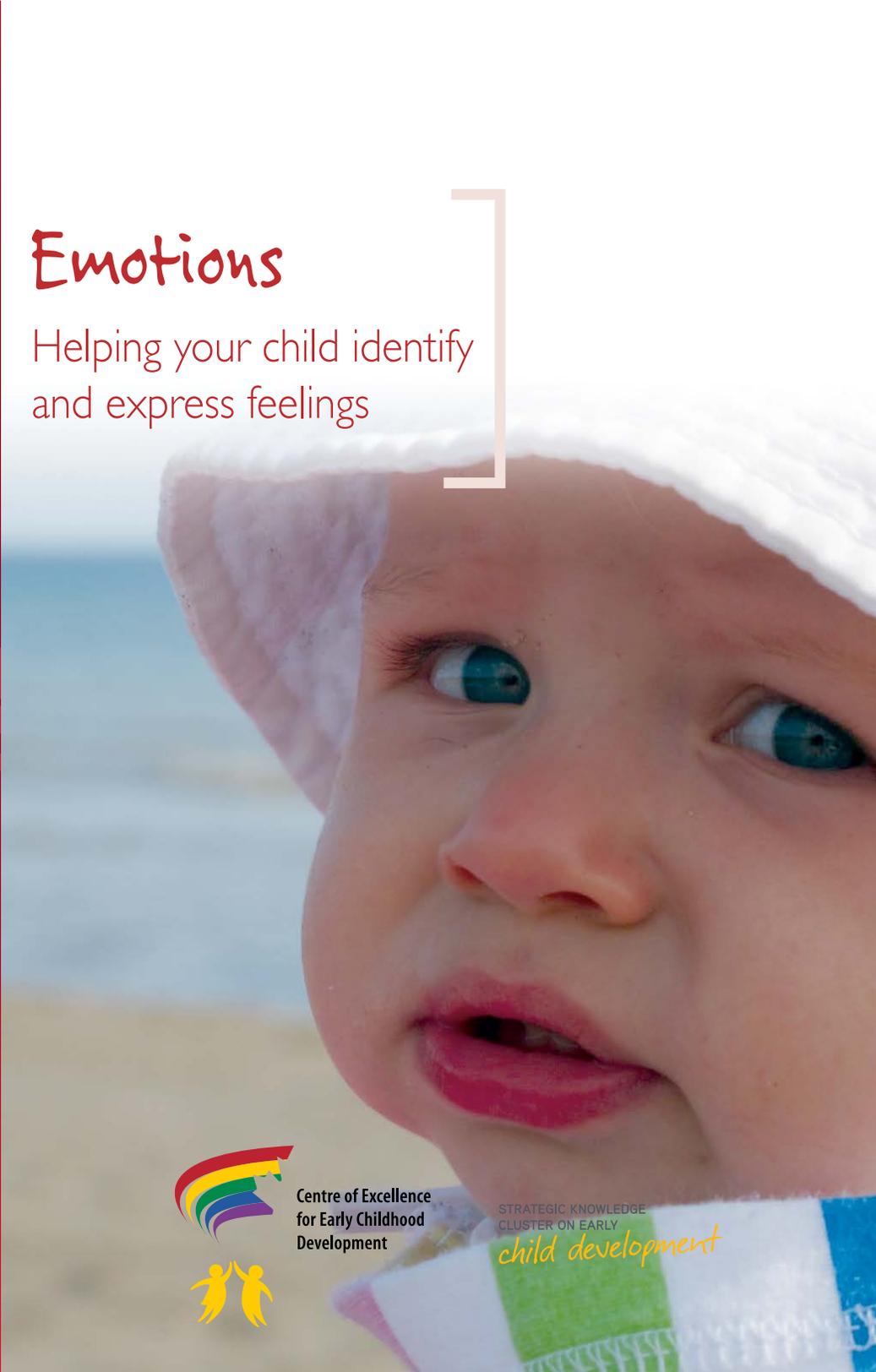


Eyes on



Emotions

Helping your child identify
and express feelings



PARENTS



Centre of Excellence
for Early Childhood
Development

STRATEGIC KNOWLEDGE
CLUSTER ON EARLY

child development



“Children with emotional competence are likely to do well in school and engage in positive relationships with other children and family members.”

What do we know?

- An emotion is a person’s inner feeling. Some examples of emotions are anger, fear, joy and guilt.
- A child who understands and can deal with emotions has “emotional competence.” This means he can express his feelings appropriately (e.g., smile if happy). He can identify what he’s feeling and what other people are feeling, and he can modify (or change) his emotions to better deal with certain situations (e.g., he can calm himself down when he’s angry).
- Children with emotional competence are more likely to be empathic – they can understand how others might be feeling. They are also more likely to help others and to find ways to deal with negative situations.
- Children with emotional competence are likely to do well in school and engage in positive relationships with other children and family members.
- The emotions that children express depend on their age and their culture.
- Some of the first emotions that babies express are fear, anger and joy.
- Around the age of 30 months, children start to express emotions that relate to the way they see themselves. They may feel embarrassed, guilty or proud.
- Children’s emotional behaviour can depend on their temperament, cognitive development, and the way they react to new situations and objects.
- Children who express interest and joy when faced with new situations and objects are more likely to have emotional competence than children who are afraid or sad.
- Children who have had negative experiences early in their life (e.g., trauma or maltreatment) may have trouble dealing with emotions.
- Children who have trouble dealing with emotions may become depressed, aggressive or anxious.

Paying attention to...

What can be done?

... your baby's non-verbal messages about how he's feeling (e.g., hugging, sulking, crying). Your baby can't talk, so use these non-verbal clues to find out what he is feeling.

- Be supportive, caring and nurturing to your child. This will help to build a strong bond between you and your child. For example, when your child gives you a hug, take the time to hug him back.

... helping your child to identify emotions.

- Show your child how you're feeling about different situations. This will help him to make the link between a specific situation and positive and negative emotions.
- Help your child understand feelings by naming them. For example, "I am very happy when you smile at me!"

... your child's reactions when facing new or challenging situations.

- Give your child advice about ways to deal with negative emotions. For example, "I can see you're frustrated with your new toy. Take a few deep breaths."
- If your child seems afraid or sad in a new situation, reassure him quickly. Help him to see the positive aspects of the situation. For example, "I know you're nervous about being away from Mommy, but daycare will be fun. Think of the new friends you'll meet..."
- Give your child comfort objects (e.g., a favourite teddy bear or blanket) if it helps to reassure him.



Information

This Key Message is a publication of the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (CEECD) and the Strategic Knowledge Cluster on Early Child Development (SKC-ECD). These organizations identify and summarize the best scientific work on early childhood development. They disseminate this knowledge to a variety of audiences in formats and languages adapted to their needs.

For a more in-depth understanding of Emotions, consult our synthesis and experts' articles on this topic in the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development, available free of charge at www.child-encyclopedia.com.

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Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development Strategic Knowledge Cluster on Early Child Development

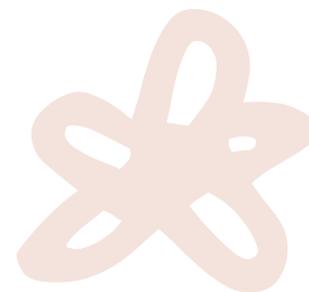
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In this document, the masculine form is used merely to simplify the text. No discrimination is intended.



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