



PRESCHOOLER

Helping Your Preschooler Name Big Emotions

Preschoolers experience big emotional waves but often can't express what they feel. This guide offers practical steps to help your child label and manage their emotions, promoting emotional literacy and self-control.

A free guide from maternity.app

Your preschooler is full of big emotions but might struggle to express them. Helping them label their feelings is key to guiding them towards self-control.

Expand their emotional vocabulary.

- **Use specific words.** Move beyond basic terms like 'happy' or 'sad'. Introduce words like 'frustrated', 'jealous', or 'overwhelmed'.
- **Identify feelings together.** When your kid experiences a strong emotion, ask how they feel and help them find the right word.

Connect feelings to physical cues.

- **Help them notice.** Ask questions like, 'How does your body feel when you're mad?'
- **Describe sensations.** Use phrases like, 'Your fists are tight, it looks like you're feeling angry.'

- ☐ Expand vocabulary: Move beyond 'happy' or 'sad.' Introduce specific nuance words like frustrated, jealous, or overwhelmed.
- ☐ Connect emotion to the body: Help them identify physical cues when feeling strong emotions.
- ☐ Use visual tools: Utilize picture books or emotion charts with distinct facial expressions.
- ☐ Normalize all feelings: Teach that all emotions are safe, separating feelings from behaviors.
- ☐ Practice empathy: Acknowledge their feelings when they express them, reinforcing it's okay to share.

Normalize all feelings in your home.

- **Teach acceptance.** Help your kid understand all feelings are valid, even the uncomfortable ones.
- **Use relatable stories.** Share your emotions during daily activities to model emotional expression.

ENGAGE WITH BOOKS

Reading picture books about emotions can open discussions and help your child connect words to their feelings.

Understanding and naming emotions takes practice for you and your preschooler. Through patience, empathy, and creativity, you can help your child develop emotional literacy.