

Take Time to Parent Smart

Emotionally Intelligent Parenting

Parents are besieged: "Show understanding;" "Be firm." "Take time to smell the roses." "Don't let 'em see you sweat." Every expert seems to spout advice that contradicts the last expert. And no expert sounds like he or she spent five minutes (let alone the last 12 years) with *your* child.

Amid the battles over shoes for school, getting along with siblings, or finishing homework on time, parents need strategies which help a variety of kids learn responsibility, respect, and self-confidence.

Emotionally intelligent parenting works by offering principles (how and why) rather than prescriptions (precisely what to do):

- Understanding yourself, especially emotions as they occur
- Labeling & expressing feelings of self and others
- Empathy, validation, Encouragement skills
- Balancing emotion and reason in decision-making
- Taking responsibility for emotions, esp. self-motivation and happiness

Emotionally intelligent parenting is likely to result in the following for adults:

- Lower stress due to fewer contests-of-will
- Less over-work due to expecting responsibility and using consequences
- More relaxation and self-soothing due to greater awareness and improved care for self

For children, this approach is more likely to produce:

- Initial resistance, both active and passive
- Increased self-control, both with immediate gratification and expressions of anger
- Greater responsibility for self, respect to others
- Increased self-confidence and resistance to peer pressure

Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

--John Mayer &
Peter Salovey

This newsletter seeks to briefly summarize what we know about strategies and outcomes of effective parenting.

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For additional resources, visit

Dreamcatcher

Family
Life
website

www.
uwyo.edu/ag/ces/dream.htm

Research Update: Emotionally Intelligent Parenting

Parent Authority & Practices: African-American Families

Smetana, J.G. (2000). *Middle-class African American adolescents' and parents' conceptions of parental authority and parenting practices*. *Child Development*, 71 (6) 1672-1686.

A longitudinal study of African-American parents and teens found:

- Moms more than dads saw authority as legitimate
- Kids accept parent authority over moral rather than personal issues (but moms want the last word on both categories)
- Parents become less insistent on compliance in later adolescence
- Moms and teens both saw church as authority for practical and friendship

Self-handicapping and Parenting of Teens

Greaven, S.H., Santor, D.A., Richard Thompson, R., & Zuroff, D.C.. (1998). *Adolescent self-handicapping, depressive affect, and maternal parenting styles*. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 29(6), 631-646.

Self-handicapping in teens is related to mothers' parenting, depression (but not synonymous with depression) and most typical of older girls. Mothers stressed by conflict with depressed children are more likely to become depressed.

Differences in Parenting of Teens

Feinberg, M.E., Jenae M. Neiderhiser, J.M., Simmens, S., Reiss, D. & Hetherington, E.M. (2000). *Sibling comparison of differential parental treatment in adolescence*. *Child Development*. 71(6)1611-1628.

Parenting patterns with teens in the same family showed no differences by gender, some by self-worth, and emotionality. Younger siblings viewed parents as more negative (favoring older sibs). Negative treatment of sibs often positively impacted well-behaved teens.

Recommendations:

- Decrease peer pressure, rejection
- Reduce family poverty, psychopathology, marital discord, punitive discipline
- Decrease early onset of target problems, stress

Targets for protection:

- Improve social norms, community boundaries
- Improve school quality
- Positive peer models
- Build positive parenting skills
- Teach social skills, self-efficacy to youth
- Social support of youth

Parents' Views of Support & Actions

Sarason, B.R., Pierce, G.R., Bannerman, A., & Sarason, I.G.. (1993). *Investigating the antecedents of perceived social support*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 65(5) 1071-1085. Prior research on parent support found:

- Social-support that built self-esteem
 - Quality of interaction with parents (varies child-to-child)
 - Climate of acceptance in both positive and negative interaction
- College students (N=262) reported parent attitudes and actions were communicated through:
- Mom's warmth, caring
 - Dad's emotional and intellectual depth
 - Positive views of early maternal care (set tone into teens)
 - Negative views of lacking father support
- Parent and child views of interaction and support correlated, with feelings of acceptance critical to self-concept. However, parent views of siblings did not predict a student's positive or negative self-concept.

Intergenerational Transmission of Constructive Parenting

Chen, Z. & Kaplan, H.B. (2001). *Intergenerational transmission of constructive parenting*. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 63(1)17-31.

Responses of 2,338 young adults revealed:

- Positive views of parents predicted good parenting, less distress, better relationships, more social participation in early into middle adulthood
- Parental education improved adjustment, parenting, participation
- Negativity or positive attitude key to effects
- Patterns similar for men and women

Stats and Facts: Children and Childrearing

Population and family characteristics:

Children under 18	1996	1998	2000	2020
Living in the U.S.	69.1%	69.9%	70.2 million	77.4 million
Within population	26%	26%	26%	24%
Dependent population	67%	67%	67%	59%
Living in polluted areas*	20%	24%	—	—
Ozone	17%	21%	—	—
Carbon monoxide	5%	4%	—	—
Living in extreme poverty	8.4%	7.6%	—	—
Living in low income	22.7%	21.2%	—	—
Living in medium income	34%	33.5%	—	—
Living in high income	23.5%	25%	—	—
Living in very high income	9.2%	11.2%	—	—
All children living with parents	75%	77%	—	—
Children with 2 parents	88%	89%	—	—
Children with single mothers	39%	44%	—	—
Children with single fathers	67%	70%	—	—

*Living in areas that do not meet at least one of the Primary National Ambient Air Quality Stds
 Source: *America's Children 2000*. *Childstats.gov*. <http://childstats.gov/ac2000/toc.asp>

Children under 18: Rankings by state

The following table illustrates the percent rank and numbers of the resident population under 18 in Wyoming when compared to the other states.

Wyoming	April 1, 1990	July 1, 1998
Percent	30%	26.9%
Rank	4	11

Source: *State Rankings*. www.census.gov/statab/ranks/rank03.txt

Issues in Childrearing

The extent of child maltreatment:

- In 1998 approximately 903,000 children were victims of child maltreatment
- Approximately 53% of all reports came from professionals including: educators, law enforcement and justice officials, medical and mental health professionals, social service professionals and child care providers
- Approximately 47% of reports came from nonprofessionals including: parents, other relatives, victims, and community members
- In 1998, 53% of victims suffered from neglect, 22% medical neglect, and 25% other forms of maltreatment

The type of abuse suffered by children varies with age:

* In 1998 rates were the highest for 0-3 year olds at 9.7/1000; children ages 16-17 was 2.1/1000

* Medical neglect in ages 0-3 was 0.9/1000; in ages 16-17, 0.1/1000

* Sexual abuse was 2.1/1000 for youth 12-15 and 1.2/1000 for 16-17 yr-olds

Other significant findings:

* In 1998, 52% of victims were female and 48% were male

* In 1998, 1,100 children died of abuse or neglect (not all deaths reported)

- 77% of these deaths were children 4 yrs of age or younger

Source: *Children's Bureau. The Scope and Problem of Child Maltreatment. The Administration For Children and Families*. www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/ncanprob.htm

Facts, cont'd.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is behavior pattern that damages a child's emotional development and sense of self worth. The child may be experiencing excessive, aggressive, or unreasonable demands beyond his/her capacity. There are three indicators that a child has experienced emotional abuse.

Observable indicators

- Youth rocks, sucks, bites self
- Inappropriately aggressive
- Destructive to self and others
- Experiences sleep, speech disorders
- Avoids play activities or experiences
- Exhibits compulsions, obsessions, phobias, and hysterical outbursts

Behavioral indicators in child

- Negative statements about self
- Shy, passive
- Slow in physical, mental, emotional dev.
- Cruel to others
- Overly demanding

Family or parental indicators

- Blames or puts down child
- Cold and rejecting
- Uncaring to child's problems or welfare
- Withholds affections
- Shows favoritism when there is more than one child in the family

Note: Any of these indicators could also be because of a specific life event or other trauma. A behavior pattern is the strongest indicator and should not be ignored

Source: Emotional Abuse. Safe Child Program. www.safechild.org/childabuse3

Preventing Emotional Abuse

Well-meaning parents can emotionally abuse a child by trying too hard to make the child behave. Emotional abuse often leads to physical abuse. Emotional neglect, ignoring or withdrawing love, can have similar effects. Children who are emotionally neglected tend to become rebellious, fearful, distrusting, lacking in confidence and self esteem (these behaviors may also be caused by other sources).

Alternatives to parent coercion or criticism:

- Offer two or more options to accomplish a goal
- Reject or praise behavior not the child him/herself
- Engage self-control, then discipline
- Use parent-child time out to calm and think
- Give up on trying to be "perfect" parent or child
- Recognize that most child abuse is not intentional
- Realize that most abuse and neglect is committed by parents
- Accept the fact that each child is unique (for better or worse)
- Seek information (library, pediatrician's office, Internet), a parent support group, professional help (parent education or therapy)

Source: Stevens, C. Preventing Emotional Abuse. NARA Public Information Room. www.nara-licensing.org/emotionalabuse.htm

Well-Intentioned Communication Blunders

- Criticism – creates anger and desire for revenge; teaches faultfinding
- Accusations – leads to negative self-labeling, fear of contact
- Instructing – Listen sometimes, and ask the youth to demonstrate
- Helping - Finishing sentences for a child tells them they are incapable of thinking things out, and decreases their ability to deal with problems.

Source: Colorado State University Gold Plains Area Cooperative Extension. 4-H/Youth Program. Talking and Listening. <http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt/GPA/misssion.htm>

Stages of Social-Emotional Development: Clues for EI Parenting

What to expect as a child grows up (through the teen years)

Understanding the course of emotional development helps parents and teachers know what to expect and how to relate to children at each stage. Insights from Erikson's psychosocial development model and other sources can guide

1. *Basic trust versus basic mistrust (hope)*: Approx. 0-2 years
 - Dependability and nurture help child cultivate sense of worth and secure attachment to caregivers
 - Attention and patience with moodiness helps an infant or toddler learn to regulate emotion, soothe self and share a range of emotions
 - Anxiety about separation and later desire to explore beyond the presence of a caregiver are healthy signs of attachment and expressiveness

2. *Autonomy versus shame (will)*: Approx. 2 to 4 years
 - Support and freedom to explore lead to self-confidence and self-control, pride in accomplishments (and self)
 - Nevertheless, tantrums, stubbornness, and negativism are normal
 - Experience with a variety of people and situations, together with growing cognitive and language skills make preschoolers more perceptive about the emotions of peers and adults

3. *Initiative versus guilt (purpose)*: Approx. 4 and 7 years
 - Development of imagination, cooperation, leading and following
 - Guilt may be immobilizing, leaving child fearful, hanging on the outer-bounds of groups, depends entirely on adults, and is restricted in skill development in play and imagination

4. *Industry versus inferiority (competence)*: Approx. 7-13 years
 - Mastery of practical skills (self-care, chores, crafts), relating with peers by complex rules and teamwork, and academic skills (social studies, reading, arithmetic) builds confidence, trust, autonomy
 - Discipline of emotional gratification, persistence-on-task, and self-control under stress establishes emotional balance

5. *Identity versus identity diffusion (fidelity)*: Approx. 13-20 years
 - Exploration of "Who am I?" in setting of support and boundaries promotes maturity, self-confidence, sex-role and career identity; limits delinquency, rebellion, self-doubt
 - Close relationships with peers and adult mentors promote maturing of emotional gratification, persistence, self-control, positive decision-making
 - Expanding relationship depth (friendships, dating partnerships, close working relationships) and breadth (increased diversity of contacts) can teach increased understanding, tolerance, violence restraint

Sources: *Erikson's Eight Stages of Development*. Child Development Institute.

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Experiential Learning and Learning about Emotions

The experiential learning model used to master technical and interpersonal skills is an ideal strategy for building emotional literacy. Experiential DO-REFLECT-APPLY processes include:

	DO	
	Experience or discover events, objects, feelings	
	APPLY	REFLECT
Generalize to personal, social settings Use info, skills in new situations		Share experiences Process for patterns, themes

Emotional Intelligence capacities apply especially to the REFLECT phase of experiential learning. DO and APPLY phases might involve events as follows:

- DO Experience: Lead a meeting or demonstration
- APPLY: Use insights during events or on later occasions to clearly express emotions or clarify ideas, to lead or teach more effectively

Emotional Intelligence Capacity

REFLECT Sharing and Processing

Sensing, Sorting, and Expressing Emotion

Observe and discuss own and others' emotions, motives, ideas, roles from observations of body language, verbal statements, group dynamics, or behavior;
Discriminate accurate or honest expressions and analyze effectiveness of efforts to clarify or hold accountable;
Recognize ways to express own feelings and hear others' feelings constructively

Using Emotions to Aid Thinking

Identify important issues based on emotional significance of ideas or relationships
Recognize complex feelings, mood changes during activity
Adjusting problem solving to match emotional states

Understanding, Analyzing Emotions

Accurately labeling emotions and appreciating meanings that different people attach to experiences
Accurately tracking shifts in emotional energy in personal processes such as skill learning or group processes such as decision-making or conflict resolution

Reflecting, Regulating To Grow Emotionally

Honest appraisal of ability to stay open to pleasant or unpleasant feelings, engage or detach from emotion
Monitor and judge ongoing emotions and learn from them

Sources: Michigan State University Extension. Age-appropriate youth development www.msue.msu.edu/cyf/youth/ageapp.html and Emotional Intelligence www.eqi.org

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Emotion-Coaching: A Caring Role Model

Psychologist John Gottman found that parents whose children develop self-confidence, self-discipline, and positive relationships with peers and adults begin with parents who know how to help them manage feelings as well as develop ability. Key steps for parents are summarized in the process of Emotion Coaching.

1 Being Aware of Emotions: Your Own and the Child's

- *Recognize your own emotions:* Adults must often stop and take inventory of their own feelings, since their background (i.e., denied feelings in family-of-origin), situation (i.e., being caught up in practical needs), or role (i.e., being caught up in a child's emotions or trying to avoid being caught up) affects their ability to handle stressors, show understanding, and model good coping skills to children
 - Practice meditation, prayer, journal writing, art or music to get in touch with emotions
- *Signal openness and acceptance of child emotions:* Parents may not be able to change what is happening, but can help kids deal with events and feel confident and supported
 - Listen carefully for feelings as well as facts. Notice non-verbal signals of sadness (lethargy, frowning, bowed head, flat voice), fear (withdrawal or aggression, higher pitched voice, tears), and other emotions in children's play, talk, and schoolwork

2 Acknowledge Emotions

- *Notice rising emotions:* Expand awareness of non-verbal signals (facial expressions, posture, gestures) for emotional states
 - Master a broader "feeling vocabulary" (beyond sad, mad, glad, to varied and subtle [sometimes conflicted or multiple] labels: accepted, rejected, ecstatic, depressed, abandoned, content, worried, appreciated, resentful, supported, betrayed, hopeful, discouraged, sure, confused, respected, contempted, understood, misinterpreted, under control, angry, secure, jealous, lonely, competent, inept, confident, insecure, proud, embarrassed, excited, bored, fulfilled, empty)
 - Master a broader "body language" vocabulary (as suggested above) as well as talking regularly with your child about what he or she is feeling
- *Learn about emotions* and the influences that shape them such as suggested by psychologist William Glasser: love, power, freedom, fun, and safety
- Reflect on own and child's experiences that contribute to fear, anger, pride, embarrassment, and other feelings. Stress and trauma may distort thinking, causing children (or adults) to: absolutize (all/nothing), overgeneralize (always/never), negativize (problems vs possibilities), disqualify positives, jump to conclusions (esp. mind reading, fortune telling), catastrophize (maximize/minimize), emotionalize (bad feelings lead to bad self), focus on "shoulds," label (judge self negatively), personalize (my fault)...all of which block positive attitudes and actions

3 Listening Empathically and Validate Feelings

- *Tune in to the child's perspective,* appreciating the sensitivity, values, wants, and roles that affect both positive and negative feelings and interpretations
 - Take time to listen, appreciate, and affirm (vs. give advice, challenge, or discredit)
- *Validate,* or recognize feelings in their early stages (rather than ignoring or criticizing)
 - Reflect on differences between feeling and behavior and focus on changing actions "I hear you saying..." "I can understand that you're..." "You feel..." (or just maintain eye contact, say "un-huh" or "OK" with understanding (not sarcasm or boredom) and continue to let the child speak his or her piece

Emotion Coaching, cont'd.

4 Help the Child Verbally Label Emotions

- *Clarify feelings*, suggesting feeling vocabulary (see above), making observations about feelings or events from statements or body language)
- Mentally step back as you physically step closer and reassure the child. Monitor your own emotional reactions (impatience, embarrassment, disrespect) to stay focused on calming or celebrating with the child. Note positive as well as negative emotions. Use pictures, games, rhymes, and cartoons to defuse negative emotions and aid labeling
- Take “time out” as necessary for time to cool off, plan a next step, do something fun
- When coaching two or more children, be sure to give each his or her “say,” and allow each to confirm observations about events or feelings before moving ahead

5 Set Limits, While Helping the Child Problem-solve

- *Monitor inappropriate behavior*, including physical violence, verbal insults, or passive non-cooperation, consistent with family values
 - Reflect on personal expectations, family ground rules, and situational factors (time pressures, roles, physical or emotional environment) in approaching each situation.
 - Respond pro-actively (i.e., take the lead in setting expectations and options). Offer brief explanations of reasons for boundaries or consequences.
 - Allow the child to “own” problems/challenge: avoid over-protective or over- criticizing
 - *Use a playful variety of methods*, including fantasy play, role playing, brainstorming, and reflecting on past successes to help the child think of possible solutions.
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EQ Tools for Lower-Stress Moments

The Six Seconds EQ Model outlines a process for cultivating emotional literacy:

1 Know Yourself (awareness, honesty, courage)

- ✓ What makes you think, act, and feel as you do?
- ✓ What parts of your reactions are habit and which are intentional?
- ✓ What do you fear?

2 Choose Yourself (delay gratification, manage feelings, optimism, accountability)

- ✓ How can you tell when to say “no”?
- ✓ How do you know what is right for you?
- ✓ Can you increase self-awareness to predict outcomes?
- ✓ Can you live with less than doing what is right?

3 Give Yourself (interdependence, empathy, idealism)

- ✓ Would the community benefit if others followed your model?
- ✓ Are you healing or hurting?
- ✓ Are you doing what you expect others to do for you?

Source: Six Seconds EQ Model www.6seconds.org

Differentiation principle: The greater the ability to integrate intellect and emotion, the greater the ability to choose each appropriately.

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Resources and Policy: Emotionally Intelligent Parenting

Internet Sites

CYFERNET Parenting Resources. Extension educational resources on topics, A-Z.
www.cyfernet.org

NNFR Parent Education Task Force. Resources for educators to plan, implement, and evaluate programs with parents.
www.nnfr.org/parented/

Principles of Parenting Alabama Extension curriculum.
www.humsci.auburn.edu/parent/

Wonderwise Parent. Kansas Extension online experiences and teaching materials for emotional and practical skills growth.
www.ksu.edu/wwwparent/wonderwise.htm

ParentLink. Missouri Extension resources and support for parents and educators.
<http://4h.missouri.edu/programs/plink.stm>

Nat'l. Parent Information Network. Collaborating educators and resources promoting quality info exchange.
<http://ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/npin/>

OJJDP Strengthening Families Model Programs. Descriptions and research results for effective parent education to reduce delinquency.
www.strengtheningfamilies.org/html/model_programs.html

Books and Publications

J.P. Shonkoff & D.A. Phillips. (Eds, 2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development.* Board on Children, Youth, and Families. Combines up-to-date research review with discussion of issues and options for families and decision-makers.

A. Gopnik, A.W. Meltzoff, & P.K. Kuhl. (1999). *The scientist in the crib: Minds, brains, and how children learn.* New York: William Morrow. Research related to early brain dev., with implications for educators and parents.

Carnegie Council on Young Children. (1994). *Starting Points: Meeting the needs of our youngest children.* New York: Carnegie Corp. Review of research and issues related to quality child care and implications for child development.
www.carnegie.org/starting_points/index.html

L.A. Sroufe. *Emotional development.* NY: Cambridge University Press. An in-depth look at the remarkable capacities of infants & toddlers.

S.A. Greenspan. (1994). *First Feelings.* NY: Penguin, & *Building Healthy Minds.* (2000). NY: Perseus. Research & clinic-based practical advice on young minds.

EQ Strategies

Modeling: "This upsets me, but let's talk." (parent calm sets the tone)

Prompting/Cuing: "Homework comes first, then you can go out." (consistent ground rules help de-personalized discipline decisions)

Paraphrasing: "You feel angry when brother takes your pencil." (repeating says 'You're heard and you count.')

Open-ended questions: "What can we do now?" (leave room for dialogue and responsibility)

Two-question rule: "How did that feel?—Were you OK with that?" (allows for follow-up, reflection)

Columbo Technique: "I don't understand... show me." (empowers others to tell their story)

Patience, persistence: "Did I hear you say you would..." (quietly insists on accountability)

Flexibility, creativity: "Let's act it out..." (infuses humor or new ideas into problem-solving)

Adaptation: "Maybe you were afraid because it was dark in here." (adjusts to developmental needs or personality of others)

Source: M.J. Elias, S.E. Tobias, & B. Sfriedlander. (1999). *Emotionally Intelligent Parenting.* NY: Three Rivers Press.

Paradoxes: A Parting Thought

Good Intentions with Bad Results do not make for Good Parenting

Emotionally intelligent children tend to display the five traits noted below. For each of the traits, note how different styles of parenting: authoritarian (strict, harsh style), permissive (lax, uninvolved style), and authoritative (warm, firm, involved style) inhibit or promote each trait.

Well-adjusted children (who grow into competent, caring, contributing adults):

- ❖ *Express feelings, because they can recognize and reflect upon emotions*
 - Authoritarian: Burying emotions, taking blame don't foster sensitivity
 - Permissive: Adult neglect leads to ego gratification, moodiness
 - Authoritative: Acceptance of feelings, expectations of responsibility promote security
- ❖ *See clearly who cares and allocate time accordingly*
 - Authoritarian: Obedience without attachment or logic leads to confusion, detachment
 - Permissive: Adult lack of availability, standards create emptiness of time and effort
 - Authoritative: Balance of structured together time and rewarding personal activities enables youth to set their own balance
- ❖ *Seek volunteers, not hostages*
 - Authoritarian: Coercion and guilt experiences set the stage for bullying
 - Permissive: Lack of interest, engagement lead to dependence, victimization
 - Authoritative: Support and accountability do not require manipulation
- ❖ *Base relationships on mutual respect of feelings*
 - Authoritarian: When emotions don't count, why open up?
 - Permissive: Out of touch makes mutual respect impossible
 - Authoritative: Acceptance, patience, forgiveness all depend on trust
- ❖ *Avoid toxic people (invalidating, defensive, disrespecting, insecure, negative)*
 - Authoritarian: Criticism is not correction; kids only seek to avoid anger, humiliation
 - Permissive: Sarcasm or selfishness only drain energy, increase anxiety
 - Authoritative: Vulnerability comes with empathy and integrity, but so do deeper, longer, more open and honest relationships

Adapted from: EQ Institute www.eqi.org