INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL LEARNING

Developing emotional intelligence is a life-long learning journey. You probably already talk about what you are feeling and ask your kids what they are feeling. This is a really great start!

Helping kids recognise their own feelings is essential to their growing into happy and healthy bigger kids and eventually adults. Some useful ways of talking about thoughts and feelings with your kids could be:

• Your brain is your thought maker. Thoughts are quiet words or an idea and are like a picture in your brain
• Your heart is your feelings keeper. Feelings are the way we feel about something; they are the things that make us happy or sad, calm or angry
• Using the Zones of Emotional Regulation Chart to assign colours to groups of emotions.

It’s important to stress that it’s good and normal to feel all the ‘colours’ sometimes. There are occasions when unpleasant feelings can be helpful. For example, mild frustration may help a child persevere to complete a challenging task, and some sadness is necessary to develop empathy.

However, it’s important for children to learn how to be the boss of their emotions, rather than responding emotionally to everything and derailing their day. Even ‘good’ such as feeling extremely excited (high in the ‘yellow’) can be detrimental by making it challenging to concentrate on a quiet task.

We want to try and be ‘green’. Why? Because being green means we’re happy, calm and comfortable. Working with kids to find their way back to green can be a useful way of helping kids to identify their own strategies for regulating their emotions. What works for some kids might not work for others - for example, having a run around in the yard might be good for some, while for others having some chill time with some favourite toys might be what works best. For some, doing some drumming might work, while others might get back to green by drawing or doing craft.

Take a moment sometimes to think about your own feelings as a parent. Kids benefit greatly from having you co-regulate: providing modeling, coaching and support to help them understand, express and modulate their thoughts and feelings. Try taking a few breathes or a moment to steady yourself before responding. Acknowledge what you’re feeling, and how that presents physically in your body. Work through this out loud so kids can see how it works.
THE VALUE OF PLAY TO LEARNING

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Playing with other kids is most beneficial, as this type of play helps kids learn how to self-regulate their behaviours and interact socially in a positive way as they talk, listen, and think as they cooperate and interact with one another.

However, all types of play gives kids lots of different opportunities to learn.

It helps kids to:

- build confidence
- build communication and social skills
- learn about the environment and their community
- learn about themselves
- figure out their place in the world
- feel happy, safe and loved.

Play is also crucial to the development of kids’ gross and fine motor skills. Through play, kids practise and perfect control and coordination of large body movements, as well as small movements of hands and fingers. Gross motor skills involve control of the arms, legs, head and trunk. Fine motor skills involve the careful control of small muscles in the hands, feet, fingers and toes. Controlling the muscles of the tongue and lips in order to speak or sing is also a fine motor skill.

Find out more about the value of play [here](#).
**ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**

Oral language development refers to the importance and process of developing spoken language and verbal interactions. Having strong oral language skills help kids to:

- Clarify their own thoughts
- Communicate effectively
- Become successful learners in the future.

Structured questioning and purposeful dialogue help kids to develop their oral language skills. The following are two simple strategies for oral language development:

1. **THE POWER OF PAUSES**

   Pauses have been shown to be an effective tool for encouraging children to participate in conversations because they:

   - Slow down the discussion
   - Provide kids with time to think, process and come up with a response
   - Allow other kids to talk

   You can silently count to ten after asking a question, or you can experiment with pause times to see what length of time suits your kid/s the most.

2. **ASKING QUALITY QUESTIONS**

   - Ask genuine questions (including those that you don't know the answer to)
   - Be curious, not just about the world but also about what your kids are thinking
   - Encourage a genuine response rather than expecting a set or specific response - experiment with different types of questions, such as yes/no questions and open-ended questions to demonstrate to kids how different types of questions make us think in different ways
   - Try to avoid judging answers. Posing questions as “I wonder...” allows children to explore and test their own ideas without fear of being right or wrong
   - Continue questioning after the child has answered, asking, “Why do you say that?” This further reveals a child's thinking, requiring them to provide more information and to actively process how to structure their thoughts in order to deliver a coherent answer with sufficient details
   - Remember to give children time to respond, and allow them to respond fully without interrupting. These types of questions might be unfamiliar, and their answers require complex thinking, meaning the whole process is a verbal challenge that might take a little while to overcome.

Find out more [here](#) and [here](#).
KIDS AND TELEVISION

Each family has their own rules and expectations around watching television at home. In these activities, we recommend watching the Bluey episodes together with your kid/s. In addition to spending time together, you will have more opportunity to engage with the stories and messages in the clips, and be able to identify and respond to the nuances in the stories that may interest your kids.

REFERENCES: