

## How to Understand and Deal With Children's Feelings

Thursday, July 25, 2013

We all have feelings and feelings impact how we are and how we deal with the world. Right from the beginning, we learn that we have them, and we often classify them as "good" or "bad" feelings. Then we have to figure out what to do with them and.....that's where parents come in.

The Nurturing Parenting Program puts out the concept that feelings aren't really good or bad, but rather they are "comfortable" or "uncomfortable". And they make the strong point that accepting all feelings as part of who we are, rather than denying any, is the way to go. So based on this concept, a parent's first job is to help kids recognize that they have feelings and what those feelings are.

The next job is to help kids manage these feelings. The Nurturing Program puts out 3 rules to help teach this to kids:

1. Respect yourself and don't hurt others.
2. Respect others and don't hurt others.
3. Respect the environment and don't destroy property, animals or nature.

With these 3 rules in mind, parents can begin to help kids identify what they are feeling and then what to do with it. They learn that they can struggle through something and find a way to move through it without hiding, denying or hurting....the ultimate result is feeling more competent to handle their emotions and thus they don't act out in negative ways and become easier to parent.

So what can a parent do to help? The Nurturing Parenting Program says the following:

1. Label the feeling you see or think you see. And, let your child know it's OK to feel whatever they are feeling.
2. Don't dominate the conversation. Be interested in what your child is telling you.
3. Brainstorm with your child what needs to happen. What does he/she need to do if anything. Maybe listening is enough.
4. Teach kids how to express their emotions in a healthy way.
5. Lastly, praise them when they are able to handle their emotions appropriately.