

## Strengthen a Child's Emotional Wellbeing

Emotions	Let them cry. Validate their feelings. Establish routines. Respect their boundaries. Talk about feelings. Label emotions with words. Know behaviour is communication.
Physical	Teach body safety. Give them responsibilities. Provide safe living environment. Healthy diet. Restrict and monitor screen time. Practice mindfulness together.
Love	Love them unconditionally. Listen first, talk second. Provide positive physical touch. Eat family meals. Play board games.
Play	Connect with your child daily. Exercise regularly. Go outdoors often. Allow healthy risks. Praise effort rather than achievement. Support their friendships.
Teach	Be consistent and follow through. Replace yelling with teaching. Model honesty. Encourage independence. Teach growth mindset. Set healthy limits. Nurture your child's talents.

## Be Consistent

If the response is the same each time, the children **feel more secure**. They are less likely to push the limits if the adults around all produce the same response.

*Example*, a child would like a sweet before dinner. If the response is sometimes yes, the child will ask every day in case today is a YES day. If there is a rule about no sweets before dinner that applies to everyone then the child will cease asking as they already have their answer.

## Screen Time

Excessive technology can have a detrimental effect on sleep, social interactions, attention span as well as the exposure to advertising and possibility of accessing inappropriate content.

### Managing screen time

- Limit time spent on screens
- Ensure any device use is supervised
- Lead by example
- Ensure that parental controls are in place and checked regularly
- Encourage alternatives to screens e.g. board games, colouring

If the struggle is getting your children to come off their device:

- Give them warning of 5 minutes left.
- When time is up, connect with your child via the device, showing and interest in what they are doing and asking them questions about what they are doing. This allows their brain to transition out of the game and back into reality. E.g. "Are you the character with the blue top?"
- Do not allow an extension of time. Be consistent with your responses.

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a strategy we can use to calm and de-escalate. To prevent emotional meltdown practice a technique called "grounding". Try and practise this when the child is calm first so they are familiar with it.

*Example*, Encourage your child to find 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste. Really focus the mind on seeing, smelling, touching etc.

# Supporting your Child's Emotional Development



## Inclusion Service– Outreach Team



'The Amazing Everyday'

## Effective Communication

- Make time to listen.
- Reflect the words they say back to them.
- Label the emotion.

## Finding the Positives

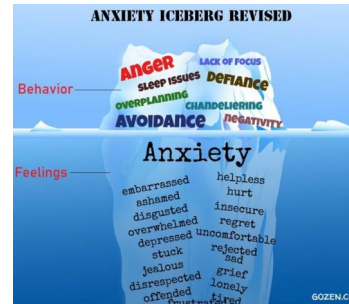
Say what you **want to see** e.g. “don’t hit your sister” instead say “we use kind hands thank you.”

Look for **opportunities to praise** and be specific with the praise where possible.

For every 1 negative comment, children need to hear 5 positive comments.

- You are helpful.
- I know you did your best.
- You make me proud.
- I believe in you.
- You can try again tomorrow.
- That was a really good choice.
- Your ideas are great.
- I will always love you.
- You have the best laugh.
- That was really brave.
- I am so excited to spend time with you.
- That’s a great question.
- I trust you.
- I love how you said that.
- Even if you make a mistake you can fix it.
- Anything is possible.

## Responding to Stress and Worries



Children will display stress/ worries in a variety of different ways. You will often observe this as an **unwanted behaviour**.

### Behaviour is a communication.

Below are some examples of how you can respond. If you can respond with kindness and consistency you will teach your child the skills to manage/ communicate their need in a different way.

- Notice out loud- “I can see something is bothering you...”
- Listen actively.
- Allow crying.
- Modelling managing your own stress/worries well.
- Just be there.
- Make a plan together.
- Be consistent.
- Promote attempting a task, not completing it.
- Teach breathing techniques/mindfulness.
- Promote a growth mindset- instead of the child saying “this is too hard” ...say “this is going to take some time and effort.”

## Things to say instead of “Stop Crying”

- “It’s ok to be sad.”
- “This is really hard for you.”
- “I’m here with you.”
- “Tell me about it.”
- “I hear you.”
- “That sounds really sad/scary “ etc.
- “I can help to work it out.”
- “I hear that you need space, I want to be here for you. I will stay close so you can find me when you are ready.”
- “I’m listening.”



## Things to say instead of “No”

NO is often a trigger word for children. The answer may need to be NO, but we can find a different way to say it.

- “Lets look at this together.”
- “Can you give me another suggestion.”
- “Do you have another idea?”
- “How can we make this work?”
- “We will need to adjust your idea a bit.”
- “May I think about that?”

