**Small Children and BIG Emotions**

Kids experience complex feelings just like adults. They get nervous, sad, frustrated, worried, angry and even embarrassed. However, young children often do not have the vocabulary to talk about the things they are feeling. They communicate their feelings in other ways, and sometimes those ways can be inappropriate or problematic.

From the moment children are born, they start to learn the emotional skills they need to identify, express, and manage their feelings. They learn how to do this through their social interactions and relationships with others, primarily important people in their lives such as parents, grandparents and caregivers.

As a parent your role is so important in helping kids to understand their feelings and behaviors. Kids need to be shown how to manage their feelings in positive, constructive ways. Kids who learn how to express and cope with their feelings in healthy ways are more likely to:

- Be empathetic and supportive of others
- Perform better in school and in their career
- Have more positive and stable relationships
- Have good mental health and wellbeing
- Display fewer behavioral problems
- Develop resilience and coping skills
- Feel more competent, capable and confident
- Have a positive sense of self

Remembering that behind every behavior is a feeling, can make managing those emotions and behaviors a little easier. Help your child to name their feelings, so they can learn to talk about their feelings. Once they can identify their own feelings, provide opportunities for them to identify feelings in others. This will help them to be aware of others, as well as teach them the skill of empathy. Remember to listen to your child and stay present, as feelings that are minimized or dismissed will often be expressed in unhealthy ways.

Being a role model to your children is helpful for them to learn how to appropriately express emotions, as we learn best by watching others. Praising your child when they talk about their feelings will not only help them to know that their feelings are normal, but it will reinforce good behavior, so they are likely to repeat it. Remember- You play an important role in your child’s emotional development!

(Kidshelpline.com)

When Little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it’s our job to share our calm, not join their chaos.

L.R. Knost