

Key Insights: Stages of Emotional Development and Recommendations for Children

Each child follows a unique trajectory in their emotional development. Therefore, parents/caregivers need to adapt and cater to their individual needs and developmental progress. Keeping open communication with children, providing support, and nurturing emotional bonds are essential for fostering healthy emotional development.

Below are developmental stages and suggestions for children at different ages (*Denham, 1998; Thompson, 1994*), for parents or caregivers to refer to:

Age	Emotional Development	Recommendations
2-3 Years Old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children start expressing a range of emotions through facial expressions and speech. They may exhibit emotions like happiness, sadness, anger, and fear. Children start learning to seek support and comfort, and they begin to understand and share the emotions of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assist children in recognizing and naming different emotions. ➤ Explain the reasons and consequences of emotions in simple terms to help children understand the relationship between emotions and events. ➤ Encourage children to express their emotions through language and play, providing demonstrations. ➤ Create a safe and stable environment to help children learn self-soothing techniques like hugging and utilizing comfort objects, etc.

<p>3-4 Years Old</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can discern and identify various emotions. • They begin developing cognitive abilities related to emotional language and expression. • Children may display interest in emotions when interacting with peers and in social situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Guide children in further identifying and distinguishing various emotions, and encourage the use of diverse vocabulary to describe emotional experiences. ➤ Discuss the complexity of emotions with children and help them understand the connection between emotions and behaviours. ➤ Encourage children to express emotions through language and creative activities such as drawing and role-playing. ➤ Teach children appropriate emotional regulation strategies, such as deep breathing, calming themselves, and redirecting their focus.
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Age	Emotional Development	Recommendations
<p>4-5 Years Old</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children start understanding and learning to control their emotions. • They begin developing skills for emotional regulation, learning to express emotions appropriately and seek methods for conflict resolution. • Children start showing interest and empathy toward the emotions of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Help children deepen their recognition and understanding of emotions, including identifying more complex emotions. ➤ Guide children in discussing the causes and consequences of emotions and how emotions can differ across various situations. ➤ Encourage children to express their emotions through language and creative methods, offering support and positive feedback. ➤ Teach children a range of emotional regulation strategies, such as seeking support, problem-solving, and self-reflection.

<p>5-6 Years Old</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children at this stage develop a deeper understanding and expression of emotions. • They begin recognizing the importance of emotions in interpersonal relationships and become more adept at collaboration and communication with others. • Children demonstrate improved emotional self-regulation abilities and can use emotions to solve problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assist children in further developing their ability to recognize emotions, including perceiving and understanding the emotions of others. ➤ Encourage children to contemplate and discuss the complexity of emotions, including mixed emotions and variations. ➤ Provide support and encouragement for children to express emotions through language and creative methods such as storytelling and games. ➤ Teach children more advanced emotional regulation skills, such as self-regulation and empathy.
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In Summary: Uniting Emotions, Uniting Lives

By offering sufficient emotional support to children, they come to understand that emotions are neither right nor wrong, but rather can be accepted and valued by parents/caregivers. The more individuals accept their emotions, the better they can find ways to manage them.