



Building emotional wellbeing  
and resilience in children 6 to 12  
years old and their families

# PARENTING STRATEGIES

## Emotional Skills

**LIFT  
OFF!** STEADY



# Hello Parents,

From the moment our children are born, our child's wellbeing is our number one priority. We do everything we can to keep them safe and healthy, while providing every opportunity to live a full and happy life. One of the most important determinants of our children's happiness is their emotional wellbeing.

There is no doubt about it, parenting is one of the most rewarding, exhausting, and challenging roles we will play in our life. The intention of this ebook is to further strengthen the resilience and emotional wellbeing of your child and make your job as a parent easier, while giving your kids what they truly need. Evidence suggests that the relationship skills, emotional skills and life skills outlined in our three ebooks, if implemented, will strengthen your child's resilience and emotional wellbeing. To see the other two eBooks go to [www.upliftingaustralia.org.au](http://www.upliftingaustralia.org.au).

Be mindful that anything worth doing takes time and it may take 6 - 12 months for these strategies to become a normal part of your family life.

We have been sharing these strategies with parents through our Lift Off! Ready > Steady > Go programs (formerly CampOut with Kids and HangOut with Kids) and the feedback has been fantastic! We have taken the time to make the three parenting strategies ebooks as short and user friendly as possible. I know that my children have greatly benefited from these strategies which have become a normal part of our family life.

There are two self-assessment tools at the end of this ebook to further support you and your family to strengthen the emotional environment in your homes. On behalf of Uplifting Australia we wish you and your family lots of love and support.

Kind regards,

Garry Thomson, CEO Uplifting Australia.



# Emotional Skills

Our ability to treat ourselves and others respectfully has a major impact on our lives. People with good emotional skills get on well with others and can stick up for themselves when they need to without becoming aggressive.

They set and hold appropriate boundaries with other people, know what they are worth and tend to be treated well as a consequence.

The strategies below support you to become an effective emotional coach for your children as well as support you to learn and grow as a parent.

- Manage challenging behaviour by separating the person from the behaviour
- Support your children to express their feelings in healthy ways

# Managing behaviour

## Manage challenging behaviour by separating the person from their behaviour

Be gentle on the person and firm on the behaviour. The goal here is to teach that whilst certain behaviours are not ok, the child is always loved and treated respectfully so they can learn from the situation.

### Why is this strategy good for my child?

Separating the person from the behaviour allows us to deal directly with the behaviour while staying gentle on the person. When we do this, we can be as direct and as clear as we want with boundaries and consequences. This separation keeps our child's self esteem intact and teaches them personal responsibility. They will know that they are always loved for who they are, despite what they do. This strategy also helps us as parents to learn and grow as well as manage our own emotional impulses. Most parents get emotional and angry from time to time. When we react emotionally with anger or frustration it can be hurtful to our children. When we realise we've done this, we recommend apologising and taking responsibility for our hurtful behaviour.

### How to integrate this into your day:

- The goal here is to be gentle on the person but firm on the challenging behaviour. Remember when we need to deal with challenging behaviour use the language "You're great, but that behaviour is not ok."
- Taking responsibility for our own behaviour builds trust and restores the loving connection again; it also role models self-responsibility. Apologising for our mistakes is one of the best gifts we can give our children. When we do this, we can say, "Sorry for the way I spoke to you. My frustration was not about you, but about your behaviour and I'm sorry I spoke like that."



# Expressing feelings

## Support your children to express their feelings in healthy ways

It is very important that we support our children to express all their feelings without making them wrong for having them.

### Why is this strategy good for my child?

When our children are upset and we show that we understand them, they feel accepted and supported by us and our relationship strengthens. Children who have their feelings acknowledged and accepted and who are encouraged to talk about their feelings in an honest and healthy way, grow up with the critical life skill of being able to manage their emotions.

If our children's feelings are not acknowledged, or are criticised, they may not learn to communicate how they feel and react in unhealthy ways. This could be hurtful to themselves and others throughout their lives. It could also create an emotional separation between you and your child, which is upsetting for everybody. Please be aware that our boys and girls are equally sensitive.

### How to integrate this into your day:

It is impossible to prevent our children from having feelings and emotions such as anger, sadness, frustration, anxiety etc, and is not our job to rescue them from these feelings. It is however, our role to support them to express themselves.

A simple model to support our children is to follow the process below. Be careful not to rush through the steps.

- 1 Be aware of your child's feelings and emotions on a daily basis. Boys and girls are equally sensitive.
- 2 Help children verbalise how they are feeling by asking them validating questions (see below).
- 3 Repeat their feelings back to them without making them right or wrong. Remember, you don't need to rescue them, just let them know you are there.
- 4 Set limits if their reactive behaviour is not ok. For example; "It's ok that you're angry but it's not ok to hit people. You need to stop doing that."
- 5 Assist your child to solve their own problems.

#### Validating questions

- You seem angry, are you ok?
- It sounds like you are feeling sad about that?
- I can see that you are worried?
- Are you feeling excited?

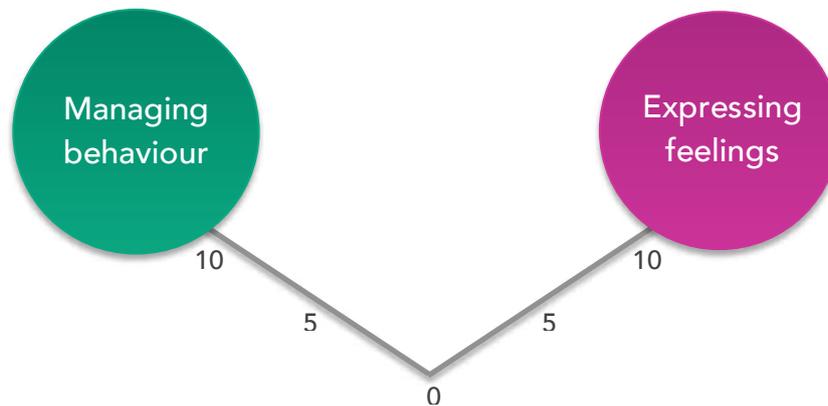
#### De-validating response

- Getting angry doesn't help anything! Don't be silly!
- Don't be sad! Smile!
- Don't worry about it!
- Calm down



# Self-reflection tool

Read each parenting strategy and score yourself on how often you use the strategy in your family. "10, you do this lots" and "0, you don't do this much".



Now, think about these strategies and consider what you would like to keep doing, stop doing and start doing in your family. Starting to use new strategies can take some time to do, so don't expect it to happen overnight!

I would like to:

Stop doing...

Start doing...

Keep doing...

# Self-awareness tool

Research informs us that the behaviours below either improve or erode our children's self esteem and social competence. It is not a complete list, but it is a good guide. Read through the lists and tick which ones are true for you. You may have ticks on both sides which is normal.

## Am I off track?

- Shouting at children.
- Teasing children or other family members, making fun in a humiliating way, using the mask of humor to justify giving negative messages to people.
- Putting children down (E.g. You're stupid, dumb, useless).
- Withdrawing love, giving the silent treatment, ignoring children for long periods of time.
- Being too busy to spend time with your children.
- Not caring about how your children feel.
- Not being considerate and not caring when children are upset.
- Treating other family members poorly.
- Leaving your anger unchecked and taking it out (verbally or physically) on children and other family members.
- Not apologising or taking responsibility for the hurts you cause others.
- Being addicted to alcohol, drugs, gambling etc. and not seeking assistance.
- Enabling your children to become very overweight or obese.
- Negative messages about body image.

## Am I on track?

- Separating the child from the behavior. Remaining soft on the person and firm on the behavior and using a calm voice.
- Making a habit of acknowledging your child's positive qualities.
- Being kind and affectionate with physical and verbal messages.
- Support your child to express their feelings in healthy ways.
- Spending one on one time with your children and quality time with your whole family on a regular basis.
- Asking how your children are feeling
- Noticing when your child needs a hug and some love and understanding. Providing them with what they need.
- Remaining respectful and caring to all family members.
- Dealing with anger in ways that don't affect your family. E.g. Seeking help from a professional or close friends and having strategies like removing yourself from the family until you calm down.
- Taking responsibility for how you make others feel. E.g. Listening to feedback, saying sorry and then changing your behaviour.
- Keeping yourself healthy and role modeling a quality life to your family.

Read back through your ticked boxes and get a sense of which behaviours you are proud of and where there is room for improvement. Now that you have a level of awareness around your preferred behaviour read back through the Parenting Strategies for a relevant approach.

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Parent Line      NSW 1300 1300 52      ACT 02 6287 3833      QLD & NT 1300 30 1300  
VIC 13 22 89      TAS 1300 808 178      SA 1300 364 100      WA 1800 654 432

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Lifeline      13 11 14

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Beyond Blue      1300 224 636

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National Sexual Assault, Family Counseling & Domestic Violence Helpline      1800 737 732

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We would like to acknowledge the generous support of everyone who helps us deliver this meaningful work to the community.

#### Key Partners



#### Merchandise Partner



#### Schools + Families

Thank you to all the schools and families that are participating in Lift Off! programs (formerly CampOut with Kids and HangOut with Kids). You are helping to build a generation of more inspiring, authentic and emotionally intelligent young Australians. Please share this information with your family and friends - we ask that organisations contact us for permission to use this information.

The Lift Off! Parenting Strategies were developed by Uplifting Australia, a not-for-profit harm prevention charity that develops programs and resources that improve the emotional wellbeing and resilience of children and families.

This book was written by Garry Thomson, Sarah Binet and the Uplifting Australia team.

[www.upliftingaustralia.org.au](http://www.upliftingaustralia.org.au)