

TALK ISN'T CHEAP ...IT'S PRICELESS!

You Are Your Child's First—and Best—Teacher.

Just as children's brains and bodies develop, so do their emotions and their ability to express themselves. Parents play an important role in helping their children learn to express and handle their emotions. Children's feelings are often connected to their actions. Children who develop social and emotional skills are able to:

- Tell you about their feelings.
- Identify different feelings. (mad, sad, glad, etc.)
- Handle small issues in ways that do not lead to temper tantrums.
- Express feeling without causing harm to themselves or others.
- Attach to other adults and separate from parents without signs of distress.
- Focus on tasks and activities.
- Form friendships with peers.

SOME TIPS TO HELP

NURTURE ATTACHMENT WITH YOUR CHILD.

No matter what you do, children are going to have feelings of sadness, worry, fear and anger. The attachment and trust that children have with parents keeps them comforted, secure and safe—and helps children to cope with difficult feelings like loneliness and fear.



MODEL WAYS TO EXPRESS FEELINGS.

You can help your children learn to cope with feelings by:

- Teaching them to express their feelings in ways that are a fit for their age. If children are too young or inexperienced to know what to say, model a simple sentence for them to copy.
- Showing them how to handle their feelings in healthy ways that do not hurt themselves or others. Encourage your children to say their feelings out loud and tell the other person how they feel.
- Serving as an example to your children by how you express or handle similar feelings.



GIVE VERBAL MESSAGES OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

- Provide praise to your children when they demonstrate pleasing or positive behaviors.
- Labeling the praise by naming the specific behavior is most helpful to children. For example, "I liked how you were willing to share your blocks." "You did such a nice job talking about how mad you are feeling right now."
- Encourage children to try new things and be sure to praise children when they show good effort.

LISTEN TO YOUR CHILDREN.

Acknowledging children's feelings will often help them feel heard and may decrease other acting-out behaviors. This also teaches children to have empathy for other's feelings.

- Take time to listen to your children's wants and needs.
- Listen to statements made about feelings or emotions.
- Demonstrate understanding of your children's emotions.
- Do not try to "fix" or play down their feelings.
- Reflect (repeat back by stating) the importance of their feelings. Example, "I understand that I made you mad when I wouldn't give you the cookie."

PROVIDE CHOICES AND LIMITS.

Learning to cope with disappointments and delays is important. When children get very few chances to make choices, it often results in struggles and a loss of self-confidence. Provide choices to your children when a choice exists. When the answer must be "no," set firm limits and "stick with them."

RESOURCES

2-I-I. For additional information **DIAL 2-I-I** and connect to community resources for your family.

www.ConnectCommunitySupport.org. Go to this website for information about Strengthening Families in Westwood and Cheviot. Learn about this initiative, access local resources or **JOIN A PARENT CAFÉ.**

strengthening families

Westwood • O H I O • Cheviot

Connect. Community. Support.

Funded by the Ohio Children's Trust Fund through the Hamilton County Family and Children First Council and The Consortium for Resilient Young Children. Implemented by 4C for Children (project coordinator), Centerpoint Health, The Children's Home of Cincinnati and Santa Maria Community Services. Partnering with the YWCA, the Council on Child Abuse and the United Way of Greater Cincinnati.

