child name their feelings through words or pictures.

Tell them that all feelings are OK if they are expressed safely.



## Use books, songs, games, stories, and play to talk about many different feelings.

Use words to help children name their feelings, such as happy, angry, disappointed, excited, frustrated, surprised, loved, scared, sad, peaceful, left out, delighted, quiet, tired.

## Make checking in about feelings part of the daily routine.

Ask your child about their feelings. For example, you could do a feelings check-in during meal time with questions like

“What made you feel excited today?”

“What made you feel angry today?”

“What made you feel loved today?”

“What made you feel bored today?”

During bedtime you could make a routine with question like

“What is one feeling you want to leave behind today?”

“What is one feeling you want to feel more of tomorrow?”



# Strategies to Try

## Try to understand how your child is feeling.

**Instead of:** “Stop screaming!”

**Try:** “You are angry. You are showing me with your loud voice.”

## Notice, name, and model your feelings.



**Instead of:** “You never listen!”

**Try:** “I feel frustrated right now. I am going to take a deep breath. That will help me feel better.”

## Name feelings for your child as they are experiencing them.

**Instead of:** “If you hit again, you are going to time out.”

**Try:** “You are angry. Your hands want to hit. I am going to keep you safe by stopping you from hitting.”



## Offer chances to notice and name lots of feelings.

**Instead of:** Reading books the usual way.

**Try:** As you read books, comment on the story using feeling words. For example:

“The bear looks tired.”

“The child has a big smile on their face and they are happy.”



“The baby is crying. The baby feels sad.”



## Ask the child about their feelings instead of making assumptions.

**Instead of:** “That must have made you feel happy.”

**Try:** “Wow, I wonder how you were feeling when that happened.”

## Let your child know that all feelings are OK.

**Instead of:** “Stop crying; it’s not a big deal.”

**Try:** “You’re really upset right now. It’s OK to feel upset.”



## Resources

- [Feeling Faces](#)
- [Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think at Home](#)



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