

Information Sheet – Parenting Series

Empathic Emotion Coaching

Using Empathy in Emotion Coaching

- Start by showing that you are listening and connecting
 - Get down to your child's level, pause, take a deep breath and show your empathy on your face.
 - Show your child you understand by matching their emotion in your face and body language ('mirroring')
- Identify their feeling and why you believe they are feeling that way
 - Link the feeling to the situation with understanding of their perspective
 - Can also link their thoughts and their behaviours
 - Communicate your understanding of the emotion and validate the emotion from their perspective
- Use statements not questions where possible
 - If your child isn't talking then guess at what they're feeling (use their body language and behaviour to tell you)

Helpful Tips

- Try to use your child's language
- Don't rush. This is about building a shared understanding with your child.
- Take a deep breath, sigh, make knowing sounds, and give your child time to process and realise that you are empathising
- Sometimes less is more
- Best to use 3-4 statements before moving on to limit setting or problem solving
- Try it out with small emotions

Emotion Coaching and Limit Setting

Emotion coaching should not be used instead of limit setting but can be used to support limit setting. Limits need to be set around behaviour and what is and is not acceptable but we don't have limits on emotions. It is OK for your child to feel what they feel.

Your job is to support them with the feeling and set limits on the behaviour.