

# Emotion Coaching

## *Parenting with H.E.A.R.T.*

### Home in on your child's emotions

- This first step is all about tuning into your child's feelings. This might involve paying attention to their facial expressions, body language, or verbal cues. Being aware of your child's emotional state is the first step in providing effective support.

### Embrace the opportunity for connection and teaching

- Recognize the emotional moments as opportunities for bonding and imparting emotional wisdom. Instead of shutting down their feelings, validate them, and use them as a stepping stone to teach about emotions and their appropriate expression.

### Actively listen and affirm their feelings

- Show your child that their emotions matter by giving them your undivided attention. This can be achieved by reflecting back what they say, which helps them feel understood. Validation is key; let them know that it's okay to feel the way they do.

### Recognize - help them recognize and label their emotions

- Assist your child in verbally identifying their feelings. This step not only aids in their understanding of the current emotional state but also helps them to communicate their feelings more effectively in the future.

### Teach problem-solving and set limits

- As much as we validate and empathize with our child's feelings, it's also important to guide their behavior. After you've identified and validated their feelings, discuss acceptable ways of expressing those feelings and help them find solutions to their problems.

**Acknowledgment:**

These materials are a modified approach to Emotion Coaching, which is originally outlined by Dr. John Gottman and Joan DeClaire in their influential book, "Raising An Emotionally Intelligent Child" (1998, Simon and Schuster). More information can also be found on the Gottman Institute website at <https://www.gottman.com/>. Emotion Coaching is a researched and evidence-based approach shown to be effective in nurturing emotionally healthy and resilient children. Our adapted model, the HEART process, honors the principles of Gottman and DeClaire's pioneering work while providing a memorable acronym to help parents recall these steps during the demands of daily life.

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## Parenting with H.E.A.R.T.

### Action Plan

#### Home in on your child's emotions

- Describe a challenging situation you anticipate facing. What might trigger this situation?
- How might your child react emotionally? What verbal and non-verbal cues might they show?

#### Embrace the opportunity for connection and teaching

- How can you shift your perspective to view this situation as an opportunity for connection and teaching?
- What specific steps will you take to use this situation to foster connection and promote learning?

#### Actively listen and affirm their feelings

- How will you show your child that you are listening to them? What might you say or do?
- How can you validate their feelings in this situation?

#### Recognize - help them recognize and label their emotions

- How will you help your child label their emotions in this situation?
- What specific words or phrases can you use to assist them in identifying their feelings?

#### Teach problem-solving and set limits

- How will you guide your child towards a resolution or help them to problem-solve in this situation?
- If you need to set limits, how will you do this? How will you communicate these boundaries effectively?

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