

# SUPPRESSING CHILDREN'S EMOTIONS



## DID YOU KNOW ?

Suppressing a child's emotion is the most destructive way of dealing with them.



As adults we can teach children to express their emotions in a controlled way, but never to suppress them. Most of the emotional expressions are nature's way of keeping man stress-free and tension-free. As humans we can mentally break down if the emotions are not properly channelled.

Scolding children for crying or showing they are angry will make them feel that expressing emotions is prohibited. This will lead to stress and emotional breakdown. It is important to teach children what they are feeling eg: "I can see you are angry, that's ok but to hit me hurts and that's not ok, I don't hit you so don't hurt me". Another example is: "I see you are sad, why are you sad? Oh that would make me feel sad too, what will make you happy?"

Acknowledge the child's feelings and teach your child how to cope with the feelings they are showing you. Be open with your communication so that they are open to you and you will soon find the child will voice "I'm not happy." Adult response "I can see you aren't happy, would you like a cuddle? Tell me why you aren't happy?"

Every one of us make a judgement about whether we are experiencing some degree of sadness, anger or fear and this is the cognitive part of emotion.

Emotional development in childhood is characterized by five developmental sequences:

1. Children's emotions emerge
2. Children develop emotional self-awareness
3. Children recognize other people's emotions
4. Children learn to regulate what they are feeling
5. Children address the emotional tasks of childhood

Within the first 5 years babies will experience varying emotions, however infants will not display all the emotions they will ever have:

- At about 6 weeks they will experience joy
- 3-4 months they experience anger
- At 5-7 months they experience sadness
- Between 5-7 months they experience fear

Children gradually learn to manage their emotions so they are not totally overwhelmed by them and so they can interact with others more effectively. Children's emotions are real and legitimate to them, there are no right or wrong emotions. All feelings stem from the primary emotions, which occur naturally.

**Remember children can't help how they feel, nor can they simply change their emotional command. There is strong evidence that when adults talk with children about their emotions, children's emotional competence increases.**



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**Te Whariki link:** Well being/Mana Atua  
Confidence and ability to express  
emotional needs