
PROPER PARENTING

Parenting the High EQ Child: Setting the Example



Spend ten minutes in a playground full of kids, and you'll get a glimpse of the interpersonal dynamics that exist in our world: the rambunctious kid who aggressively barrels through other kids to force his way onto the swing, the hesitant preschooler who doesn't let go of her mom's hand as she goes on the slide, or the diplomatic grade schooler who makes sure the older kids don't cut in line at the merry-go-round—a quick microcosm of the kind of people who will inhabit our future homes, streets, and corporate offices one day.

But what exactly brings about such a vast difference in self-awareness, social interaction, and empathy (or lack thereof)? In a world where conventional intelligence (Intelligence Quotient or IQ) only takes you so far, playground dynamics highlights another factor—emotional intelligence—and how it also plays an important role in our child’s future success.

But what is Emotional Quotient or EQ? And why is it important?

Unlike IQ which measures a person’s technical intelligence, EQ is “the ability to recognize, understand and manage our own emotions as well as to recognize, understand and influence the emotions of others.” Introduced in 1995 by psychologist [Daniel Goleman](#) through a book of the same name, emotional intelligence is deemed more important in the long run because a person with high EQ tends to be more successful in the workplace and in relationships, and tend to lead [healthier, happier](#) lives.

In other words, boosting a child’s emotional intelligence now can help pave the way to [better jobs](#), healthier relationships, and leads to an overall sense of well-being. How can you help your child improve this ability? First, identify your child’s strengths and challenges with these [signs](#).

The good news is, whether your children possess a high or low EQ, emotional intelligence is an ability that can be [learned and practiced](#).

How do parents set the example and better equip them to have a higher EQ? Let’s start with the tools we were all born with—our five senses:

SIGHT

Parent:

You are your children’s example in a brand new world they are just discovering. How you respond to situations and manage your emotions is the greatest example your children will learn from, so choose your responses and words wisely.

This is also your chance to change your old patterns of behavior; improving your EQ is a [lifelong](#) practice that’s never too late to learn.

Child:

Show your children a different perspective from theirs, foster empathy by explaining to them how the other person may be feeling. Use age-appropriate books and movies your children can easily relate to. Ask, “Why is Baby Bear sad? Does Goldilocks know she hurt his feelings?”

Connect it to what may have happened during the day: “Remember when you took your sister’s toy away? Do you think that made her happy or sad?” This broadens their understanding of how their actions impact other people’s emotions.

HEARING

Parent:

Listen to your children and ask questions. If the child is screaming, use a firm, quiet tone to bring down the intensity of the situation and enable a more conducive environment to talk.

Encourage them to use words instead of sounds or whining. Introduce new words: “Are you mad? Tired? Sad? Disappointed?” Explain the new words by recounting past experiences. “You know, Mommy was also disappointed the other day when I missed my show. Are you also disappointed now?” The more words they know, the better they will be at identifying and handling these emotions in the future.

Nancy Webb, a pastor’s wife and grandmother of three, suggests asking your children, “Is there a better way to answer or show what you’re feeling?” This way, you force them to think about what they’re doing, and in the process, empower them to make a choice.

Child:

Share your feelings with your children, but keep it simple: “I feel sad because you didn’t listen to me.” The tendency for parents is to put up a brave front but by doing so, we are showing them that it’s better to suppress the emotion rather than figure out a way to share it constructively.

TOUCH

Parent:

Parenting counselor Joanne de la Calzada shares, “A calm, loving touch on the shoulder can work wonders when your child is in an emotional state. Don’t correct in anger; a gentle touch and calm approach is better.”

Child:

Encourage children to draw their feelings, use stuffed toys for storytelling, mold clay, and build up and tear down building blocks. Enroll them in sports which lets

them release pent-up energy and interact with others. Encourage positive physical expressions of emotion: happy (dancing to music), mad (throwing a pillow on their bed), and sad (drawing a picture of their feelings).

SMELL

Parent:

Take a deep breath. Respond rather than react. If you need to take a moment, away from the situation and your child, don't storm out. Explain that "Mommy is just going to the room for a few minutes but will come out again to talk with you, okay?"

Child:

"Smell the flower, blow the candle" is a good visual cue to distract and interact. Let your children do this a few times until they have considerably calmed down. This will equip them with a breathing technique they can take with them until adulthood, and teach them to practice "pausing" before responding.

TASTE

Parent:

[Good nutrition matters](#). What you feed your children now will introduce them to a lifetime of taste preferences and habits. Let your child have a good nutritional beginning by serving a menu with mildly seasoned protein, vegetables, and fruits. Also important is a good source of calcium like Promil, with high quality foundation nutrients such as unsaturated fats from plant-based oils, whey and casein protein, and carbohydrates, with the addition of DHA, AA, and Lutein.

Child:

Offer two kinds of healthy snacks: "Do you want peanut butter and brown bread or wheat pancakes?" Let them exercise decision-making skills in a controlled setting, and this will build their confidence.

Children will soon embark on a journey wherein they will have to maneuver academically, socially and corporately. Parents play a huge role in how children will develop their emotional intelligence and eventually find their place in the world. As we guide them to practice the life skills they need to succeed, we better prepare them to handle the conflicts they will encounter in this playground called life.

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