

Strategies for Young Children

Young children often do not yet have the vocabulary to express themselves and may act out instead. We can teach young children to give feelings names, and then we can provide opportunities to identify feelings, both positive and negative feelings. Talk about feelings as they occur throughout the day like when you play a game or traveling in a vehicle.

- Try to make a face and have your child guess the feeling. Then, create a sentence to match your expression.
- Don't underestimate story time. Most books include emotions and feelings of characters.
- Talk about your feelings.
- Use a feeling thermometer. It provides a common language for families to identify and share feelings. The thermometer can have as many color zones as appropriate. Children can use the thermometer to identify their feelings, and it can become a conversational tool for parents to find out why the child has such feelings and what can be done to deescalate. Find out more information by visiting FOCUS: <https://www.focusproject.org/focus-on/the-feeling-thermometer>
- Draw the feeling. Parents can staple the pages to make a book and children can "read" the book and tell a story.
- Act out the feeling. Children can use puppets, dance or sing.

Find more information here:

Teaching Your Child to Identify and Express Emotions. (n.d.). Vanderbilt University. The Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning.

http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/teaching_emotions.pdf

"Show Me What You Feel" is from the CD Kids in Motion by Greg & Steve.

Additional songs and activities for children can be located on the internet.

Sesame Street for Military Families has many suggestions on helping younger children express their feelings: <https://sesamestreetformilitaryfamilies.org/topic/self-expression/?ytid=Y2ntweE1KwU>

MCEC® Parent Support empowers military-connected parents with resources to be their child's first and best advocate. Learn more about ways to get involved and stay informed about upcoming webinars, workshops, and additional resources by emailing Parents@MilitaryChild.org.

Strategies for School-Aged Children and Teens

- Homemade stress balls (with playdough)
- Deep breathing
- Blowing bubbles
- Engage the 5 senses: List/think of two things for each of our senses. 2 things to see, 2 things to hear, 2 things to feel, 2 things you smell, and 2 things you taste
- Triangle Breathing: start at the bottom left of the triangle. Breathe in for three counts as you trace the first side of the triangle. Hold your breath for three counts as you trace the second side of the triangle. Breathe out for three counts as you trace the final side of the triangle.
- Finger crochet
- Painting, drawing or doodling
- Reading
- Going for a brisk 10-minute walk
- Going outside and listening to nature
- Calling a friend
- Writing positive affirmations on cards and decorating them
- Planting a flower in a pot
- Journaling
- Writing something positive about yourself for every letter of the alphabet

For more tips check these websites:

<https://www.thehelpfulcounselor.com/18-coping-skills-strategies-for-children-and-teens/>

<https://copingskillsforkids.com/blog/using-shapes-to-teach-deep-breathing>

<https://www.verywellfamily.com/coping-skills-for-kids-4586871>

<https://www.nap.edu/resource/other/dbasse/wellbeing-tools/interactive/>

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Coping: Reinforce Problem-Solving**Can I fix this problem?****Three things to think about:**

- 1. What is the problem?**
- 2. What are all of the things I can do?**
- 3. Which option is best? Try it!**

Decision Option	Can I solve this safely?	Pros	Cons	Best choice to try

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Helpful Links

- The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering & Medicine. Tools for Supporting Emotional Wellbeing in Children and Youth: <https://www.nap.edu/resource/other/dbasse/wellbeing-tools/interactive>
- Center for Parent and Teen Communication: <https://parentandteen.com>
- Fostering Resilience: www.fosteringresilience.com
- Military Family Life Consultants (MFLC):
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/non-medical-counseling/military-and-family-life-counseling>
- Military OneSource also offers counseling help: 800-342-9647 or live chat 24/7.
- Military Kids Connect: <https://militarykidsconnect.dcoe.mil/>
- FOCUS (Families OverComing Under Stress) teaches practical skills to help families overcome common challenges related to a military life: <https://www.focusproject.org/>

Videos

- 6 Tips to Help Your Children Control Their Emotions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4n2MiGgDUI>
- Teenage Coping Skills: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8vVq2-TGaY>
- Routines: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jLU59JWAYk>

MCEC® Resources

- *SchoolQuest™* is an interactive tool, specially designed to support highly mobile military-connected parents & students:
<https://schoolquest.militarychild.org>
- Military Student Consultants: This program is the portal for all questions student and parent related. You can submit your specific questions concerning transition barriers and receive specialized support. To contact a Military Student Consultant, email msc@militarychild.org
- The MCEC® podcast series covers an array of informative and important topics with guests from all walks of life. Visit [Podbean](#), [Google Playstore](#), or [iTunes](#)

MCEC® Parent Support Resources

- Find other MCEC® Parent Support [webinars](#) related to this topic on our official website MilitaryChild.org
- Contact your local Parent Support team for workshops offered in your community:
<https://www.militarychild.org/programs/parent-to-parent>
- If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to:
Parents@MilitaryChild.org

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