

BOOSTING YOUR CHILD'S EQ

Much emphasis has been placed in our society on developing intellectual intelligence or IQ. Although having a high IQ may ensure academic success, it is not necessarily linked to achieving fulfillment in work or relationships. Research now indicates that obtaining happiness in life may be more dependent on having a high EQ instead of IQ level. EQ or emotional intelligence is measured by how well we manage our emotions and our ability to get along with others.

There are many benefits to having a high EQ. Children with a strong EQ are more in touch with their own feelings and have learned how to handle negative emotions. They are less likely to suffer from depression since they have developed good coping skills and are better able to deal with frustrations and disappointments. They also have more empathy for others which will help them to maintain healthy relationships as adults.

Some EQ is inborn and related to personality. Kids that are friendly and calm may have a higher natural EQ than those that are anxious and shy. Luckily, a child can learn to develop emotional skills. According to the experts, only fifty percent of EQ is actually inborn while the remainder is acquired. Parents can help nurture their children's emotional intelligence at an early age. Toddlers and pre-schoolers can be taught to identify their feelings by learning the meaning of basic words such as sad, happy, angry, frustrated, etc. Parents also need to listen when their children are upset and encourage them to talk about their feelings. By understanding their own emotions, kids will begin to develop sensitivity for others.

According to Dr. John Gray, author of Children Are from Heaven, "New communication skills must be learned and practiced to increase children's awareness of what they are feeling, otherwise they will go out of control, resist authority, and act out on pent-up feelings." Gray also maintains that children who are taught to effectively express their emotions learn to individuate from their parents and develop a stronger sense of self. In addition, they must learn to express negative as well as positive feelings. Parents need to provide guidance so that children understand appropriate ways of expressing their negative emotions. For example, punching a pillow instead of a sibling is a more acceptable method of acting out anger.

Encouraging problem solving is another way that parents can help boost their children's EQ. It's tempting for parents to impose their own solutions to their children's dilemmas in an effort to quickly stop children from crying or fighting. However, kids need to develop their own problem solving skills in order to be able to get along with others. Parents can help their children brainstorm and come up with alternative solutions to a problem. Younger children may have a difficult time understanding that there could be more than one solution to a problem. After making a suggestion, they may think that their original idea was wrong if their parents ask them for more alternatives. Parents need to reassure them that their response was fine and they are just trying to discover different ways of solving a problem. After coming up with a list, they could help their children evaluate which idea might work best. Parents can make suggestions and gently steer their children towards an appropriate solution without telling them exactly what to do.

Parents can also nurture their children's EQ by being consistent and setting limits for them. As children mature, they will hopefully begin to incorporate these limits into their everyday life. They may be more self-disciplined and better able to follow school guidelines if they are already accustomed to observing rules at home. Parental consistency also allows kids to develop emotional security since they know what to expect on a regular basis.

Finally, parents need to let their children experience life's ups and downs so that they can grow emotionally. As parents, we instinctively try to shelter our children from harm which may prevent them from learning how to handle difficult situations on their own. In order for kids to develop emotional intelligence, they must be exposed to stresses and disappointments. Finding ways to rise above tough situations will help enhance their EQ. They will be better prepared as adults to deal with problems and achieve satisfaction in life.

Sources:

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