

# Emotional-Social Growth

Presented by Megg Thompson M.Ed. ECMPWTPCF

Certified Behavioral Consultant

Certified Life Coach working with children, adults and families

Founder and Filler of The eMpTy Toolbox

[meggthompson.com](http://meggthompson.com)

[megg@meggthompson.com](mailto:megg@meggthompson.com)

603-706-3288

The brain is not a rational brain—it is an emotional brain. The limbic system (primary center of emotions) tells the neocortex what to pay attention to. If something doesn't speak to the child emotionally, the child's brain ignores it!

“Healthy development of the brain proceeds from the primitive to the complex (from reptilian to limbic to neocortex) provided certain basics are present:

1. Responsive nurturing
2. The avoidance of stress
3. The presence of secure emotional relationships

If these basics are missing, the result can be the over-development of the reptilian brain which keeps the child in a constant “hyper” state (fight, flight, freeze). The domination of the survival-oriented part of the brain interferes with healthy brain growth and development.”

-Mogar, Nkahata, Rico

# Where do emotions come from?

- Things are not right and not fair
- Lack of movement
- Hungry or lack of nutrition
- “I haven’t figured them out yet”
- Temperament
- “This is too much, too loud, too cluttered!”
- “I am bored, so, so bored! None of this interests me!”
- “I need to be able to make some of my own decisions!”
- “When do I get to make some choices!”
- “Oh, I’ll show you powerful!”
- “I want to be with someone. Can you help me figure this out? Don’t leave me alone!”
- “I would like some directions I can understand, please!”
- “Slow down!”

# Nervous System

1. Autonomic Nervous System: this part of the nervous system is responsible for the control of the bodily functions that are not consciously directed (breathing, heartbeat and digestion)
2. Sympathetic Nervous System: Charged with controlling the body's fight/flight or freeze reaction. When racing a threat, these responses automatically prepare your body to flee from danger or face the threat head-on. How do children/adults show their emotions?

# I'll show you my emotions....

- Dominant, determined, direct kids: physically hurtful: hit, punch, hit, pinch, slap, push
- Interactive, imaginative, impressionable: swear, yell, spit, bite, threaten verbally
- Supportive, sensitive, sweet: hold emotions in, anxiety, panic attacks, can explode when held in too long
- Cautious, critical thinkers, correct: hold in emotions, revenge, perfectionistic, depression

# Emotions

6 total emotions:

Happy - preschool

Sad – preschool

Mad - preschool

Afraid - preschool

Surprise – 8 years old

Disgust – 8 years old

Blended Emotions (ex. Jealous, Excited) – 12 years old

# Anger can be the hardest emotion....When I am angry I will.....

- Pout/sulk, eyebrows
- Make you think I don't care when I probably do, but I will never admit it.
- I will tease others
- I will tell on others so they get in trouble and your focus isn't on me for a little bit.
- Asthma – physiological connection to anger
- I will choose things I can control like my bathroom schedule, talking, eating or sleeping.
- I may hurt myself on purpose. I wonder if I hurt myself if you will change your emotions/disposition towards me.
- Depression – anger turned inward – can lead to suicide



I show my emotions in 3 places:

- Hands
- Mouth
- Feet

# Anger strategies: be aware of how children express their anger.

1. Mouth: roaring box, yell into a pillow, biting tools/bracelets/necklaces, substitute inappropriate words, biting straws, venting appropriately
2. Hands: hole punch paper, put hands in pockets, wall push-ups, scribble it out, tear paper, punch a pillow, squeeze hands into fists and release
3. Feet: stomp, bubble wrap, go for a walk/run, kick football, exercise, kick beanbag chair, trampoline

# How can I, as the teacher, help with a child's emotions?

1. Validate thought and normalize emotions
2. Teach identification with emotions vocabulary (Name it!)
3. Teach modulation (Claim it!)
4. Teach expression of emotions (Tame it!)
5. Teach values like respect and responsibility through character education. What do I do when a friend cries, is mad, is happy, hurts? What does forgiveness look like? How do we move past apologies?
6. Know that children will not master emotions to be "ready" for school. When do we master emotions?

# Things to Remember:

- Self-regulation precedes self-discipline
  - Self regulation: ability to manage emotions/behaviors appropriately
  - Self-discipline: ability to pursue what one thinks is right despite temptations to abandon it.
- Be a role model for self-regulation and self-discipline. They are watching you!
- Create an environment that allows for self-regulation
- Create an environment with structure/schedule
- Create an environment where moving is celebrated
- Become a teacher that understands emotions