



Buxton Nursery Ltd

Emotion Coaching & supporting children using the 3 R's

Emotion coaching

Emotion Coaching uses moments of heightened emotion and resulting behaviour to guide and teach the child and young person about more effective responses. Through empathetic engagement, the child's emotional state is verbally acknowledged and validated, promoting a sense of security and feeling 'felt'.

There are 4 steps to the emotion coaching process:

Step 1. Recognising the feelings and empathising with them It is important that an adult comes alongside a child who is experiencing a strong emotion. They need to establish a calm rapport with the child so that they can begin to attune and coregulate with them. This will include:

- Giving eye contact
- Displaying sympathetic body language
- Using a calm and measured voice

By doing these things you establish the emotional tone in the situation. This is essential before any teaching and co-learning can happen.

The best gift you can give to another human is to stay with them in their emotion and hold that emotion with them.

Step 2. Validating and labelling

The adult then helps the child to identify the emotion and name it. The adult never tells the child directly what they are feeling but uses one of the following to suggest how they might feel.

I think your body felt...

I think your body was feeling

I saw..... Or..... I noticed....

I can hear in your voice that you might be feeling

I can sense that you are feeling [emotion]....

Your face is telling me that...

I wonder if you feel...

I imagine that feels....? It sounds to me that you might feel...

Tell me about that...

Are you saying that

It sounds to me like you feel.....because.....Is that right?

How does that make you feel?.

Naming an emotion can help to soothe a child and helps to build their vocabulary for different feelings. An adult can set a good example by naming their own emotions and talking about them.

3. Setting limits on behaviour (if need be)

It may be necessary to make it clear that certain behaviours are not acceptable and sometimes it is necessary to use a very clear limit on how the child expresses their emotions. It isn't the emotion itself that needs to change but rather how they are expressing it. There may have been a goal that the child was hoping to achieve with the behaviour. It is good to identify this but make it clear that the behaviour was not acceptable.

Eg

"It's okay to feel how you feel. It is not okay to ____."

"These are the rules we have to follow to keep everyone safe...doing _____ is not ok".

"You can't behave like that even though you feel annoyed because it's not safe".

4. Problem solving with the child

This can only happen once the child is calm and relaxed (this is the third stage of the 3 R's – Reason).

You can then begin to explore the feelings that gave rise to the behaviour incident remembering that all feelings are OK, but we have choices about how we respond. Then we can begin to scaffold alternative ideas and actions that could lead to more appropriate and productive outcomes. Adults can trust them to come up with ideas and adults should try not to jump in with their own ideas unless the child is finding this tricky. This helps the empower the child to believe they can overcome the difficulties and manage their own feelings and behaviours.

The 3 R's

Regulate – first we help the person to regulate their fight/flight/freeze/collapse responses using safe and appropriate regulation tools.

Relate – second, we relate and connect with the person through a safe, attuned and sensitive relationship.

Reason – third we support the person to reflect, learn, remember and articulate and become self-assured.

