

■ might benefit from Emotion Coaching approaches (Emotion Coaching by Tina Rae, £30, from the Nurture Network) to help him make links between what he is thinking and feeling and doing and will increase his emotional communications and his understanding of self.

The following are Five Essential Steps of Emotion Coaching.

Step 1 – Be aware of emotions and tune in to the child’s emotions and your own

- pay attention to your own emotions, from happiness to sadness to anger
- understand that emotions are a natural and valuable part of life
- observe, listen and learn how your child expresses different emotions
- watch for changes in facial expressions, body language, posture and tone of voice.

Step 2- Connect with the child. Use emotional moments as opportunities to connect

- pay close attention to the child’s emotions
- try not to dismiss or avoid them
- see emotional moments as opportunities for teaching.
- recognise feelings and encourage the child to talk about his or her emotions
- provide guidance before emotions escalate into anxiety

Step 3 – Listen to the child. Respect the child’s feelings by taking time to listen carefully

- take the child’s emotions seriously
- show the child that you understand what he or she is feeling
- avoid judging or criticising the child’s emotions

Step 4 – Name emotions. Help the child identify and name emotions

- identify the emotions the child is experiencing instead of telling the child how he or she should feel
- naming emotions helps soothe a child
- set a good example by naming your own emotions and talking about them
- help the child to build a vocabulary for different feelings

Step 5 - Find good solutions. Explore solutions to problems together

- when children are anxious, help them to identify their feelings and explain how to problem solve together
- help children think through possible solutions
- make tasks as fun as possible and model emotional coping in the adult.