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Emotional intelligence is another term for how we handle our emotions. So a child's emotional intelligence is about how well they understand feelings or emotions; not just their own, but also other people's. As your child learns more social skills, they will get better at telling you how they are feeling. They will learn to tell how other people are feeling and get smarter about how feelings work.

Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to:

1. Identify your own emotions and those of others.

We begin doing this when we try what our children are feeling from their faces, tone of voice (or cries), and other clues. The next step is to name that feeling. Noticing how your child feels and naming the feeling will help them learn about their feelings.

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## 2. Manage your own emotions and cheer up or calm down another person.

Think about your child and what seems to work to help calm them down when they are angry, sad, frustrated, or feeling some other painful emotion. Try some of the following methods that have worked for other parents and caregivers.

- Hold your child gently.
- Talk low and slow. Reassure them with calming words.
- Pick them up and walk; bounce them gently; sing to them.
- Give them a warm bath. This is especially effective for spirited children. Playing with water can be very relaxing.
- Do the unexpected! Try using humor. Give your child a choice. Use the ACT method. Doing something different can change your child's view of things, and that can change their mood.
- Help them solve the problem or find an alternative.
- Give them a "time out". Create a special, quiet place for them to go for time outs. Do not use time outs as punishment. Use them like they are used in a sports game, as a break that'll give you and your child a chance to rest and regroup.

## 3. Use emotions in positive ways.

Feelings help us know how things are going. They tell us if we are OK with the current situation or if we need a change. You can help your child make this connection. You can help them learn to pay attention to the message behind feelings. One way to use emotions in a positive way is to first understand what you're feeling and then decide whether or not you want to change it: Name the feeling. Then name the change. (Or keep it the same.)