

# 5 Steps of Emotion Coaching

Helping children and young people understand the emotions they experience, why they occur, and how to handle them.

## Steps

## Sample Responses

01  
STEP

**Mindread, label, organize:** This helps the child start to identify their emotions and feel seen and heard by you. Expressing your curiosity helps you figure out exactly what the child is feeling (sad, mad, angry, frustrated, embarrassed) before moving forward to coach them through the feeling.

- I see you are feeling...
- I notice you are (clenching your hands, frowning, getting hyper)...
- I hear you saying...
- Tell me more about what you are feeling.
- It sounds like you are feeling \_\_\_\_, is this correct?

02  
STEP

**Empathize and validate:** Empathizing is reflecting and experiencing another person's emotions, or put another way, imagining you are the child and reacting with their emotions and past experiences. This also means putting aside your own feelings, judgments, reactions and experiences.

- It's normal to feel \_\_\_\_ when this happens.
- I would feel that way too if this happened to me.
- I understand why you feel this way.

### **Empathy is not:**

- ✓ Thinking others have the same thoughts/feelings as you;
- ✓ Sharing the same emotion or similar experiences,
- ✓ Sharing your own perspective,
- ✓ Agreeing with or condoning the behavior.

03  
STEP

**Set limits on inappropriate behaviour:** Clarify for the child that although the feeling is perfectly valid and understandable, not all behaviours triggered by the feeling are acceptable.

- It's okay to feel \_\_\_\_, but it's not okay to \_\_\_\_
- It's okay to feel **angry**, but it's not okay to **punch, hit, kick, scream**.
- It's okay to feel **embarrassed**, but it's not okay to **make fun of other people**.
- It's okay to feel **nervous**, but it's not okay to **lie about what happened**.

04  
STEP

**Problem-solve:** Prompt the child to think of options. The best ideas come from children themselves, when they explore the problem from their own perspective and knowledge.

- Looking back now, what would you do differently?
- How could you handle it differently next time?
- What are two other ways of solving the problem?

05  
STEP

**Coach a skill:** If the child is unable to think of any possible solutions, explore with them what they might have done differently.

Something that I know works with other kids or for myself is \_\_\_\_, would this be something we can work on together?

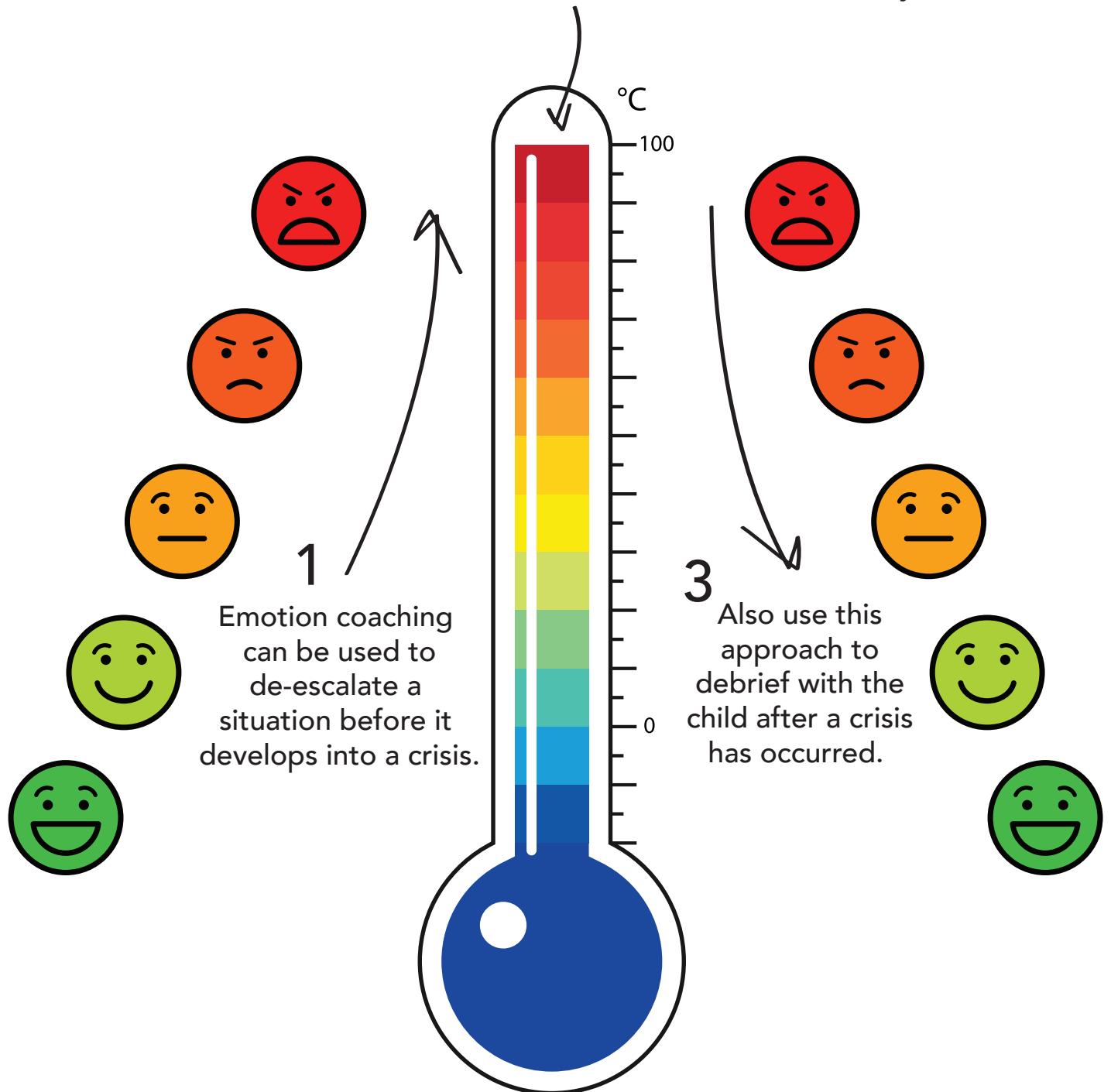
- Asking for help
- Talking to someone I trust
- Taking a break
- Go outside
- Doing relaxation activities (mindfulness, deep breathing, drawing)
- Doing something physical and repetitive (walk, jumping jacks, push-ups, running)

All feelings are valid, but not all behaviours are acceptable.

# WHEN TO USE IT?

## 2

When the child has lost control and become physically or verbally aggressive, take immediate actions to contain the behavior and ensure the safety of all involved.



## References:

Declaire, J. & Gottman, J. (1997). *The Heart of Parenting: How to Raise an Emotionally Intelligent Child*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

John Gottman –Emotion Coaching

<https://emotioncoaching.gottman.com>

<https://www.emotioncoachinguk.com/>

## For more information:

Elizabeth Roberts, Ph.D., OPQ, Psychologist - Lester B. Pearson School Board, [eroberts04@lbpsb.qc.ca](mailto:eroberts04@lbpsb.qc.ca)