



Grande Prairie Family
Centered Coalition

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2019

This month we focus on:

Emotional Maturity



What is Emotional Maturity?

Emotional maturity is the ability to think before acting, impulse control, ability to deal with feelings at an age-appropriate level, empathy and compassion for other people's feelings and the willingness to help and comfort others. It is the ability to express both positive and negative emotions in ways that are healthy, respectful, and appropriate to the situation.

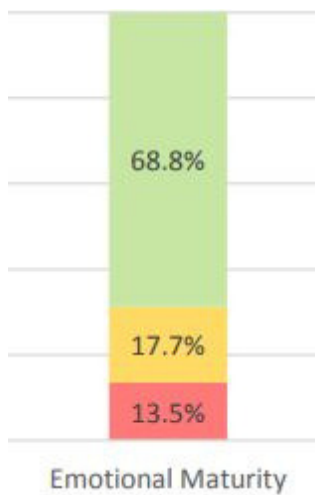
Why is it important?

Children who are emotionally healthy and able to understand and get along well with others, are children who are prepared to learn and succeed at school and through out life.

Children who learn emotional maturity are more resilient and able to show empathy. They generally have a more positive attitude and are able to share and take turns. They are also better able to regulate their own emotions - all skills we need to be healthy and successful adults!

A child doing well almost never shows aggressive, anxious, or impulsive behavior; has good concentration; and often helps other children. A child doing poorly has regular problems managing aggressive behavior; is prone to disobedience and/or is easily distracted, inattentive, and impulsive; usually does not help other children; and is sometimes upset when left by their caregiver.

The chart below shows data collected from the 2016 Early Development Instrument for **Grande Prairie** in the area of **social competence**.



68.8% - Children who are developmentally on track. Almost never show aggressive, anxious, or impulsive behavior. Children will have good concentration and will often help other children.

17.7% - Children who are developmentally at risk - Experience some challenges in the following areas: helping other children who are hurt, sick or upset, inviting other children to join in activities, being kind to other children, and waiting their turn in activities. They will sometimes experience problems with anxious behaviors, aggressive behavior, temper tantrums, or problems with inattention or hyperactivity.

13.5% - Children who are developmentally vulnerable - Experience a number of challenges related to emotional regulation. For example, problems managing aggressive behaviour being prone to disobedience and/or easily distracted, inattentive, and impulsive. Children will usually not help others and may have difficulty transitioning into class each day or between activities.

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTIONAL MATURITY

- You can start teaching emotional maturity from the very beginning by fostering healthy attachment with your baby. Attachment is the emotional bond between parent/ caregiver and child. To encourage healthy attachment you can do the following with your baby/ child: respond sensitively to their needs with nurturing care, comfort your baby/ child when they need you, especially when they are hurt, sick or upset, and let your baby/ child know they are loved, that you are there for them and they are important to you.
- Parents and caregivers are important role models in a child's life. By modeling appropriate emotional expressions and naming emotions in the moment, children are able to develop healthy emotional regulation.
- Time-In: Provide warmth, comfort and affection for strong feelings. Give cuddles, hugs, kisses, tell them they are going to be okay. This does not "spoil" a child - in fact, reacting in a loving and nurturing way calms the baby/ child and the stress response system in the brain gets turned-off and the brain begins to create the networks of brain cells that help the baby/child learn to soothe themselves.
- Discuss behavior later - after the child calms down you can talk with them about the behavior you would like to see (e.g. "Cups are for drinking, not for throwing.")
- Give your child opportunities to be caring and thoughtful to others - make a "Teddy Bear Hospital" for their stuffed animals, set up opportunities for your child to play with others, give them cuddly toys to care for (feed, wash, hug).
- Label and help organize your child's feelings when they are upset, then show them different ways to cope. For example: "You seem mad. Would you like a hug or would you like to look at a book in a quiet place?"
- Accept feelings and emotions as they are. All feelings are okay - there is no right or wrong. How we cope with emotions is where issues can arise. It is important to not make fun of or laugh at a child when they are upset or afraid.

For more information and links to tools and resources on child development as well as information on upcoming events visit our website: <https://www.gpfamilycenteredcoalition.ca>