

Chapter 1 : Principles 5 and 6 both address the idea that it is important to acknowledge and express feelings. This idea is based on a cultural idea that unexpressed feelings create tensions and can cause problems. Not all cultures believe in the importance of expressing feelings.

What are your personal reactions to the idea of encouraging infants and toddlers to express their feelings? Should you also express your feelings?

As a caregiver, encouraging infants and toddlers to express their feelings is an important part of life. It is not that the child(ren) is/are in control of the outcome, but instead become part of the solution to the problem/situation at hand. When a child is upset, it is important that they are encouraged to express their feelings. It is our responsibility as caregivers to help show infants and toddlers how to express their feelings. We can do this by example. There are too many people that say to children, "Do as I say, not as I do". Instead, when a child is sad, we need to not only find the solution, but find out what the source of the child's sadness is. It is not enough to just stop the child from crying, but that we discover what the root cause of the crying is. It could be that they simply are hungry or just want some attention. However, there are times when children are hurting internally either physically or emotionally. This is where encouraging children to express their feelings helps both you and the child. When we talk to children like a person, not using "baby-talk" jargon, they can tell you are being genuinely honest and caring. After all, children are people too, and they deserve to be treated with love and the respect they deserve. Indicated by the 3-R Interactions (interaction that is respectful, responsive, and reciprocal) as well as helping to develop a good relationship between caregiver and child. There are those people who think that a child(ren) is/are too young to understand such complex feelings or understand what others are doing and saying. It is a terrible misconception. I can't stand it when people talk to infants/toddlers using "baby-talk" or say that a child(ren) cannot

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understand what is going on around them. As adults we can sense when there is tension in a room from the first few steps. We may not know what the tension is about, but we sure can feel it and so can infants/toddlers as well. When I interact with toddlers and there is a situation where I am not happy with a decision they have made, I tend to use a stern voice. The toddlers have many different reactions. They tend to start feeling sad or angry. I address that sadness or anger immediately and explain that it is okay to feel upset or angry, but you need to talk to me about it and not throw things or scream. Just as it says in the textbook, *“Children in child care need to be around real people, not warm, empty role-players. Part of being a real person is getting angry, scared, upset, and nervous now and then.”* (Gonzalez-Mena, Janet. *Infants, Toddlers, and Caregivers.. [Chegg].*)