

WHAT AM I FEELING?



THE “EMOTIONALLY-DISMISSIVE” PARENT/TEACHER

Says:

“You don’t need to be sad. It’s not that bad. Put a smile on your face. There’s no reason to be unhappy.”

The child feels:

- Ignored or disregarded when he has strong feelings
- He learns that emotions are “bad” and need to be “fixed” quickly
- He doesn’t learn how to handle his emotions, and has trouble with other children’s emotions

These children may:

- Feel diminished or dismissed
- Are reluctant to come to you when they feel sad or angry
- Begin to dis-miss their own feelings and the feelings of others

THE “EMOTIONALLY-DISAPPROVING” PARENT/TEACHER

Says:

“Stop crying! You can’t join us until you stop the crying.”

The child feels:

- Upset and now that you tell him that he’s wrong, he feels even worse.
- He feels criticized or punished for showing emotions even when he does not misbehave.
- He is never taught what to call the strong feelings he has or what to do with them.

These children may:

- Have more difficulty trusting their own judgment
- Feel something is wrong with them
- Have trouble regulating their emotions or solving their problems

THE “EMOTIONALLY-FREEDOM” PARENT/TEACHER

Says:

“That’s it, just let your feelings out. You can hit and kick the pillow over there.”

The child feels:

- Comfortable in expressing his feelings and knows that it’s acceptable to show emotions, whatever they are. But, there are no limits on her behaviour and little guidance as to how to deal with her strong emotions.

These children may:

- Don’t learn to regulate their emotions
- Have trouble concentrating
- Have trouble forming friendships
- Have trouble getting along with other children

THE PARENT/TEACHER AS “EMOTIONAL COACH”

Says:

Tell me how you feel. I’ve felt that way, too. You can’t hit somebody when you’re angry. Let’s think together about other things you can do when you feel this way.”

The child feels:

- Valued and comforted when all of his emotions are accepted. At the same time, he learns that there are limits on her behaviour when she has strong feelings.

These children may:

- Learn to trust their feelings
- Regulate their own emotions
- Solve problems
- Have high self-esteem
- Learn well
- Get along well with others