

Are You an Emotion Coach Parent?

The Dismissing Parent	The Disapproving Parent	The Laissez-Faire Parent	The Emotion Coach Parent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treats the child's feelings as unimportant, trivial • Disengages from or ignores the child's feelings • Wants the child's negative emotions to disappear quickly • Believes children feelings are irrational and therefore don't count • Focuses more on how to get over the emotions than on the meaning of the emotion itself • Shows little interest in what the child trying to communicate • May lack awareness of emotions n self and others • Believes the child's negative emotions mean the child is not well adjusted • Believes the child's negative emotions reflect badly on the parents • Feels uncertain about what to do with the child's emotions • Sees the child's emotions as a demand to fix things • Minimizes the child's feelings, downplaying the events that led to the emotion • Does not problem-solve with the child, believes that the passage of time will resolve most problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays many of the dismissing parent's behaviors, but in a more negative way • Judges and criticizes the child's emotional expression • Is over aware of the need to set limits on their children • Emphasizes conformity to good standards of behavior • Believes negative emotions need to be controlled • Believes emotions make people weak; children must be emotionally tough for survival • Believes negative emotions are unproductive, a waste of time • Reprimands, disciplines, or punishes the child for emotional expression, whether the child is misbehaving or not. • Is concerned with the child's obedience to authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freely accepts all emotional expression from the child • Offers comfort to the child experiencing negative feelings • Offers little guidance on behavior • Is permissive; does not set limits • Believes there is little you can do about negative emotions other than ride them out • Does not help the child solve problems • Believes that managing negative emotions is a matter of hydraulics, release the emotion and the work is done • Does not teach the child about emotions <p style="color: blue; font-style: italic;">Effects of this style on children > They don't learn to regulate their emotions. They have trouble concentrating, forming friendships, and getting along with other children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values the child's negative emotions as an opportunity for intimacy • Is aware of and values his/her own emotions • Sees the world of negative emotions as an important arena for parenting • Does not poke fun at or make light of the child's negative feelings • Does not say how the child should feel • Uses emotional moments as a time to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - listen to the child - empathize with soothing words and affection - help the child label the emotion he or she is feeling - offer guidance on regulating emotions - set limits and teach acceptable expression of emotions - teach problem-solving skills <p style="color: blue; font-style: italic;">Effects of this style on children > They learn to trust their feelings, regulate their own emotions, and solve problems. They have a high self-esteem, learn well, and get along well with others.</p>
<p style="color: blue; font-style: italic;">Effects of these styles on children > They learn that their feelings are wrong, inappropriate, not valid. They may learn that there is something inherently wrong with them because of the way they feel. They may have difficulty regulating their own emotions.</p>			

How to Respond to Kids' Big Emotions?

Angry	You feel angry when somebody takes your stuff without telling you. I am just here if you need me. You sound so angry. You can tell me what happen when you are ready. I see this is not easy for you / I am just here to keep you safe.	<h3 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Practice with Your Family</h3> <p>A. For this week, take the time to notice your own tone of voice, body language, bodily sensations when you have a strong reaction to something. It will give you clues about your feelings. Journal about these feelings.</p> <p>B. Observe your child(ren) for a while, with no judgement and only with the purpose of getting tuned to their current emotions (in conflict situations, words are sometimes unnecessary). Write these down.</p> <p>C. In any conflict and stressful situation, take a small PAUSE of at least 6 seconds to let your feeling subside, then act and respond, calmly and intentionally. To pass the 6 seconds, think of your 6 favorite vacation spots, 6 favorite books or films.</p>
Frustrated	You are so frustrated that you cannot have that sweet right now. It is so frustrating to _____ (mention what they are frustrated about)	
Disappointed	That must be a big disappointment for you. You were looking forward to it. I hear you and I am just here. It's hard when things don't turn out the way we want it.	
Embarrassed	That must have been so embarrassing for you.	
Disgusted	Today this food doesn't seem appetizing to you. What do you feel like eating?	
Sadness	That must have hurt your feelings. Tell me what happened. You really miss _____. I can understand that. I miss ____ too.	
Scared	First day of school can be scary - so many things to get used to. (Try to be specific to show them you really understand)	
Anxious / Worried	It is ok to feel this way / I am just here for you / What plan do you think we can do?	
<h3 style="margin: 0;">Helping Kids with Their Feelings</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listen with full attention 2. Acknowledge their feelings with a word, e.g., "Oh," "Mmm...," "I see." 3. Give their feelings a name 4. Give them their wishes in fantasy. It helps when someone understand how much we like something (e.g., I hear how you want them so much. Let my magic work... abrakadabra. There you go!) 		

References

Faber, Adele, and Elaine Mazlish. 2012. *How to talk so kids will listen and listen so kids will talk*. New York, NY: Scribner.

Gottman, John M. 1998. *Raising an emotionally intelligent child*. New York, NY: Fireside.



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