



Teaching Kids about Emotions

How good are you at interpreting other people's facial expressions?

The better your child can read other kids facial expressions the better their social skills, and the easier they find it to make friends. The more others kids think your child is friendly and ultimately this leads to popularity. Up until now we just thought that some people were better at this than others. But recent research has shown that the ability to read others expressions is not a result of chance or how you are born – that you can actually teach your child how to become better at reading their friends faces. You can teach them this skill.

Interested in teaching your kids? Well, I suggest you start by collecting a series of photos of people's facial expressions. Make sure you have a variety of emotions such as happy, sad, fear, anger, disgust, surprise just to start. Before you use these with your kids it's advisable to test it out on a few adult friends first and get them to guess the emotions. If your friends have difficulty pinpointing the right emotion then discard it from your pile. Then ask your kids what the emotion is. The more you practice the better they become.

Another great strategy is when your reading to your kids to point out the characters facial expressions and simply ask your child "how do you think their feeling?" This teaches empathy .

Scientists at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago were startled at the amount of children in a recent study who cannot pick up on the non-verbal cues, understand them and respond correctly.

For example kids did not even notice the way someone's shoulders slump with disappointment or hear the change in someone's voice when they are excited. They believe that these skills are essential for children to make and keep friends and avoid problems later in life. On the other hand children that can pick up the cues and respond are likely to have successful friendships. Body language expert Alan Pease recommends just 15mins a day of observing others body language will help you to refine these skills

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