

# Helping Your Child Manage Emotions

## *A Resource Guide for Parents*

Parenting is an incredible journey—and one of the most important roles you'll ever have. But when your child is overwhelmed with big emotions like anger, fear, or sadness, it can be hard to know how to respond in a way that truly helps. Fortunately, recent advances in neuroscience offer valuable tools for raising emotionally resilient children.

The following tips are derived from *The Whole-Brain Child*, by Dr. Daniel Siegel and Dr. Tina Payne Bryson. In their book, they introduce simple, science-backed strategies that help parents nurture emotional intelligence by understanding how a child's brain works during moments of stress.

This resource guide offers key takeaways and practical techniques you can begin using today.

### Understand the Brain to Connect with Your Child

Children's brains are still under construction. The parts responsible for logic, problem-solving, and self-control (the "upstairs brain") develop gradually through childhood and adolescence. When a child has a meltdown, they're often reacting from their "downstairs brain," which handles instinct and emotion.

Rather than disciplining or dismissing big feelings right away, the first step is connection—or **"connecting to redirect."** When we meet our child with calm, empathy, and validation, we help them feel safe. This connection opens the door for teaching and growth.

### Be a Calm, Consistent Role Model

One of the most powerful tools you have as a parent is your own behavior. Children learn how to handle emotions by watching the adults in their lives. When you respond to stress with calm, use respectful language during conflict, and talk openly about your feelings, your child takes notice. Modeling healthy emotional habits gives your child a living example to follow—and sends the message that it's okay to feel, to pause, and to choose how we respond.

## Try the “Name It to Tame It” Approach

Children often don’t have the words to describe what they’re feeling, which can lead to outbursts. By helping your child name what they’re experiencing—“You seem really frustrated that your toy broke”—you help them process the emotion, making it feel less overwhelming. Labeling feelings helps the brain integrate emotional and logical responses.

## Use the “Upstairs Brain” to Build Emotional Skills

Once your child is calm, it’s time to engage their developing reasoning skills. Encourage them to reflect on what happened and explore better ways to respond next time. This might sound like: “What could we do differently if this happens again?” Over time, this helps them learn emotional regulation and problem-solving.

## Create a “Resilience Routine”

The Whole-Brain approach includes using everyday moments to strengthen your child’s whole brain. You can:

- Talk about feelings openly as a family.
- Tell stories together, helping your child make sense of their experiences.
- Encourage mindfulness and movement, which both support healthy brain development.
- Model emotional regulation by naming and managing your own feelings.

## Remember: Emotional Development Takes Time

Helping your child manage emotions is a process, not a quick fix. When you respond with patience, curiosity, and care—even when it’s hard—you’re doing the essential work of building trust, teaching lifelong skills, and nurturing mental well-being.

If you’re feeling overwhelmed or uncertain, your Assistance Program is here to support you. Whether you want guidance on parenting strategies, support for family stress, or someone to talk to, our licensed counselors are just a call or click away.

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