



## Self-Awareness & Self-Management

Do you know yourself? Your interests, talents and values may come to mind, but do you know yourself emotionally? You may even wonder what it means to know yourself emotionally. Self-awareness and self-management are two of five social-emotional competencies necessary for success in school and life according to Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence* (2005).

- Self-awareness involves identifying your emotions and what triggers them, how to manage them, and ways to express them constructively.
- Self-management involves understanding your ability to assess your talents and interests, ways to build on strengths, and making effective use of family, school and community resources for emotional support. Both competencies are critical for realistically setting and monitoring progress toward achieving academic/work and personal goals.

The capacity to be self-aware emotionally contributes to a person's ability to handle stress, control impulses, and motivate oneself to persevere in overcoming obstacles. These qualities are necessary throughout life. Children who are taught strategies to recognize and appreciate the range of their emotions are better equipped to be hopeful and happy.

Some behavior concerns in children may be related to a lack of ability to accurately label emotions. Children may confuse angry and sad, frustrated and annoyed, proud and happy and many others. Knowing how to discern emotions assists children to predict their reaction and manage their feelings in a pro-social way. As children mature, their emotions affect their ability to make responsible decisions that affect their success in school and in relationships with others.

There are ways that parents can support the development of these important skills. Talking with children about their emotions and helping them to verbally name their feelings is a beginning. It takes patience and lots of modeling for the full range of emotions to be understood. Doing so impacts perceptions and influences the relationships we want for ourselves, our children, and society. Understanding your emotions and responses can change the dynamics of your family interaction and lead to the kind of modeling that makes a positive difference for your children. Taking the time to know yourself emotionally is essential for guiding your children toward healthy social/emotional well-being.

### WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Use children's literature as a model for identifying and labeling emotions exhibited by the characters.
- Be honest with yourself and others about your own feelings and share that with your children.
- Talk to your children about how their emotional displays affect others – both positively and negatively.
- Model goal-setting and planning so that your children understand the process and challenges you face.
- Encourage your child to accurately label his/her feelings and what triggered the emotion.

### SEL RESOURCES

#### Websites:

Emotional development:  
[www.illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/social](http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/social)

Impulsivity in children and teens:  
[www.psychologytoday.com/child/waystocontrol](http://www.psychologytoday.com/child/waystocontrol)

#### Articles:

How children develop empathy:  
[www.drkuter.com/parenting](http://www.drkuter.com/parenting)

#### Books:

*Emotionally Intelligent PARENTING: How to Raise a Self-Disciplined, Responsible, Socially skilled Child.* (1999) Elias, Tobias, Friedlander.

*Don't Give Me That Attitude! 24 Things Kids Do and How to Stop Them.* (2004) Borba, Michele, Ed.D.



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