

Emotional Intelligence in Children

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Abstract: Emotional intelligence is an important skill for children to develop, both for their future wellbeing as well as their future workplace success. Emotional intelligence in children is the ability to identify, control, and express their emotions. Since emotional intelligence appears to be a strong predictor of success and happiness in life, it is expedient for parents and teachers to encourage its development in children. This paper helps teachers and parents understand children's emotions and how to deal with the emotions in a healthy way.

Keywords: Emotion, Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence in Children

I. INTRODUCTION

Emotions influence our attention, memory, learning, health, and our ability to get along with others. When emotions run high, people do and say things they normally would not. Emotional skills help us to better face daily challenges. Noticing a child's emotions early is critical.

Schools ensure that all students master basic skills such as reading and math. Recently, educators and parents have started to realize the importance of social and emotional skills. Without emotional intelligence, it is difficult to envisage the human personality of the 21st century. We often think that children are not sophisticated and incapable of understanding the emotional complexities of their world. Emotional intelligence has been linked to academic success, school dropout, or the development of behavioral problems in children. Children grow emotionally in their childhood. Research has shown that the best time to build lifelong needed emotional-social skills is in early childhood, which is the most rapid period of development in a human life. Lifetime habits are generally formed during early childhood.

II. CONCEPT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence (EI) or emotional quotient (EQ) is a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to differentiate between different feelings, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior. It is person's ability to identify, evaluate, control, understand, express, and manage emotions in positive ways in us, in others, and in our relationships. It is the ability to be smart about emotions. IQ measures a person's academic intelligence, while EQ measures emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence consists of awareness, understanding, and the ability to express, and manage one's emotions. It has been regarded as the power to act under pressure, the trust of having efficient relationships, the courage to make decisions, and the vision to create the future. It has a strong relationship with creativity, communication, and leadership [1].

Emotional intelligence is a very useful tool for solving school-related issues. It is a set of skills that children of all ages can learn and improve, as illustrated in Figure 1 [2]. Children have the capacity to learn emotional intelligence

skills and they need adults to teach and train them. There are a number of programs that develop emotional intelligence in young people. These include Friends, The Heart Masters, You Can do It, Mind Matters, Kids Matter, and Bounce Back [3]. Children can develop their EI in many ways including social interactions, camping, playing games, dancing, listening to music, oral storytelling, dramatic play, role-playing with dolls, etc.



Figure 1: Emotional intelligence in children [2].

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to express and manage emotions appropriately while respecting the feelings of others. These five elements that characterize emotional intelligence were suggested by Daniel Goleman, an American psychologist who gave emotional intelligence its global popularity [4,5].

1. **Self-Awareness:** A person understands what he is feeling at a particular time and how his feelings affect others. Self-awareness is fundamental to emotional management. It is the basis of emotional literacy that supports the other EI elements.
2. **Self-Regulation:** A person can manage his experience and expression of emotions. This is important in predicting achievement in children. Children high in self-control will be healthier and successful, earn higher grades, and are less likely to have criminal records.
3. **Motivation:** A person can accomplish goals in spite of negative feelings he may be having. He has a sense of what's important in life.
4. **Empathy:** A person can understand how others feel. Emotionally intelligent people are empathetic. They are good at putting themselves in someone else's shoes and seeing challenges from different perspectives.
5. **Social Skills:** A person can manage relationship and build social connections. These diverse skills are used

to induce desirable responses in others. Social skills involve showing desirable emotions to others.

These five elements are illustrated in Figure 2 [6]. Individuals who exhibit high EI usually possess these five key elements. Daniel Goleman argues in his book that IQ contributes only about 20% to success in life, and other forces contribute the rest.



Figure 2: Five components of emotional intelligence [6].

Emotional intelligence enables one to consider the emotional state of another in order to motivate, plan, and achieve one's desires. It is a set of skills that children need to learn at the age.

IV. HOW TEACHERS CAN DEVELOP EI IN STUDENTS

Emotional intelligence can be developed in children through learning, training, and education. All educators need to integrate emotional intelligence skills into their classrooms. Early childhood educators need high emotional intelligence to cope with job-related stress and to serve as positive role models for the children they teach. Teachers can use their own emotional intelligence to acknowledge the feelings children. Both students and teachers can use the mood meter (e.g., happy, scared, frustrated, annoyed, calm) to acknowledge their feelings.

The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence has developed the RULER program for schools. RULER is an acronym that stands for Recognizing emotions in self and others, Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions, Labeling emotions accurately, Expressing emotions appropriately, and Regulating emotions effectively.

The five RULER skills for children are presented as follows [7,8].

- *Recognize*: How am I feeling? Cues from our bodies (e.g., posture, energy level, breathing, and heart rate) can help us identify our levels of pleasantness and energy.
- *Understand*: What happened that led me to feel this way? As feelings change throughout the day, think about the possible causes (e.g., people, thoughts, and events) of these feelings.
- *Label*: What word best describes how I am feeling? We use a very limited number of words to describe how we are feeling (e.g., happy, sad, mad).

Cultivating a rich vocabulary allows us to pinpoint and communicate our emotions accurately.

- *Express*: How can I express appropriately what I am feeling for this time and place? Explaining to children what we are doing and why, as we express different feelings at school, provides them with models of different strategies to express their own emotions.
- *Regulate*: What can I do to maintain my feeling (if I want to continue feeling this way) or shift my feeling (if I do not want to continue feeling this way)? Having short-term and long-term strategies to manage emotions is a critical part of effective regulation.

The program has been shown to boost student's emotional intelligence and social skills, productivity, academic performance, leadership skills, and attention while reducing anxiety, depression, and bullying [9]. The RULER acronym can help teachers communicate better with children. By using a wide range of activities (such as creative arts, music, games), teachers can help children develop RULER skills. Practicing RULER can be done at school as well as at home. Some school districts offer social and emotional learning (SEL) programs to help build EI in kids and teach them how to manage their emotions. Figure 3 shows an example of teaching emotional intelligence in early childhood [10].



Figure 3: Teaching emotional intelligence in early childhood [10].

V. HOW PARENTS CAN DEVELOP EI IN CHILDREN

The family is the most vital unit of society in which children are raised. It is one of the most important social environments through which they learn many values, behaviors, and skills that help them adapt to life. The family environment plays a key role in the formation of a child's personality [11]. The development of personality in children is strongly influenced by parents. Parenting styles are crucial to developing children's emotional intelligence. A family environment that is full of trust and loyalty will foster a healthy personality, in contrast to a family environment with quarrels and fighting. The absence of one parent or both will have negative impacts on their growth and will make them susceptible to behavioral disorders [12]. Parents naturally want the very best for our children and can be the best teachers of their own children. They should be willing to teach their children emotional intelligence, a skill that will make them successful in life.

Children often need an exhausting amount of attention and help and parenting can be stressful. Moms and dads do not need to be "super-parents," hiding their emotions from their children. Kids need to learn from their parents in order to learn how to regulate their feelings and behave when outside home environment.

Professor John Gottman observed that parents respond to children's emotions one of four possible ways [13]. These responses represent four types of parents.

1. *Dismissing parents* see children's emotions as unimportant and attempt to eliminate them quickly, often through the use of distraction.
2. *Disapproving parents* see negative emotions as something to be squashed, usually through punishment.
3. *Laissez-faire parents* accept all emotions from child, but fail to help the child solve problems or put limits on appropriate behaviors.
4. *Emotion coaching parents* value negative emotions, are not impatient with a child's expression of them, and use emotional experience as an opportunity for bonding by offering guidance through labeling emotions and problem-solving the issue at hand.

Developing emotional intelligence in your child now will help him or her become a good leader, a good citizen, and a good parent. The following five tips will help parents become their kids' "emotion coach" and raise emotionally intelligence of children [14]:

Recognize their own emotions: Parents need to be aware of their own emotions and sensitive to the emotions of their children - anger, anxiousness, disgust, fear, happiness, jealousy sadness, silliness, shyness. Figure 4 shows five core emotions [15].



Figure 4: Five core emotions [15].

- Once you help your children recognize their own emotions, whether it is anger or disappointment, they can start taking ownership. Lead by example.
- *Emotion is an opportunity for intimacy and teaching:* The best lessons about dealing with emotions are learned when things get emotional. Think about the challenges your child faces every day and how you can help. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises parents not use technology as a way to calm or pacify negative emotions in their child.
- *Listen and validate feelings:* Pay full attention while you listen to your child's emotional expression. Let your child know you understand how he or she is feeling. Use your child's mistakes as opportunities to grow better.

- *Help them label their emotions:* Help them put words and meaning to how they are feeling. You have the words; they do not. Negative emotional words such as "angry," "upset," "scared," "shy" and "frustration" as well as positive emotional words such as "joy," "excited," "happy" and "hopeful" can all build a vocabulary to express feelings.
- *Teach problem-solving skills:* One of the key roles of EI is determining how we respond to challenges. Teach your child to breathe through them. Work on helping your child see that he has the ability to solve problems peacefully and effectively on his own.

VI. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

Emotional intelligence is regarded as an important stepping stone to success. It helps children do better in school and get along better with their mates and friends. It provides a variety of benefits that will serve your child well throughout her entire life. Children with higher emotional intelligence can pay attention, are more engaged in school, and have more positive relationships with others.

No matter how high you child's emotionally intelligent is, there is always room for improvement. Improving emotional intelligence in children can help them in the following ways [16]:

- Improve self-awareness
- Manage stress
- Boost self-motivation
- Build empathy
- Make good decisions
- Communicate effectively
- Develop better relationships
- Higher success and happiness during adulthood
- Improved mental health
- Better prepared for workplace

Raising kids with high emotional intelligence is a major challenge to parents' competence. Establishing respect for emotion is a difficult childrearing task parents face.

No one can reduce the complexities of raising children, with each child being uniquely different. Adolescence creates difficulties for many families, because they go through enormous changes [17]. Incorporating emotional intelligence into learning programs can be challenging, as programs must address a variety of topics.

CONCLUSION

One of the most important life skills parents can teach their children is emotional intelligence, which is a conjoint of different abilities. Today, employers are looking for individuals with high EI. Teachers and parents should help raise the emotional intelligence of future generations by working together to get our schools to implement programs like RULER. Emotional intelligence development of children depends on the quality of children's relationships with the adults and early care experience. For more information about emotional intelligence in children, one should consult the books in [18-25] and the following related journals: *My Journal of Monstrous Emotions* and *Young Children*.

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