

LET'S TALK ABOUT FEELINGS: Brain Building Tips for Encouraging Healthy Emotional Development in Young Children



HAPPY

PRACTICE POSITIVITY

Tip

Practice saying things in new ways with your child. You can take turns saying something negative then try to talk about the same thing in a positive way: "I don't like loud noises" can become "I like quiet sounds."

Brainy Background™

When your child learns how to describe things and people in different ways, they're learning communication skills and how to understand others' perspectives. These skills are helpful in having good relationships now and in the future.



Like adults, children experience a variety of emotions every day. In the first five years of life, children are making important connections in their brains as they learn about feelings – their own and others- and also how to communicate their emotions.

Positive, supportive interactions during everyday moments with parents and caregivers help children develop important skills for understanding and communicating emotions.

Try these fun, science-based tips with your child to support healthy brain development that will help them thrive now and in life!



STRESSED

STRESS BUSTERS

Tip

During a calm moment, invite your child to come up with their own ideas for managing stressed feelings. You can make suggestions, such as using words to explain their feelings, hitting something that can't be hurt, or counting numbers. Try out the ideas and brainstorm others.

Brainy Background™

When you give your child some responsibility for coming up with their own ideas for managing stressed feelings, you're helping them learn to manage their emotions and behavior. You're also helping them learn to take on challenges.



FRUSTRATED

USE YOUR WORDS

Tip

Does your child get upset and start to cry and whine? Remind them to use their words to say what is bothering them or what they want. If they're too upset to talk, try to guess what they want to say until they let you know you "got" it!

Brainy Background™

Helping your child learn to communicate their upset feelings in words is one of the most important tools you can give them for managing these feelings, and expressing themselves in ways that can be understood and responded to.



PROMOTING EMPATHY

FACE OFF

Tip

Make a face that expresses a feeling and ask your child to make a face that expresses the opposite feeling. If you make a happy face, they should make a sad face. Talk about when they remember people making these faces. Then take a selfie together with your goofiest faces!

Brainy Background™

This game helps your child learn empathy, by practicing to understand the emotions of others, and express their own feelings. It's an important skill that we use every day as adults!



LONELY

SEE YOU LATER

Tip

Before you go to work or drop your child off somewhere, share a favorite "See you later" story, such as "After a while, crocodile" or "See you soon, cocoon." Create a new goodbye tradition. Tell them that after it's finished, it will be time for you to leave. Reassure them you will see them later.

Brainy Background™

Transitions can be difficult for toddlers. When you create a goodbye tradition through the "See you later" poem or another story, you give them some control, which helps them feel safe.

Visit WeAreBrainBuilders.org for more information on brain building tips to make the most of everyday moments with your child.