

Top tips on:

How to support my child's emotional wellbeing

If you are feeling anxious and low, you are likely to be seeing these kinds of feelings in your child.

'When we are full up of emotions, they often spill out, even subconsciously' and even when we think we are hiding it from others, we are often not...



Here are some tips for increasing your 'happy' and 'positive' feelings that you can try with your child.

Identifying and managing the feelings

Things that you can do to start to identify and express feelings in different ways other than behaviours like getting angry and shouting and losing patience, or withdrawing are:

- **For Parents that feel like they are getting full of emotions**
 - Take a little time for yourself where you can – think about self-care – take a bath, a little walk, call a friend or a family member and talk about how you are feeling that day with others in your family.
 - Be aware that sometimes we can have negative thoughts when things are not going well. Its in these times, we must try our best to see the positives. Maybe you're thinking things like my childrens behaviour is really bad, instead of thinking this turn it into a positive – my children are really good sometimes, this is a stressful situation for my children.
- **For when children feel full of emotions (this might come out as anger):**
 - Draw out some feelings on a paper – happy, sad, scared or more that you can think of and spend time talking to your children about how they are feeling that day. For older children you can spend time talking about their interests and feelings.
 - You can make a worry jar and the children can write their feelings and emotions and put them into it. This gives you the opportunity to discuss their emotions at the end of the day.



Other ideas:

- **Try to manage difficult feelings:** Try to focus on the things you can control, including where you get information from and actions to make yourself feel better prepared.
- **It is okay to acknowledge some things that are outside of your control right now but constant repetitive thoughts about the situation which lead you to feel anxious or overwhelmed and are not helpful.**





Improve mood

Do something you like together, for example look at old photos with your children, read a book together, or listen to some music you both like.



Increase energy levels

A simple workout like a run, or a jog round the living room or the garden, or star jumps. For more ideas you can access free easy ten minute workouts online.



Get Better sleep

Have naps and rest when needed, set wake up and sleep times, and 10 minute relax sessions before bed



Boost feeling good about yourself

Set yourself small tasks to carry out during the day, cook something, learn something new, get homework for school done with your child or play a game (and if you don't do it.. it's okay, try again tomorrow)

Help to relax your mind

- **Manage your media and information intake.** If constant negative media is affecting you, try to limit the time you spend watching, reading, or listening to media coverage of the outbreak.
- **Get the facts.** Find a credible source you can trust such as GOV.UK, or the NHS website, and fact check information that you get from newsfeeds, social media or from other people.

Another useful link: The anxious child

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/anxious_child.pdf

For more information on our interactive sessions or groups please contact the early help hub on 0300 555 2866 opt 1

Top tips for Parents on:

How to have fun with my children and family

This tip sheet can help you think about new ideas to keep your children entertained, reflect a little bit on our own childhoods and how you are parenting now. With all that is going on it can be difficult to prioritise the time to spend time playing with our children. Some parents can find it really hard to play with their children, especially if they had difficult times themselves when they were children - it can feel really strange to enter into games and use imagination and play. However spending time with children and at play with them can really help them with their learning, self-control and relationships with others.



For parents...Ask yourself these questions

What you felt when you were a child, what you enjoyed and didn't enjoy?

Typically, were you the quiet one? The loud one? The shy one? The one that liked to win? – can you see any similarities in your children's behaviour now?

What things do you want to take from your childhood/your family when you were young into the way your own family works now?

Do you want to make a change while you have this time all stuck in doors where your children are probably with you for long periods of time?...if you answer yes, continue reading this tip sheet.

What can you do to make changes?

3 Top 'Changing things' Tips (this even works for older children)

- Spending time with children, even small amounts of quality time where you can:
- Talk together about what interests them
- Playing a game together or working on an activity together

If it doesn't work out well the first time, keep trying

This helps as:

- Children and young people realise they don't just have to misbehave to get our attention
- We are building stronger relationships with them
- They are learning new things and ways to communicate
- It can also help you find new ways of thinking about our own difficult childhood feelings and what you want to bring with you from your childhood into your family life now and what you want to leave behind.

If you would like more information on this subject, you can talk to your early help worker about a parenting session looking at emotions and relationships in the family.

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Here are some tips for fun activities that you can try with your child.

Carol Vorderman is offering free maths lessons, David Walliams has released 30 free audio stories and Joe Wicks has become the nation's PE teacher with his daily YouTube fitness class - for those that have stuck at it anyway.

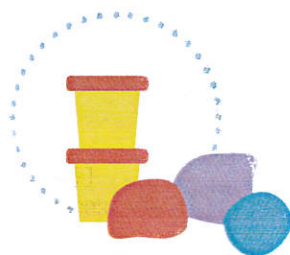
1. Play-Doh

Play-Doh is another old favourite and can keep them entertained for hours. Whether they want to make their own dinosaur, elephant, car or castle, the possibilities are endless. If you can manage not to stress about the colours being mixed together it can be a whole lot of fun. And if you haven't got any Play-Doh, it's pretty simple to make your own.

All you need is:

- 2 cups of plain flour
- 1 cup of salt
- 1 tablespoon of oil
- Half to 1 cup of cold water
- 2 drops of liquid food colouring

Mix the flour and salt, then add the water, oil and food colouring. Knead the mixture well, adding a little more flour if the consistency is too wet.



2. Alphabet game

Now this one couldn't be simpler and it'll get them writing and practising their spellings without them even knowing. Pick any subject like girls' names, boys' names or even chocolate bars and they have to write one down for each letter of the alphabet. You could even get the kids to see who can do it the fastest, if you can handle the fallout that is.

3. Shadow Drawing

You will need the sunshine for this one or a lamp. Ask your child to get their favourite animal or character out and they can easily draw around the shadows on the paper. You might even go further and ask them to colour them in afterwards.

4. Collage

Take out some of your old photos that you never get a chance to look at and make a collage. A collage is a piece of art made by sticking various different materials such as photographs, paper, or fabric onto a backing sheet. Create something that inspires you and makes you feel happy.

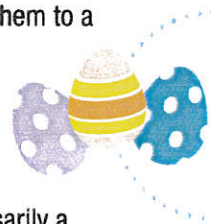


5. Move around

Do a simple workout like a run, or a jog round the living room or the garden, star jumps. For more ideas you can access free easy ten minute workouts online.

6. Grow your own Veg

Not only will growing your own vegetables keep the kids busy for a while, but it might save you some trips to the shop too. Lots of retailers sell kits that will get you started: look on your local gardening website or www.amazon.co.uk for ideas. You can start them off in a tiny pot in the house before transferring them to a larger one or a garden, if you have one.

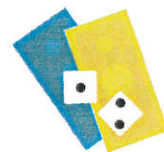


7. Egg decorating

You will have missed the annual Easter egg decorating competition at school - not necessarily a bad thing - but that doesn't mean you can't get doing your own designs at home. If you don't mind using up some of your precious groceries then hard boil a couple and get creative. If not then there are plenty of craft sets you can buy with eggs to colour in and decorate. Mum and dad might have to be the judges this time.

8. Make your own Monopoly Game

It can be as simple as cutting up an old cardboard box and using some felt tips to create areas that you know on the board. Your children will enjoy putting the landmarks in that they recognise. It may also be a good way of getting older and younger children to connect and communicate together.

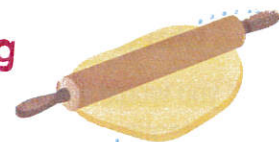


9. Family tree

At this time when we are away from our loved ones, it might be a nice idea to get the children making their own family tree. Older children can also get involved and see how far back they can go into the family history to discover their ancestors. Draw it out on an old roll of wallpaper or anything else you have around the house.

10. Cook something you enjoy

Find a recipe that you can cook together as a family. Plan the day you will cook it. Create a list of ingredients. Give everyone a task and work together to create your delicious dish(es).



Top tips for Parents on:

Connecting Families (Reducing Parental Conflict)

What does 'parental conflict' mean?

Conflict in relationships between parents is normal, and can happen between parents that are together and those separated. When conflict becomes destructive- arguments that are frequent, intense or poorly resolved- it can harm children's outcomes. By contrast, constructive conflict – where there continues to be respect, controlled emotions and good resolutions in our communication with our partner or co parent - is linked to very positive outcomes for children. This Tip Sheet can help you think if your relationship between yourselves as parents / co parents is **Constructive or Destructive**. Start by asking and answering the 3 F's questions and reading through this leaflet.

Frequency – How often are your arguments happening: daily, weekly, monthly?

Feelings – How are you left feeling?

Feedback – Is the conflict ever resolved? How and what happens to resolve it?

Arguments are like fire – they need logs, a flame to get going and fuel to keep it going.



The logs are the topics we argue about such as money, sex, responsibilities



The fuel – what makes the fire worse? Snapping, bringing up old arguments, walking off, saying hurtful things, bottling things up



The water – what puts the fire out? Saying sorry, hugging, listening, problem solving, negotiating.



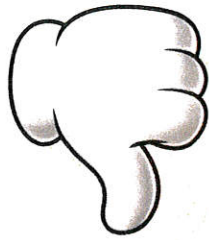
The Match – what is your fire starter? It could be your tone of voice, complaining, not listening to each the other person, feeling stressed



It helps to think about how your arguments get better or worse.

Make it worse

- Intense arguments
- The silent treatment
- The need to win
- Personal attacks
- Arguments that are about or involve the children
- Hostile verbal exchanges



Make it better

- Problem solving together
- Agree to disagree
- Not putting the other person down
- Try to compromise
- Be affectionate
- Resolve differences



Common things we all do in arguments are:

Criticise – Criticism isn't the same as complaining. It is an attack. "You only think about yourself."

Instead try starting a sentence with "I..." and asking for what you need. "I was worried last night. I'd like it if you could text me when you're going to be late."

Contempt is when we are deliberately mean. We might use name-calling, or sarcasm, or roll our eyes to show we are not interested.

Instead try to focus on what you like about each other. Look for opportunities to pay each other compliments or praise.

Defensiveness is usually a response to criticism. We deflect blame onto the other person. "I've been busy. Why couldn't you do it?"

Instead

- Try to see things from each other's point of view.
- Take responsibility and say sorry when you're in the wrong.

Stonewalling is when we get so overwhelmed that we shut down completely, blanking one another, or walking out of the room.

Instead

- Try to be good to yourself. Take some time out to do something relaxing and enjoyable.

Which ones you do?

Think about a recent argument you had, how did you feel? How do you think your partner felt? How do you think your children felt?

Useful links:

Early help website: <http://www.mywalsall.org/walsallearlyhelp/rpc/>

Black Country Women's aid: <https://blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk/>

Relate: <https://www.relate.org.uk/>

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