

# Facilitator's Guide

# EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

for Parents with Children Ages 6-12

**A resource to strengthen parents' knowledge  
and skills to improve their child's social and  
emotional wellbeing**

## Parents Matter Project

Implemented by Middle Childhood Matters Coalition Toronto

Parent learning sessions are developed with input from the Paediatric Residents' Advocacy Committee at The University of Toronto and The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids)

**MIDDLE CHILDHOOD MATTERS**  
—COALITION TORONTO—

Ontario  
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## Middle Childhood Matters Coalition Toronto (MCMCT)

The Middle Childhood Matters Coalition Toronto (MCMCT) is a group of 20 social service, child welfare, education, recreation, health organizations and parent leaders promoting and influencing a system that prioritizes children ages 6-12 (middle childhood), and their families. MCMCT envisions a city where children ages 6-12 and their families have equitable opportunities and resources to thrive.

The Coalition believes, and research states, that this is an important time in a child's life. To support children's healthy development during this stage, MCMCT promotes high quality, affordable, accessible and culturally appropriate out-of-school time programs (before and after school time, summertime and holidays). The Coalition was one of the driving forces behind the development of the City of Toronto's first Middle Childhood Strategy, which prioritizes programming for this age group.

Our member organizations work with thousands of parents and children across Toronto. MCMCT recognizes the vital need to educate and support parents, caregivers and adult allies living, working and caring for these children across Toronto.

## Paediatric Residents' Advocacy Committee

The University of Toronto Paediatric Residents' Advocacy Committee was established in 2001 by residents who were passionate about the overall wellbeing of children and in response to the recognition by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada that advocacy is an integral part of a paediatrician's role.

This committee is resident-led and supervised by staff physicians from SickKids. Residents and staff volunteer their time and are committed to educating parents and children, running clinics, and advocating for children's issues at the national levels. The Parent Nights sub-committee develops curriculum and runs workshops for parents to provide health information to empower them to improve their child's overall wellbeing.

Learning sessions developed by the Paediatric Residents' Advocacy Committee:

- Sleep and Bedtime Routines
- Body Image and Self-esteem
- Healthy Eating and Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- Cognitive Development in Middle Childhood and Adolescence
- Emotional Development in Middle Childhood and Adolescence
- Social Development in Middle Childhood and Adolescence

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We wish to extend our continued appreciation to the Paediatric Residents' Advocacy Committee at the University of Toronto and SickKids for sharing their expertise and developing the Emotional Development learning content and delivering learning sessions in diverse communities across Toronto.

Thank you to all the Middle Childhood Matters Coalition Toronto parent leaders and coalition members, who gave their time and insights into making this guide possible. As well, to all the Toronto service providers who promote the unique developmental needs of children ages 6-12, we are grateful to you all.

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# INTRODUCTION

The Parents Matter Project endeavors to support and educate newcomer, low-income and racialized parents in Toronto with children ages 6-12 (middle childhood) on how to best improve developmental and social outcomes for their children. This includes the creation and implementation of topic-specific parent learning sessions. Parenting and family relationships provide the foundation from which children ages 6-12 can develop the skills to overcome challenges and thrive to adulthood. These parent learning sessions aim to build upon the assets, capabilities and strengths of parents to help increase their knowledge on a number of topic areas relevant to their child's social and emotional development.

This facilitator's guide provides practical learning sessions to increase familial relationships, including resources that can be utilized and accessed beyond the life of the session. This is grounded in the knowledge that families crave more meaningful time together and the need to have access to materials, tools and skill building knowledge on an ongoing basis that is accessible at all times. By attending a learning session, a parent will leave with more knowledge, awareness and confidence in their ability to parent throughout this developmental stage. The interactive activities and supplementary resources will help parents to solidify their learnings.

In addition to Emotional Development in Middle Childhood and Adolescence, 15 evidence-based learning sessions have been developed in collaboration with experts in the fields such as:

- Sleep and Bedtime Routines
- Body Image and Self-esteem
- Healthy Eating and Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- We All Have Mental Health
- Growing Health Minds
- Children's Mental Health Challenges and Seeking Support
- Counting on Math
- Reading is Everywhere
- Keeping Children Safe Online
- More than Just Video Games
- Raising Responsible Digital Children
- Cognitive Development in Middle Childhood and Adolescence
- Social Development in Middle Childhood and Adolescence

# FLOW OF THE LEARNING SESSION

LEARNING SESSION STRUCTURE	DESCRIPTION
Learning Objectives	What parent participants can expect to learn by attending each learning session.
Warm-up/ Check-in	An activity to introduce and ground parent participants. The purpose is to begin getting to know each other by creating an inclusive and welcoming environment where all voices are heard and valued.
Group Agreements	An opportunity to collectively co-create the conditions of how learning will unfold. Creating a group agreement demonstrates that the space is shared by all.
Reflection Moment	Guiding questions are used to prompt reflection on current knowledge of the topic presented.
Content Development	How the information will be delivered and resourced (learning discussions) how learning happens- what do we need to know.
Action Moment	Each learning session will motivate concrete actions for parent participants to go from “reflection to action-now what?” with tips, tools and hands-on experience.
Evaluation and Check-out	Reinforce new learnings, takeaways and evaluate the learning.



# FACILITATION TIPS

- Prepare your session in advance; read content carefully and resources needed.
- Be clear and concise in your interactions.
- Listen to what is said.
- Remember to integrate important points that have not been raised by parent participants.
- Validate questions outside of the lesson plan raised by parent participants and direct them to their service provider.
- Be ready to accommodate changes and respond to your audience. Flexibility will be required from time to time and you may need to adapt the agenda in some situations.
- When appropriate, share your own lived experience as a parent or caregiver. However, be conscious not to dominate the conversation.



## Useful Tips to Successfully Facilitate a Group Discussion

### 1. Adults learn better when:

- They are personally motivated and engaged.
- They have the opportunity to reflect on what they are learning.
- They can exchange knowledge and experiences with others.
- They can have better understanding of what they learn and the implementation of that learning at home.

### 2. Adapting for inclusion:

- Know the diversity within the group: who are the participants? What experiences do they bring?
- Integrate cultural experiences: consider how both the facilitator and parent participants can bring their cultural experiences into the session.
- Be sensitive to emotional responses: depending on parent participants lived experiences, sometimes exercises can trigger participants' emotions.

# EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## Overview

Middle childhood refers to the stage between early childhood and adolescence, usually defined as ages 6 through 12. During this critical period children go through significant changes in each of the five domains of development – cognitive, physical, emotional, social, communication and mental health.

It is time for learning, creativity, self-expression and increased autonomy and independence.

The Ages and Stages Curriculum is a 3-part module focusing on cognitive, emotional and social development during middle childhood and adolescence. Each module will present developmental milestones and events taking place across one of these three areas. Each module also includes a case scenario to bring the information to life.

## Learning Objectives

- a. Understand the transition of a child in middle childhood to adolescence with regards to emotional development and regulation and identity formation
- b. Describe the different ways children might behave throughout middle childhood and adolescence
- c. Discuss strategies to manage behavioural changes in middle childhood



### Materials and Supplies

FLIP CHART



FLIP CHART  
PAPER



MARKERS



LEARNING  
TOOLS



POST-IT  
NOTES



ATTENDANCE  
FORM



PENS



EVALUATIONS



# LEARNING SESSION OUTLINE

<i>Agenda</i>	<b>Length of the learning session (1 hour)</b>
1. Welcome and Introduction	(5 minutes)
2. Check-in	(10 minutes)
3. Reflection Moment	(5 minutes)
4. Content Development	(25 minutes)
5. Action Moment	(10 minutes)
6. Evaluation and Check-out	(5 minutes)

## **1. Welcome and Introduction** (5 minutes)

Facilitator(s) will welcome parent participants and organization(s) supporting the learning session. Housekeeping items should be introduced: washroom facilities, fire exit and additional information needed for the learning session.

*Materials needed:* Pens

**Appendix 1 - Tool 1.1** Agenda

**Tool 1.2** Attendance and Photo Release Form

**Tool 1.4** Evaluation (Pre)

## **2. Check-in** (10 minutes)

*Getting to know each other:* Introductions of parent participants (5 minutes)

Facilitator asks parent participants to sit/stand in a circle; and share their name, their children's names and ages, and invites them to describe their week using a word that begins with the first letter of their first name.

EXAMPLE - **Lori:** Lousy or **Theresa:** Terrific.

## 2.a Group Agreements

(5 minutes)

Materials needed: post-it notes, markers, flip chart paper, pens.

Facilitator asks parent participants any of the following

### ? Guiding Questions

- What do we need from each other and ourselves to create a safe learning space?
- How are we going to learn together in this space?

Parent participants are asked to write their answers on a post-it note and place it on the flip chart. Facilitator will read them out loud for parents' consensus.

The list should be posted visibly for the length of the learning session.

*Building a group agreement with parent participants is an important step to take when working with groups. It invites members to co-create a safe space for sharing where all voices are heard and valued.*

## 3. Reflection Moment

(10 minutes)

Materials needed: Flip chart paper, markers, post it notes and pens

### Appendix 2: Learning Tool 2.1 Overview of Emotional Development

Facilitator asks parent participants the following:

### ? Guiding Questions

*What kind of emotional changes you expect in your children, as they grow older?*

*What have you witnessed? Can you describe them?*

Parent participants are asked to write their answers on a post-it note and place it on the flip chart.



If not brought up during group agreements, facilitator should explore the importance of **confidentiality** and sharing in a safe space.



### Facilitator Tip

Have each question written separately on the flip chart paper for parent participants to add their post-it notes. Read answers out loud for parents to discuss. Hand out **Learning Tool 2.1** Overview of Emotional Development

### Learning Tool 2.1 Overview of Emotional Development.

	EMOTIONAL REGULATION/IDENTITY FORMATION
Middle Childhood (age 6-9)	- Start to take notice and compare themselves to peers - Self-identity based on parental values, labels and external influences
Early Adolescence (age 10-13)	- Preoccupied with changing body - Self-consciousness about appearance and attractiveness
Middle Adolescence (age 14-16)	- Concern with attractiveness - Better able to label feelings
Late Adolescence (age 17-20)	- More stable body image - Firmer identity - Management of self-regulation

## 4. Content Development

(25 minutes)

*Materials needed:* Flip chart, flip chart paper, markers, post-it notes and pens

### Mini-Lecture

Facilitator presents the following content to parent participants. Content can be introduced on a flip chart paper with key points.

### Discussion Points

- Middle childhood and early adolescence is a challenging and emotional time
- Understanding what your child is going through during this time can create an open environment to help facilitate discussions
- Middle childhood and early adolescence is an important time for **forming an identity**

## WHAT IS IDENTITY FORMATION?

The sense of self is based off their self-concept and self-esteem.



**Self-concept:** a child's perception of their own talents, goals and life experiences, ethnic, religious and sexual identity.

**Self-esteem:** how one evaluates their own self-worth.

Developing an identity is important but can be difficult as your child's body starts to change

- In early adolescence, these changes can be distracting for forming an identity and can sometimes be harmful to their self-esteem
- As children get older, they tend to become more concerned about their physical attractiveness
- Once they are close to adulthood, they establish a stable idea of their body image
- It is important to address concerns of body image early to encourage healthy living and positive self-esteem

Children start to **develop an ability to manage emotions**

- During this time, they become more aware of being able to identify and label their own feelings and feelings of others
- Management/self-regulation of emotions

## WHAT IS SELF-REGULATION?

**Self-regulation:** a person's ability to recognize the emotion they are experiencing, reflect on why they are feeling that way and deal with this emotion in the constructive way.



Self-regulation does not happen overnight. However, children are very observant, so leading by example will help with their progression. Current research continues to support the belief that a parent's own ability to self-regulate has a tremendous impact on their child.

After the mini-lecture, facilitator invites parent participants to discuss the following

## ? Guiding Question

*What are the ways that your child's behaviours may change as they develop?*



### Facilitator Tip

Try having parent participants sketch a picture of a child on flip chart paper and write down ways that their child may behave as they are learning to regulate their emotions.

Invite parent participants to identify if these behaviours are positive or negative by drawing a plus and minus sign beside each behaviour.

## MANAGING EMOTIONS

### Parents might notice that teens:

- Show strong feelings and intense emotions at different times
- Have moods that seem unpredictable
- Experience emotional ups and downs that can lead to increased conflict
- May be more sensitive to your emotions: young people get better at reading and processing other people's emotions as they get older
- May be more self-conscious, especially about physical appearance and changes
- May go through an "invincible" stage of thinking and acting as if nothing bad could happen to them

### What are ways that your child's behaviours may change as they develop?

#### **It is important to remember that your child's brain is still learning how to regulate emotions**

- Your child's decision-making skills are still developing, and your child is still learning about the consequences of actions
- Create a safe space where your child can discuss their emotions out loud. This can be through conversations with you or having them write them down and read them out
- Allow your child to explore words to describe their emotions

Facilitator reads out loud the following case scenario:



*You are the parent of a 12-year-old girl. You notice that she has been “moodier” recently. When she comes home from school, she goes directly to her room. She has outbursts toward her younger sister. When you ask what is wrong, she yells at you to leave her alone. She tends to make comments about her appearance, saying things like “I’m fat” or “all of the boys think I am ugly.”*

### ? Guiding Questions

*What are the things you can say to her to address these comments?*

*How can you help her as her parent?*

*How will her way of coping with emotions change over time?*



## Discussion Points

- As children get older, it is important to address their changing bodies. This girl sounds like she is in the phase of being preoccupied with her body image and is concerned about her attractiveness, a normal part of identity formation.
- She is also “moodier” which may be her way of working through how to regulate or cope with the emotions she is having.
- As a parent, you could invite her to share her thoughts and feelings with you. You can help her to find words to describe her feelings. You can share some of your own experiences growing up with body image and self-esteem.
- Remind her that everyone her age is, or will, go through this.
- Her appearance does not define her as a person.
- Create an open space for her to share her feelings. Provide her with ways to cope with her emotions.
  - » This can be through inviting her to talk with you one-on-one
  - » Sharing your own experiences with body image as a teen
  - » Providing time in the day for her to reflect on her feelings either through talking, drawing or writing them
- As she gets older, she will discover ways to cope when she is feeling sad or angry.

### 6. Evaluation and Check-out

(5 minutes)

*Materials needed:* Pens

**Learning Tool 1.5** Evaluation Form (Post).

**Evaluation:** Facilitator hands out **Learning Tool 1.5** and invites parent participants to give their feedback. Provide participants with pens and evaluation forms to be filled out. Encourage them to be honest. Their responses are anonymous and they do not have to answer any questions they do not feel comfortable answering.

**Check-out:** Thank parent participants for their participation and time.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1

**Tool 1.1** Agenda - Emotional Development in Middle Childhood and Adolescence

**Tool 1.2** Attendance and Photo Release Form

**Tool 1.3** Facilitator's Check List

**Tool 1.4** Evaluation (Pre)

**Tool 1.5** Evaluation (Post)

## APPENDIX 2

**Learning Tool 2.1** Overview of Emotional Development

## APPENDIX 3

References

### Tool 1.1 Agenda - Emotional Development in Middle Childhood and Adolescence

1. Welcome and Introduction (5 minutes)
2. Check-in (10 minutes)
3. Reflection Moment (5 minutes)
4. Content Development (25 minutes)
5. Action Moment (10 minutes)
6. Evaluation and Check-out (5 minutes)

**APPENDIX 1.2 - ATTENDANCE AND PHOTO RELEASE FORM**

**Tool 1.2 Attendance and Photo Release Form**

FULL NAME	EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER	DO YOU CONSENT TO HAVE YOUR PHOTO TAKEN?	SIGNATURE REQUIRED
1.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
2.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
3.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
4.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
5.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
6.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
7.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
8.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
9.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
10.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
11.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
12.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
13.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
14.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
15.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
16.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
17.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
18.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
19.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
20.			<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	

### Tool 1.3 Facilitator's Check List

#### *Materials and Supplies:*

- Markers
- Flip Chart (if needed)
- Flip Chart Paper
- Post-it Notes
- Pens
- Learning Tools
- Attendance Form
- Evaluation Forms (Pre & Post)



**PARENT EVENT: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / 20\_\_**

**Do at START  
of Event**

**Please answer the questions below.**

**PART 1: About You**

1. **Your gender:**  Female  Male  Trans  I describe my gender in a different way
2. **Your children’s age(s):**  0-5  6-12  13+
3. **Parenting status:**  I’m a single parent  I’m **not** a single parent
4. **What country were you born in:** \_\_\_\_\_
5. **What is your postal code:** \_\_\_\_\_
6. **Do you have any relatives living with you at home?**  Yes  No  
**If YES how many?** \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2: About the Event**

7. **How did you hear about this event?**  Friend/Family  Another Organization  
 Internet  Flyers  Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
8. **Please rate your knowledge on:** (Circle **ONE** answer per question)

		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	DON'T KNOW
a	Emotional development of children	H	M	L	DK
b	How children regulate their emotions at different ages	H	M	L	DK
c	How to talk with my child about their emotions	H	M	L	DK
d	How to encourage healthy emotional development in my child	H	M	L	DK
e	I can identify one (1) resource to support my child’s emotional development.	Yes		No	

**PART 3: About your Learning**

9. **What do you hope to learn today?**

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**THANK YOU!**

## APPENDIX 1.5 - EVALUATION (POST)

PARENT EVENT: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / 20\_\_

Do at END  
of Event

Please answer the questions below.

### PART 1: About the Event

1. Please rate your knowledge on: (Circle **ONE** answer per question)

		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	DON'T KNOW
a	Emotional development of children	H	M	L	DK
b	How children regulate their emotions at different ages	H	M	L	DK
c	How to talk with my child about their emotions	H	M	L	DK
d	How to encourage healthy emotional development in my child	H	M	L	DK
e	I can identify one (1) resource to support my child's emotional development.	Yes		No	

### PART 2: About your Learning

2. What did you learn today?

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### PART 3: About your Satisfaction

1	How often will you use what you learned today with your child(ren)? (Circle <b>ONE</b> answer)	Never	Sometimes	Always
If never, please tell us why not?				

2	How informative was the facilitator? (Circle <b>ONE</b> answer)	Not Informative	A little Informative	Very Informative
3	How satisfied are you with this event overall? (Circle <b>ONE</b> answer)	Not Satisfied	A little Satisfied	Very Satisfied
4	If we could improve ONE THING - what would it be?			



Learning Tool 2.1 Overview of Emotional Development

## OVERVIEW OF EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

	EMOTIONAL REGULATION/IDENTITY FORMATION
<p><b>Middle Childhood</b> (age 6-9)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Start to take notice and compare themselves to peers</li> <li>- Self-identity based on parental values, labels and external influences</li> </ul>
<p><b>Early Adolescence</b> (age 10-13)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preoccupied with changing body</li> <li>- Self-consciousness about appearance and attractiveness</li> </ul>
<p><b>Middle Adolescence</b> (age 14-16)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Concern with attractiveness</li> <li>- Better able to label feelings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Late Adolescence</b> (age 17-20)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More stable body image</li> <li>- Firmer identity</li> <li>- Management of self-regulation</li> </ul>



### Resource Share

Cognitive Development in School-Age Children. AboutKidsHealth Sickkids.

**<https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/>**

**Article?contentid=711&language=English&hub=YourSchoolagechild**

Social and Emotional Development in School-Age Children. AboutKidsHealth Sickkids.

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