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Q&A



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Dr May Lim, who has years of experience working with young kids affected by developmental delays and disorders, shares with My Paper how parents can help develop

their children's emotional intelligence (EQ).

How should parents relate to their children?

Build a positive relationship by being in the moment. When you spend time with them, think about what is going on in their lives.

What can parents do to address their children's emotional needs?

Help them to build an “emotional” vocabulary by giving labels to their feelings. Listen with empathy. Pay attention to your kids when they talk about how they feel. For example,

instead of saying that “there is no need to get upset”, acknowledge that it might be natural for them to feel that way.

Teach your kids how to act on their feelings, such as telling an adult instead of pushing a younger sibling back. It is not wrong for kids to feel angry, but you can and should limit actions like kicking and hitting.

How to stop so-called undesirable feelings?

Disapproving of your children's fear or anger will not stop them from having those feelings. Repressing negative feelings can result in negative consequences such as nightmares or anxiety issues.

Can problem-solving help to develop a child's EQ?

When children feel that their emotions are understood and accepted, they are likely to be more open to problem solving.

Resist the urge to solve a problem for them. Instead, encourage your children to think of a solution, or help them in the brainstorming process. This helps to instil in them the confidence that they can handle a tricky situation themselves.

How should parents behave?

Be a role model by staying calm, expressing verbally how you feel.

Instead of snapping at people or

being verbally harsh when you are angry or stressed, explain why you are displeased with the situation and what you are going to do about it.

What your children see you do is how they will act too.

What are the red flags to look out for?

Pay attention if your children experience an extended period of fear and anxiety over attending pre-school or school, if they have very limited language capabilities for their age, or if they avoid social interaction or playing with others.

Parents should seek advice from professionals, such as occupational therapists and psychologists, if necessary.