**Emotion Coaching**

**Time:** 2 hours

**Developmental Competencies**

- **CFAM234-01** Knows how to encourage everyone in the home be respectful; how to provide appropriate nurturing and empathy to children.

- **CFAM234-08:** Understands the need to: teach children to manage and deescalate anger; teach skills to express emotions in ways that are respectful and healthy.

- **CFAM234-10** Knows and understands the influences/triggers on a child’s behavior including: developmental challenges, behavioral emotional challenges, past abuse, neglect, separation, and placement.

- **CFAM239-07** Understands the need to teach children to manage and de-escalate anger; teach skills to express emotions in ways that are respectful and healthy.

**Talking about Competencies**

Emotion Coaching is a research based method from the Talaris Institute and the Gottman Institute that gives caregivers a way to help children learn about emotions. Research shows that when caregivers value and guide emotions using this important method, children do better in many ways. These children tend to:

- Form stronger friendships with peers
- Have higher self esteem
- Regulate their moods more easily
- Be more successful in their problem solving skills
- Bounce back from emotional events more quickly
- Get sick less often

Emotion Coaching helps prepare children from birth to 5 years old for the challenges they face throughout their lifetime. A child’s ability to delight in the happy times and recover from the bad ones is a key part of emotional health. By learning and practicing the 5 steps of Emotion Coaching, you can make an important investment in a child’s future.

**Materials and Preparation**

- A workshop packet link for each participant for them to print or download
- Computer and projector
- Flip chart paper or a whiteboard and markers
- Emotion Coaching Video downloaded onto hard drive
- Powerpoint for use instead of posters
  o 10 emotions
  o Emotion Coaching for Kids
  o The 5 Steps
- Optional balloons for activity

### Session Flow

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### Classroom Training

#### Feelings About Feelings:
How our meta-emotions shape the way we handle feelings
- Research shows that in every culture, emotions are “felt” in the same way. It is how the emotions are expressed that differs. Everyone feels the same emotions, but some are more aware of them than others.
- Many adults value some emotions (like joy or happiness) more than others (like sadness) in themselves and in their children.
- Parents’ attitudes about feelings shape the ways they teach children about what feelings are and how they should be managed.

#### The Four Parenting Styles
How to teach children about emotions
- Every emotion is important and has a purpose. Parents can learn to recognize how they influence their children’s experience of all emotions, even “negative” emotions like sadness and anger.
- For parents to use specific parenting styles, it is important for them to understand why connecting with a child during emotional times has such a positive impact.
- Setting limits on behavior is a part of teaching children to handle their emotions appropriately.
One style (Emotion Coaching) helps children learn how to handle their own feelings so they can manage life’s challenges better.

**Emotion Coaching**

The five basic steps

Listening with empathy is at the heart of Emotion Coaching. Children want to be heard and understood. When they know you care enough to share in their feelings, they will learn to trust you with their emotions. Here are the five steps:

- Be aware of emotions
- Connect with your child
- Listen to your child
- Name emotions
- Find solutions

The training guide is replicated below. There is no PowerPoint presentation for this training. However, the training guide refers to posters for use in the activities. Please note that all posters are replaced by PowerPoint slides, which are separated by title slides.

- Slides 1-12 replace the 10 Emotions Posters in the activity on page 17 of the training guide.
- Slide 14 replaces the Emotion Coaching Poster reinforcing page 31 in the training guide.
- Slide 16 replaces the Emotion Coaching for Kids Poster reinforcing page 34 in the training guide.
Slide 7

The Ten Emotions:
How to Recognize and Value Emotions
Beginning at Birth

Slide 8

The Ten Emotions:
How to Recognize and Value Emotions
Beginning at Birth

Slide 9

The Ten Emotions:
How to Recognize and Value Emotions
Beginning at Birth

Slide 10

The Ten Emotions:
How to Recognize and Value Emotions
Beginning at Birth
Slide 11

The Ten Emotions:
How to Recognize and Value Emotions
Beginning at Birth

Slide 12

The Ten Emotions:
How to Recognize and Value Emotions
Beginning at Birth

Slide 13

Emotion Coaching:
Created by and Used with Permission of The Talaris Institute and the Gottman Institute

Slide 14

Emotion Coaching for Kids

1. What Happened?
2. How Do You Feel?
3. How Can I Help?
Emotion Coaching:  
Created by and Used with Permission of The Talair Institute and the Goldman Institute

Slide 16

Emotion Coaching Makes A Difference

1. Be Aware of Emotions
2. Connect With Your Child
3. Listen to Your Child
4. Name Emotions
5. Find Good Solutions
Emotion Coaching

The video to use with this curriculum is at the link below:
https://vimeo.com/201215290

Password: EmotCoach
2-Hour Workshop

Four Parenting Styles and Emotion Coaching

Lesson at a glance

- Opening and ground rules (5 minutes)
- Introduction (15 minutes)
- Section One - Feelings about Feelings (30 minutes)
- Section Two - The Four Parenting Styles (30 minutes)
- Section Three - Emotion Coaching (30 minutes)
- Closing (10 minutes)

Before the workshop

- Review the Workshop Guide
- Be familiar with the Research Spotlights Five Steps of Emotion Coaching and Four Parenting Styles
- Review The DVD program titled Emotion Coaching
- Prepare a workshop packet for each participant, including the What Am I Feeling? brochure, the Ten Emotions brochure, and the Four Parenting Styles brochure
- When conducting this workshop, you will need:
  - the Emotion Coaching DVD
  - either a TV/DVD or a computer and a projector
  - a white board or flip chart and markers
  - a workshop packet for each participant
  - Optional: balloons, paper, and pens for each participant
Overview

Section 1 - Feelings About Feelings
This section provides an overview of parents' attitudes about their own feelings—what researchers call “meta-emotions.” Research shows that the way parents feel about emotions shapes the way they experience their own feelings and respond to the feelings expressed by their children. Parents are powerful role models for their children, and this is especially true in showing children how emotions work and how to manage them.

Section 2 - The Four Parenting Styles
This section introduces and explains four parenting styles identified by Dr. John Gottman. Research shows that when dealing with the strong emotions of their children, most parents have a “style” or a method for handling them. The four styles are the Dismissing style, the Disapproving style, the Laissez-Faire style, and the Emotion Coaching style.

Section 3 - Emotion Coaching
This section provides an in-depth look at the five steps of Emotion Coaching. It describes how parents and caregivers can help children understand their emotions in healthy ways. When parents learn to do the steps of Emotion Coaching, their kids benefit. This section also includes activities to help explain Emotion Coaching to kids. Paying attention to the feelings of others and trying to think of solutions isn’t just for kids! It’s great for adults too.
Objectives

In the 2-hour workshop, participants will learn:

Section 1 - Feelings About Feelings

*How our “meta-emotions” shape the way we handle feelings*

- Research shows that in every culture, emotions are “felt” in the same way. It is how the emotions are expressed that differs. Everyone feels the same emotions, but some people are more aware of them than others.
- Many adults value some emotions (like joy or happiness) more than others (like sadness) in themselves and in their children.
- Parents’ attitudes about feelings shape the ways they teach children about what feelings are and how they should be managed.

Section 2 - The Four Parenting Styles

*How to teach children about emotions*

- Every emotion is important and has a purpose. Parents can learn to recognize how they influence their child’s experience of all emotions, even “negative” emotions like sadness and anger.
- For parents to use specific parenting styles, it is important for them to understand why connecting with a child during emotional times has such a positive impact.
- Setting limits on behavior is a part of teaching children to handle their emotions appropriately.
- One style (Emotion Coaching) helps children learn how to handle their own feelings so they can manage life’s challenges better.

Section 3 - Emotion Coaching

*The five basic steps*

Listening with empathy is at the heart of Emotion Coaching. Children want to be heard and understood. When they know you care enough to share in their feelings, they will learn to trust you with their emotions. Here are the five steps.

- Be aware of emotions
- Connect with your child
- Listen to your child
- Name emotions
- Find solutions
Let's begin!
Welcome the participants to this learning time. Introduce yourself and tell them about your experience with kids or tell them a little about your children or about your family when you were a child. Then invite participants to introduce themselves and tell a little about their children (names, ages, girls or boys). If participants are attending a workshop series, start with a brief follow-up from the last session.

Little reminders can help
You know your audience, and only you can determine if it's important to set the ground rules for the learning time. If necessary, use these bullet points as little reminders of common courtesy:
• All opinions are honored.
• Everyone is respected.
• Only one person talks at a time.
• Everyone has a right not to speak or participate in an activity.
• Please turn cell phones to vibrate, and no texting please.
Remind participants of the location of the restrooms and let them know they should use the facilities as needed.

Opening Comments
The purpose of this session is to share experiences and knowledge about how children learn what emotions are and how to understand them. Every person feels different emotions every day, and these emotions shape the way we think and the way we act. Learning about emotions is a long and exciting journey, and it all begins in the home. The ways in which parents handle their own emotions are powerful examples for their children as they learn about feelings. Even more powerful are the ways parents respond to the emotions of their children. The goal of this discussion is to learn what participants already know about emotions and to provide some research-based information about emotional development.

Let's start with an activity now that will help us remember how we learned about emotions.
Opening activity

“Let’s think back to when we were kids.”

The opening activity provides a chance for each participant to tell others in the
group one example of how they learned about emotions and the impact each
emotional experience can have on future experiences. The stories should focus
on early years (up to age eight or so) and can include experiences with family
members such as parents, grandparents, aunts/uncles, or older siblings. The
stories can be funny, encouraging, or sad – every story should be valued.

To begin, give an example or share a story yourself. Try to include details about
the experience so that everyone can understand how you felt, how your family
member treated you, and what you learned from it. Your narrative doesn’t have
to be a masterpiece. After telling the story, ask group members if the story
reminded them of anything they might have experienced as children. After a
brief discussion, let them know that their turn for sharing stories is next!

Ask participants to form groups of three. If possible, have the groups go to
different parts of the room so they can speak without being overheard by
others. Invite each participant to tell a story about a time that he or she can
remember experiencing an emotion while growing up. Encourage people
to focus on what they learned about emotions from the adult who responded
to them. Each group member will have a chance to tell a story.

After participants have told their stories, ask by a show of hands how many
shared stories involving being scared, happy, or sad. Ask two to three
volunteers to share their stories with the larger group. Try to get a variety of
emotions if possible.
Section 1

Meta-Emotions
Our Feelings About Feelings

In our opening activity, we told stories about how we learned about emotions. The way we feel about emotions shapes the way we handle our own emotions and the emotions of our children. As our stories showed, the adults in our early lives taught us a great deal about how emotions influence our behaviors. As parents and caregivers, we are teaching our children about emotions every day in the way we model our feelings and the different ways we respond to their feelings.

ASK PARTICIPANTS and write responses on a white board or flip chart.

1. How do you experience anger or sadness?
2. How do you express this emotion?
3. How do you feel about this?
Write on the white board or flip chart the following:

"Meta-Emotions" — The way you feel about feelings (or emotions).

**The process of exploring emotions** starts with introspection, a look at how you handle your own emotions and how that impacts your behavior. Dr. Gottman calls these "meta-emotions" — our feelings about our feelings. Think about how you feel about certain emotions. Are some feelings better than others? Should some feelings be hidden or ignored?

Watch the first section of this Parenting Counts DVD on *Emotion Coaching* produced by Talaris Institute, a nonprofit organization in Seattle. This DVD features the research of Dr. John Gottman. Through years of research with families, Dr. Gottman discovered that the way parents feel about feelings has a direct correlation to the way their children feel about emotions. In other words, your child learns about emotions from you.
Discussion Questions
Following the DVD

CONSIDER HAVING PARTICIPANTS answer their questions as a group or if more appropriate, they can write their answers on a sheet of paper.

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being very aware, how would you rate your awareness of your own emotions? In other words, do you know how you are feeling throughout the day?
   - Adults often are more aware of some emotions than others, depending on how they feel about certain emotions.

2. Do you know how you learned about emotions?
   - Parents’ attitudes about emotions usually reflect the attitudes they experienced in their homes when they were young.
   - Adults who are in touch with their feelings report better overall health.

3. Can you name your own feelings?
   - Some adults have a large emotion vocabulary (they can name lots of emotions), and others can name only a few.

4. On a scale of 1 to 10, again, 10 being very aware, do you recognize how your kids are feeling throughout the day?

5. How do you recognize your child’s emotions?
   - Parents who are more aware of their child’s emotions pay attention to more than just what the child is saying or doing.
   - They also observe body language, tone of voice, and other nonverbal or behavioral clues.

6. How do you know that your perceptions are accurate?
   - Practice and by being a good detective
   - By watching how your child responds
Discussion Questions
Following the DVD

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6. How do you know that your perceptions are accurate?
   - Practice and by being a good detective
   - By watching how your child responds
What are the benefits of being aware or “in-tune” with your child’s emotions?

- Parents who are aware of their own emotions are more likely to be aware of their children’s emotions.
- Parents who are aware of their children’s emotions usually respond to the child more quickly. This means that the child doesn’t need to escalate emotions to get attention.
- When parents are more aware of their child’s emotions, the parents are more likely to see emotional times as opportunities to teach the child about how feelings work.
- When children have parents who are more in tune with their emotions, they often do better in school and have stronger social relationships.

ASK PARTICIPANTS to write their answers a sheet of paper.

Which emotions do you feel are “good” emotions?

Which emotions do you feel are “bad”?

Are there emotions that are neutral or in between?

- Many parents think of emotions like happiness or joy as “positive” and emotions like sadness or anger as “negative.”
- Ignoring certain emotions doesn’t mean that we don’t feel them—they still can affect the way we think and act.
- When children learn that some emotions are bad, they can feel that something is wrong with them when that emotion arises. This can lead to negative self-perception.
- How parents feel about the experiences of anger and sadness plays a big role in how they teach their children about these emotions.
Name that emotion!

Take out the set of *Ten Emotions* cards (these are large black and white photos of children). Give everyone something to write with and a piece of paper. Tell participants that you will be showing them pictures of children who are feeling different emotions. Show them one at a time, and for each picture, participants should do two things:

1) Name the emotion.
2) Write a few words describing how they feel when their child shows that emotion.

Make sure you show the side of the card *without* the label for the emotion at the top.

After showing all ten of the cards, have the participants break into groups of four or five. Group members can first share answers to see what each person thought an emotion was. After this, they can share how their own children show these emotions and how they feel as parents when their children have these emotions.

Fun with balloons!

Using either a balloon or a piece of paper, ask each person to draw a face that represents an emotion. Once people are finished, ask how many drew a happy, sad, angry, or scared face.

Make the point that some emotions are easier to recognize than others. In fact, some children hide their feelings or are afraid to express them. For instance, disappointment may be hard to notice. Some children may act out, while others may get very quiet and withdrawn. Select two of the drawings and have the artists tell how the emotion in the drawing is expressed by their child. Talk about ways to make it safe for the child to express the emotion.
Take-home messages

**Recognize emotions.** Learn to be a detective when it comes to your child's feelings. Look for clues about how she is feeling. Sometimes it's easy to tell what your child is feeling, but other times she might not be able to tell you. When you're in tune with her emotions, you'll be off to a great start in teaching her how to understand and cope with them.

**Value emotions.** If you grew up in a family that ignored or did not allow all emotions to be expressed, it doesn't mean that your children need to learn the same lessons about emotions. You can change this pattern. Start creating a home that values emotions by becoming more aware of your feelings.

**Understand emotions.** It's perfectly normal to feel lots of different emotions throughout the day. All emotions are important emotions because they help us experience the ups and downs of life, and they help us understand how others are feeling. When it comes to your children's emotions, make it safe for them to share how they feel. That's the first step in helping them learn to handle emotions.
Section 2

The Four Parenting Styles
How Do You Parent?

Note to discussion leader: The purpose of this section is to help parents understand how children learn about feelings from their parents and caregivers. Before moving on to the next topic, read the tips for each question that suggest how research can be applied to everyday life. If time is short, note that the information from research is presented below with most important ideas listed first. (Complete research information is available from the Research Spotlight titled Four Parenting Styles.)

Let’s begin!

The goals of this discussion are to learn what participants already know about teaching children emotions and to support them in making parenting choices with information from research.

Opening comments

We all have feelings. These feelings shape how we think and how we act. Some parents are uncomfortable with certain emotions and try to avoid expressing them, while others try to be aware of their feelings so they can understand them. Children learn about feelings—whether they are good or bad and how to deal with them—from the most important people in their lives. This means you!

How can parents be good examples for helping kids deal with emotions? How can parents help their children learn healthy ways to manage feelings like anger, joy, and sadness?

ASK PARTICIPANTS and write responses on a white board or flip chart

How do you want your child to handle his or her feelings of anger?

We’ll talk about the four main ways parents respond to emotions and what kids learn from each of these different parenting styles.
How do children learn about emotions?
We have four short videos to watch about the four main ways parents teach their children about emotions. As you watch the videos, see if you identify with one of these styles more than the others. You may find that you can see yourself in every situation.

On the board, write in four columns the name of each style:
- Dismissing
- Disapproving
- Laissez-Faire
- Emotion Coaching

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View DVD
Section II

All Four Parenting Styles

We're going to discuss all four parenting styles one at a time. So let's watch the first section again and see what we notice the second time through.

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View DVD
Section II - Part 1

Dismissing Parenting
Discussion Questions
Following the DVD

1 What do children learn about feelings from the Dismissing style?

- Children learn that the “negative” emotions (especially sadness or anger) can’t be trusted. They learn that it’s only good to feel happy, even though they have other feelings.
- Children learn that it’s better to “get over” certain emotions rather than to feel them and understand them. Children may also learn to hide their emotions.
- Children learn that some feelings won’t be noticed until they escalate into stronger feelings.
- Children don’t learn how to cool down from emotions like sadness or anger, which can make getting along with others more difficult.

Distraction is a method many parents use at times, particularly in public places, and that’s okay. Sometimes refocusing the attention of little ones, especially under the age of three, can be helpful. But when you have the time and the private moment to talk about what your child is feeling, it will accomplish three things:

1. It will help the child deal with the emotion in the moment.
2. It will build a sense of trust and connection between you.
3. It will tell your child that his or her emotion is important.
2 What do children learn about feelings from the Disapproving style?

- Dissapproving parents may be uncomfortable with displays of emotions, etc.
- Kids can learn that some feelings are "good" and other feelings are "bad." When children feel the "bad" emotions, they will think something is wrong with them (or that they are bad themselves) even though their feelings are normal.
- Kids learn that certain feelings should be switched off like a light. They will still have feelings like sadness and anger and they won't know where to turn for help.
- This parenting style can have long-term negative effects. Because children don't learn how to handle their feelings, they are more likely to have trouble concentrating in school and getting along with others.
- Children will be less likely to share certain feelings with their parents if they know they might be punished for them. They will feel more alone or confused when these feelings come.

View DVD
Section II - Part 3

Laissez-Faire Parenting

3 What do children learn about feelings from the Laissez-Faire style?

- Children learn that all feelings are valued, and they can be open about their feelings with others. This is a very important part of learning what emotions are.
- When all emotions and responses to emotions are accepted, children learn that it's okay to act out or misbehave when they have strong feelings, and that almost "anything goes" when it comes to their behavior.
- Children don't learn how to calm down when they feel excited, angry, or sad.
- Without guidance in learning how to handle their emotions, children don't learn how to act appropriately around others and can have trouble keeping friends or concentrating in school.

Laissez-Faire parents are compassionate and loving, but they miss the step of helping the child understand the emotion and working to a solution.
What can children learn about feelings from the Emotion Coaching style?

- Children learn that feelings are important and can be trusted. They learn what different feelings are called and begin to understand why they feel the way they do.
- Children learn that they are not alone with their feelings and that they can bring their emotions to their parents with confidence that they will be loved and comforted.
- Children learn that all feelings are okay, but not all behaviors are okay. (Repeat that statement for emphasis.)
- Emotion Coaching parents take the time to teach children how to solve problems life brings no matter how small they may seem.
- Children learn how to calm themselves down when they have strong emotions. This can especially help children concentrate at school.
- Children learn about their own feelings and the feelings of others, which helps them form strong friendships.
Workshop Activity

Parenting from all sides

This activity is designed to help participants understand that most parents use all four styles at different times in their lives.

No parent is an Emotion Coach all the time – in fact, Dr. Gottman says in the DVD that successful Emotion Coaches only use this style **30 percent of the time**. This means that most of the time parents handle their children’s emotions differently.

**Write the four parenting styles on the board and the slogan that matches:**

- Dismissing – “Just get over it. Let’s go do something else!”
- Disaproving – “You shouldn’t feel that way.”(There’s no reason to be sad.)
- Laissez-Faire – “Anything goes.”
- Emotion Coaching – “Empathize and guide.”

**ASK PARTICIPANTS**

In small groups (three or four people), have participants share examples from their own lives as parents. Use these questions to guide their discussions:

1. Try to think of an example when you used the techniques of each “type” of parent. One option might be for the participants to choose two of the four styles, and then choose one to share about.

2. What was going on in their lives that led them to respond in those ways?

3. How could they do something different next time?
Take-home messages

Here are some things to remember in trying to help your children learn about emotions.

**Feelings** aren't good or bad. In fact, all feelings are normal, and a child can't control how he feels. Make sure that your child isn't punished for feelings. Instead, let him know that you'll help him figure out what to do when he experiences strong emotions.

**When your child** is upset, don't try to make her happy right away. Let her know that it's okay to feel whatever she is feeling, and that you'll be there for her to help her understand the emotion.

**Emotion Coaching** parents value sharing emotional times with their children. When your child is expressing emotions or is confused about a feeling, use this as an opportunity to bring your child closer. Don't push your child away or discipline his behavior. This is a great chance to teach him about emotions. You'll be helping your child learn to handle his emotions, and you'll create a stronger bond along the way.

**It is important** to help children learn that their feelings are important, but it's also important to teach limits on their behavior. Children like to know where the boundaries are, and it's important that you teach them what's okay, and what's not okay.

The big message is that parenting counts!
Section 3

The Five Steps of Emotion Coaching

Note to discussion leader: Before the workshop, read the Research Spotlight titled Five Steps of Emotion Coaching

Let’s begin!

The goal of this discussion is to learn what participants already know about emotions and how they currently teach their children about feelings. The objective is to provide parents with options that are supported by research.

Opening comments

The topic for this session is the Five Steps of Emotion Coaching. In his research, Dr. John Gottman found that parents typically use four different parenting styles when teaching children about emotions. One of these parenting styles, Emotion Coaching, has been demonstrated to be the best approach. When parents take the time to use the five steps of Emotion Coaching, children feel that their emotions are valued. As a result, children learn how to self-soothe or calm themselves down when they have strong feelings or when they need a break. This ability helps them concentrate better in school and form strong friendships.

ASK PARTICIPANTS and write responses on a white board or flip chart.

1. What is empathy?
   - The ability to relate to or understand what someone else is feeling.
   - Brain science tells us that a child is not usually capable of showing empathy until around age two.

2. Can you share a time when someone showed empathy to you?

3. How did it make you feel?
INTRODUCE DVD

We have a short video to watch about the *Five Steps of Emotion Coaching*. As you watch the video, try to imagine what it would be like to take these steps with your child.

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**View DVD**  
Section III  

**The Five Steps of Emotion Coaching**

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**Discussion Questions**  
**Following the DVD**

**1 When is the best time for Emotion Coaching?**

- Any situation can be an opportunity for Emotion Coaching, but most parents use it when a child appears to be confused by or struggling with her feelings. When you notice your child is angry, joyful, or sad, try to see this as an opportunity for teaching what emotions are and how they work.
- Sometimes a child has strong feelings, but doesn’t let them show. The more tuned in you are to your child’s feelings, the more opportunities you’ll have for Emotion Coaching.
- Sometimes a child’s feelings are overwhelming, and you’ll need to draw close and hold her a moment before trying to help her figure out how she’s feeling.
- Emotion Coaching takes time, so if you’re in a rush, it’s probably better to wait until another time to guide your child through his or her emotions. Also, if you are struggling with your own feelings about a situation or your child’s behavior, you might not be in a good position to explore your child’s feelings either.
2 What is empathy, and why is it so important in teaching about emotions?

- Using empathy starts with listening carefully to what your child is saying and observing how he is feeling. Don’t tell your child what he should be feeling, but let him share what’s really going on inside. Remember, this is his emotion, not yours.
- Empathy means you’re sharing your child’s feelings with him, letting him know that he’s not alone with his emotions and that you understand him.
- When children experience empathy, they learn to trust their feelings—and they learn to trust you with these feelings.
- Sometimes children will struggle to find ways to tell you how they feel. Try to reflect a child’s feelings back to him with simple statements (“Are you feeling sad about losing your toy?”)

3 Why is naming emotions so important?

- Young children experience powerful feelings, but they don’t know why they experience them. When you put a name to these feelings, children feel more understood.
- Helping a child name emotions is a great way to help build her emotional vocabulary, which is an important part of healthy emotional development.
- When a child can name her emotions, it often helps in situations when she experiences strong feelings by giving her a chance to recover and self-soothe.
- Children who can name their own emotions are more likely to notice and identify the emotions of others.

4 Setting limits and problem solving: How do children learn to handle their emotions by themselves?

- It is important for parents to set limits on their children’s behaviors at times. Children are more successful when they know where the boundaries are. This means that they are actively looking toward their parents for guidance.
- Your child needs you to teach him how to problem-solve when he is in a tough or a new situation. Sometimes, these are the experiences that bring up the most confusing or strong emotions. Once your child has had the time to calm down from a strong emotion (this can take up to 20 minutes), brainstorm together some possible solutions.
- As children get older, it is important that they learn to find solutions on their own. Unless his ideas are not acceptable (such as in the instances of stealing and cheating), give your child the freedom to choose his own solutions and try them out. You might be surprised what creative options he finds!
- Be patient. It takes a long time for children to become comfortable managing emotions. These skills develop well into adulthood.
Let's watch the video again and see what we notice the second time through.

**View DVD**
**Section III**

The Five Steps of Emotion Coaching

Let's review the Five Steps of Emotion Coaching

1. **Be aware of emotions**
   - Tune into your child's feelings and your own.

2. **Connect with your child**
   - Use emotional moments as opportunities to connect with your child.

3. **Listen to your child**
   - Respect your child's feelings by taking time to listen carefully.

4. **Name emotions**
   - Help your child identify and name emotions.

5. **Find solutions**
   - Explore solutions to problems together.
Take-home messages

Here are some things to remember in trying to help your child learn about emotions.

By drawing close to your child when she has strong feelings, she'll learn to trust you with her emotions. This will lead to more opportunities for Emotion Coaching later.

Being an Emotion Coach means being a role model to help your child process emotions. A great way to do this is to name your own emotions throughout the day. You'll not only be more aware of how you're feeling, but you'll also be teaching your child the names of the different emotions people have.

You are a powerful role model for your child, and when you show him empathy, you are teaching him how to show empathy to others. When children learn to understand the feelings of others, they can form stronger friendships.

Remember that a child's feelings aren't the problem, but his behavior might be. Redirection may be needed when children act out inappropriately.
Workshop Activities

Emotion Coaching for Kids
This activity is designed to help parents teach their children the basics of Emotion Coaching. Use the 3 Step Poster as a aid. Have the participants break up into groups of four to five.

Introduce this idea: Now that you are “experts” in the concepts of Emotion Coaching, here is a simple way to teach the steps to your family. Because kids may not be ready for all five steps (often this is age related), the focus of this activity is on “the big three.”

Part I—Teach children to name emotions (“What’s that emotion called?”)
Using the Ten Emotions cards or brochures (if possible, have the Ten Emotions brochures for all participants to take home), have the parents take turns “practicing” teaching kids about all ten emotions. Encourage them to use child-friendly words and to act out the emotions and explain how they feel. You may also want to mention that for younger children, it is age appropriate to only focus on one or two emotions at any one time. Over time, the goal is for children to be able to name all ten emotions by looking at them and then recognizing each expression in others.

Kids love making faces, so start there. Then add actions like crying, stomping, crossing their arms, and hiding their faces. Ask them how they would act if they were feeling sad or angry.

Part II—Be on the lookout for feelings (“Who’s upset?”)
Once kids can recognize some emotions, the next step is encouraging children to notice them on their own. Start by helping children notice when somebody is upset (this is usually more clearly expressed than happiness). In their groups, have participants brainstorm ways they can encourage their children to notice when people are upset. Some ideas might be:

- Having children look out for people who are upset at public places (parks, stores, school) and point them out to the parent.
- Role playing emotions. Let children pretend to be happy / sad / angry and ask them what solutions might make them feel that way.
- Having children share stories of times when they noticed someone was upset and what the person did.
Part III—"How can you help?"

Help children learn to think of solutions to their problems. This is an important part of helping them learn how to handle their own emotions. Using the *Ten Emotions* brochure, have the group brainstorm ways they would try to help a child who was feeling these emotions strongly. Then have them take turns practicing "translating" these ideas into child-friendly words, and encourage them to give positive feedback to each other.

Encourage participants to use the *Ten Emotions* brochure to ask their children what they would do if they saw another child feeling one of those emotions. After listening to their children's ideas, parents can help the children think through other possibilities as well.

**Animals Have Feelings Too! (optional activity for kids)**

Ask every child to choose an animal that he or she would like to pretend to be. There can be lots of different animals or several of the same.

Group the animals by categories: all cats, all dogs, all tigers, etc. Next, ask all of the cats to stand and pretend to be very sad. Then talk about why they are sad and come up with a way to make them feel better. Do the same with each animal group.

**Caught in the Act of Emotion Coaching**

When learning about the Four Parenting Styles and Emotion Coaching, it's easy to feel like only "perfect" parents teach their children about emotions. No parent is perfect. Remember, Emotion Coaching parents only use all five steps of emotion coaching about 30 percent of the time. Chances are that each of you has already used the steps of Emotion Coaching, but just didn't know it. (If time permits: This activity will help reassure parents that they really can do the steps by reminding them of the ways they've already done them.)

**Activity:** Have the participants break into groups of three or four, and have each person tell about a time he or she felt a close connection with his or her children. Encourage participants to describe what happened in lots of detail, including what led up to the bonding time and what happened afterward. After each person shares an example, have the rest of the group draw connections between the story and the five steps of Emotion Coaching.

After each group member has had a chance to share a story, have the groups pick one or two stories to share with the rest of the group and describe which of the Emotion Coaching steps they identified in the example.
Wrap-up

Let's review what we have learned. Help me recap concepts discussed and see if you can personalize the information by imagining yourself using Emotion Coaching with your family. Remember, Emotion Coaching works on adults too!

“Meta-Emotions” – how you feel about feelings.

- Parents who are aware of their own emotions are more likely to be aware of their children's emotions. Likewise, parents who ignore emotions will teach their children to do the same.
- Parents' attitudes about emotions usually reflect the attitudes they experienced from their parents and caregivers.
- Parents' attitudes about feelings shape the ways they teach children what feelings are and how they should be handled.
- Parents who are aware of their child's emotions pay attention to body language, tone of voice, and other clues along with their child's words and behaviors.

The Four Parenting Styles

- Emotions are a normal part of life. Both you and your child feel them every day. The goal is to learn to value your own feelings and the feelings of your child.
- When some emotions are dismissed or criticized, children learn that it's better to "get over" these emotions than to feel them and understand them. Children may also learn to hide their emotions which can lead to behavioral challenges later.
- When children are punished for feeling certain ways, they will be less likely to bring those feelings to their parents. They will feel more alone when these feelings come.
- When parents use the Emotion Coaching style, children learn what emotions are and how to self-soothe when feelings are strong.
- When children learn self-awareness and how to respond to both their own emotions and the emotions of others, they can form stronger friendships and do better in school.
Emotion Coaching

Listening with empathy is at the heart of Emotion Coaching. Children want to be heard and understood. When they know you care enough to share in their feelings, they will learn to trust you with their emotions.

- When children have parents who use the Emotion Coaching parenting style, they learn about emotions in healthy ways. As a result, these children tend to do better in school, have better relationship with their parents, and make stronger friendships. They may even get sick less often.
- Emotion Coaching takes time—it can’t be rushed. If you don’t have the time to go through the five steps at one moment, make time later to talk about the emotional event.
- It’s important to set clear limits on behavior. Helping your child think through appropriate solutions to her problem will help her learn to handle her own emotions as she grows.

Remember, you can’t expect to use Emotion Coaching all of the time. If you average 30% of the time, you’re doing great! Just remember, Parenting Counts!

If you have a participant evaluation, ask the group to fill it out now.

We hope that you have enjoyed this workshop and that you go home knowing just how much your parenting counts! For more information on parenting, visit

www.ParentingCounts.org

Note to workshop facilitators:

Your suggestions and comments are encouraged! Please let us know how you use this Emotion Coaching kit and how we can improve it in any way.

Send your email to feedback@ParentingCounts.org.