Emotion coaching is a way of responding to a child’s emotions that helps them to learn about their feelings and make helpful behaviour choices.

Start with the first step and build from there!

What we know is that connecting with your child through the use of emotion coaching is really helpful.

So practice when you can, but don’t feel that you have to emotion coach every time.

If you miss an opportunity to emotion coach, you can always talk about the situation later with your child.

This helps them know that you’ve recognised their feelings.

Flip over to find the 5 steps to emotion coaching

What if my child doesn’t want to talk?

It’s important not to pressure them. Let your child know that you are available to talk when they are ready. Engaging children in a drawing or colouring activity may help.

What if my child rejects my attempts to use emotion coaching?

Stay calm. Talking about feelings and emotions is hard. Take a breath and remind yourself not to take it personally.

What if I feel so angry?!

Only use emotion coaching when you are feeling calm. Mistakes happen, and if we do respond to a child out of anger, it is important to apologise. When we do this, we show children that we all make mistakes when we are angry, but it is important to apologise.

What if the child’s behaviour escalates?

Try to acknowledge low levels of emotion before they get higher, such as disappointment and frustration. Allow them to feel understood and supported by first helping the child name their feelings, before asking questions about what is going on. If our children’s behaviour does escalate, it is important to label their emotions, but set limits about what is appropriate behaviour (e.g. “I can see you’re feeling angry, but it is not OK to yell”).

Getting On Track in Time

– Got It!

Rivendell, Thomas Walker Hospital, Hospital Road, Concord West NSW 2138

SLHD-GotIt@health.nsw.gov.au

If you have additional concerns and would like to seek extra support you can:

Contact the Family Referral Service
1800 066 757
Go to www.deadytots.com.au

Your school is there to help!

Speak with your child’s classroom teacher, the Principal or the school counsellor.

Have a yarn with your GP about your child’s social and emotional well being.
Five Steps of Emotion Coaching

1. Be aware of how your Child is feeling

Look at their facial expressions and body language.
Imagine yourself in their shoes – how would you feel?
Happy? Angry? Lonely? Sad? Excited?

2. Recognise an opportunity for connecting and teaching

Are you calm? It is really important for adults to model how they manage and regulate their strong emotions.
Step away and take a break if you need to.
Is your child calm and in a space where they can reflect and engage in conversation with you?

3. Connect and listen to your Child

Help your child to feel understood and heard.
"I wonder if something is bothering you?"
"I notice your head is down... I can see you're looking away..."
"If someone did that to me I'd feel pretty angry..."

4. Use words to describe what they are feeling

Support your child to put words to their feelings.
This gives them a way to explain how they are feeling and makes strong emotions easier to manage.
"It looks like you are feeling really happy"
"I can see you are very frustrated"

5. Set limits and help your child solve their problem

Support your child to find solutions.
"What ideas do you have?"
"What can you do?"
"Is there something I can do?"

Emotion coaching in action Here Jason uses emotion coaching with Sam who is refusing to go to school.

Step 1
Jason: Come on it's time for school
Sam: No I'm not going!!
Jason: Come on we have to go, we're already late!
Girl: No, my tummy hurts.

Step 2
Jason: You don't want to go to school, do you bub?
Sam: No.

Step 3
Jason: You look really sad and a bit worried, I wonder if something has happened at school?
Sam: Kinda...
Jason: Can you sit with me and tell me what happened?
Sam: They are all mean to me...
Jason: Oh really? Can you tell me about it?
Sam: It's sports day and don't wanna go. I always get chosen last for the game. They say I'm no good.

Step 4
Jason: That sounds awful, no wonder you don't want to go to school, feels horrible to be left out aren't?
Sam: Yes.

Step 5
Jason: I know. Why don't we have a yarn about it on the way to school and figure out what we can do about it?
Sam: Okay.

From "Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child: The Heart of Parenting" By John Gottman