

Parenting Emotionally Literate Children

We live in times where gadgets seem to gain more importance than human relationships. Young children struggle to cope, as their nimble fingers negotiate these gadgets given to them as pacifiers by super busy parents. What they enjoy as a play thing is now literally playing with their lives. Therefore “emotional intelligence” or emotional literacy is the need of the hour. The onus on parents is to make an effort to firstly understand child behaviour and secondly to bring them up in an emotionally stable manner.

Yes, the first task is for parents to understand the behaviour of their child. This requires time to observe and make emotional deposits in their children. It means we need to invest time and effort to express our emotions appropriately and effectively. Emotionally literate parents bring up emotionally healthy children. Secondly, parents have to cope with the demands of urban parenting and stay connected with their children. It’s important for parents to connect with their children and be re available to them. Here are some skills that the parents can remember to develop to meet the challenge.

Model social-emotional skills for your child*

1. Focus on your child’s strengths first before being constructively critical.
2. Follow up with consequences for misbehavior.
3. Ask children how they feel and be understanding of those feelings first before making suggestions.
4. Practice ways to stay calm when angry (like counting to ten, thinking of other things, finding the positive when it seems none exists).
5. Avoid shaming your child.
6. Be willing to apologize.
7. Give children choices where appropriate and respect their wishes if it really doesn’t matter (gain authority by being firm on important matters).
8. Ask questions that help children solve problems on their own.
9. Read books and stories together.
10. Encourage sharing and helping.

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[These are recommendations from the National Staff Development Council of US. Source: BIGEQCAMPAIGN.org]*