



Emotionally Intelligent Communication: RULER Skills for Families

Emotions give us valuable information about ourselves and our environment. As a parent, developing these five skills in reference to our emotions and our children's emotions helps us to:

- Respond more effectively, working towards creating an emotionally connected, secure parent- child relationship
- Identify the skills that we need to teach our children
- Provide opportunities for modeling and practicing these skills within our family, so that our children will have the resilience to deal with life's ups and downs

	Definition	Strategy	Parent	Child
Recognizing	Using faces, body language, physiology and tone of voice to identify emotions	Acknowledging and validating feelings to help your child feel heard and understood	Becoming aware of my feelings	Becoming aware of my child's feelings
Understanding	Becoming aware of the causes and consequences of emotions and how they influence our thoughts, memory, judgment and behavior	Listening with full attention and curiosity, clarifying, connecting, and responding nonjudgmentally to the feelings that are driving the behaviors	What happened to make me feel this way? How will these feelings affect my thinking, memory, judgement, and behavior?	What happened to make my child feel this way? How will these feelings affect my child's thinking, memory, judgement, and behavior?
Labeling	Using a varied emotion vocabulary to describe feelings accurately and communicate a full range of emotions	Name it to tame it	Using more sophisticated, nuanced feeling words as children grow	Encouraging children to use a more varied feeling word vocabulary through modeling and practice
Expressing	Being aware of when and how to communicate feelings appropriately	Using "I" statements to communicate feelings and accept expression of emotions while limiting behaviors	Making choices about how to express my feelings in different situations (e.g., public vs. private)	Encouraging children to make choices that are appropriate for different situations (e.g, school vs. home)
Regulating	Developing and using strategies to feel more, less, or the same amount of an emotion	Breathing to calm down, reframing, positive self talk; have a problem solving conversation to brainstorm ways to shift feelings; if a desire can't be granted, grant the wish in fantasy	Developing helpful strategies to shift my emotional state in order to achieve my goals	Encouraging and supporting children to develop strategies to manage emotions or shift to more pleasant emotional states



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The five skills of Emotional Intelligence are taught, modeled, practiced and developed one conversation at a time. These conversations will help your child to make sense of their experiences and learn from them.

Use the five skills of emotional intelligence to respond to:

A child's feelings and behavior

Situation: Your first grader feels excluded from a group of children who are planning to go to the park together with their families. The other parents work part time and are available to go during the week.

"It sounds like you would have really liked to be invited to go to the park with Courtney and Jamal and that you are feeling a bit left out.

[Recognize, Understand, and Label].

Is that how you are feeling, a little down? I'm noticing that you don't have much energy, your head and shoulders are down. *[Express]*

Would you like to tell me more about it? Oh, so you overheard them talking and it sounded like you would be missing a lot of fun. That must have been difficult. Is there something that you can tell yourself that would make you feel less left out and more connected to your friends? *[Regulate]*

Or perhaps there is something that we can do? For instance we could invite them on the weekend."

A situation

Situation: Your fourth grader does not get to play the drums in the school orchestra and her teacher wants her to play the trumpet. She walks off the school bus appearing angry and frustrated.

"It can be disappointing when you don't get something that you really want *[Recognize]*.

I know how much you really wanted to play the drums. *[Understand]*. It seems like you are a little angry too. Would you like to tell me more about that? *[Labeling]*

Do you think that Ms. X would be willing to hear how you feel about this? Perhaps we can practice together – I can be her and you can be you. What would you say? *[Express]*.

So do you think that a trumpet would be an acceptable instrument or would you rather have a conversation with her about the drums? *[Regulate]*

If you couldn't get to play the drums, what might be a good thing about playing the trumpet? *[Regulate]*