

Emotion Tuning explained

There are a number of different ways that you can tune in to your child's emotions

Notice the emotion

Notice how you think your child is feeling.

- What facial expression/body language does your child have?
- What sort of emotions might your child feel because of the situation?
- How might you feel in a comparable adult situation?

Clarify with a question

This helps your child work out how they feel.

- You look pretty worried. Do you want to talk about what is going on?
- Were you scared when you couldn't find me in the supermarket?
- How did you feel when you saw Toby playing with Karl?
- Were you frustrated when your teacher told you to share your favourite book?
- I wonder if you were feeling mad at your sister?

Reflect the emotion

State the emotion you think your child is feeling.

- It looks like you're very happy
- You seem a bit sad
- I can see you're very frustrated
- It seems like you are a bit anxious
- I bet you felt pretty grumpy

Children will generally tell you if you are right or wrong about their feelings, especially if you say it in a gentle way. Often when children are first getting the hang of how to say how they feel, it helps to start by labelling the emotion and getting an idea about whether you have been correct.



Locate emotion in the body

You could ask where the child feels that emotion in their body. It is very important for children to learn that emotions are in their head and in their body.

- Where in your body do you feel angry?
- I wonder if your tummy feels a bit anxious?
- It looks like you might feel your sadness in your shoulders

Empathise

Talk about how you would feel in a similar situation.

- I would have felt angry if my sister had been allowed to go out and I had to stay home
- I feel sad when I'm not included with my friends

Validation and empathy the keys to Emotion Coaching and provide a lovely connection between parent and child. BUT be careful not to put your emotions first, especially when you are just starting to Emotion Coach.

Explore

You might follow this up with a further question or comment to find out more about the situation or explore other emotional reactions.

