

What is Emotion Coaching?

“Emotion Coaching is about helping children and young people to understand the different emotions they experience, why they occur and how to handle them”

Emotion coaching was first introduced by John Gottman and his colleagues in the USA. Emotion coaching is about helping children to become more aware of their emotions and to manage their own feelings particularly during instances of misbehaviour. It entails validating children’s emotions, setting limits where appropriate and problem-solving with the child to develop more effective behavioural strategies. In effect, emotion coaching techniques instil the tools that will aid children’s ability to self-regulate their emotions and behaviour. It enables practitioners to create an ethos of positive learning behaviour and to have the confidence to de-escalate situations when behaviour is challenging. Emotion coaching provides a value-added dimension to behaviour management strategies and creates opportunities for longer-term solutions to children’s well-being and resilience.

Why do Emotion Coaching?

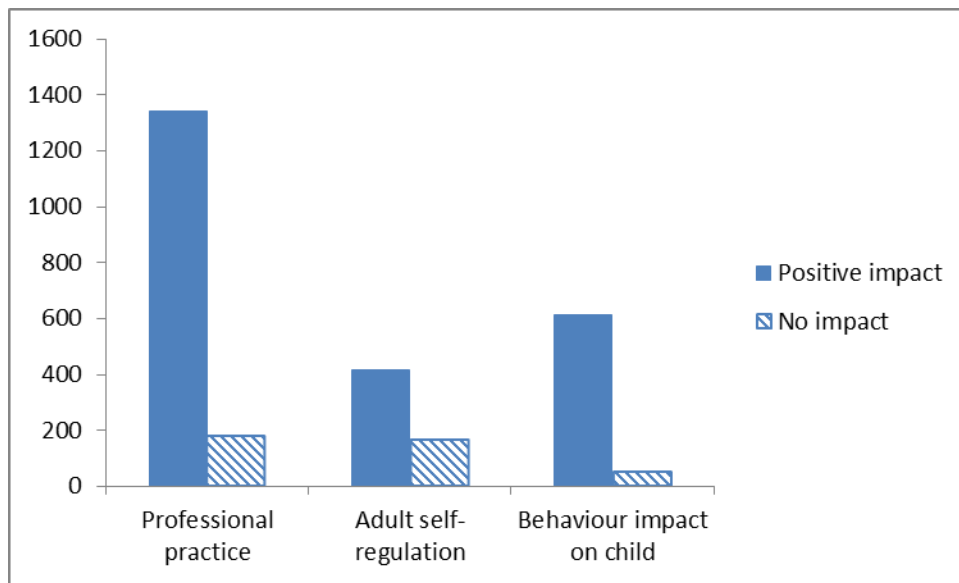
“Much of today’s popular advice about children’s behaviour ignores the world of emotions. Instead, it relies on child-rearing theories that address the children’s behaviour, but disregard the feelings that underlie that behaviour”

Gottman’s research has shown that emotion coached children:

- ✓ **Achieve more academically in school**
- ✓ **Are more popular**
- ✓ **Have fewer behavioural problems**
- ✓ **Have fewer infectious illnesses**
- ✓ **Are more emotionally stable**
- ✓ **Are more resilient**

Research at **Bath Spa University** has echoed some of these findings and has helped to reduce the number of negative behavioural incidents in schools and early years settings. The research demonstrates that emotion coaching:

- ✓ ***Helps children to regulate, improve and take ownership of their behavior***
- ✓ ***Helps children to calm down and better understand their emotions***
- ✓ ***Helps practitioners to be more sensitive to children’s needs***
- ✓ ***Helps create more consistent responses to children’s behavior***
- ✓ ***Helps practitioners to feel more ‘in control’ during incidents***
- ✓ ***Helps promote positive relationships***



N=127

Some findings from the Bath Spa Emotion Coaching Research Project

What participants say about Emotion Coaching

“It makes the children feel more secure and gives them a vocabulary to talk about how they are feeling instead of just acting out. This helps them to be more positive and happier.” (Practitioner)

“I used it when two boys were getting really hyper... They completely calmed down... We’re so used to the Supernanny stuff and the naughty step but this gives you a different tool to use.” (Practitioner)

“He’s a different child from what he was like before and the other children pick up on what he’s like and will play with him now.” (Practitioner)

“I think emotion coaching has changed completely how I parent and I have been totally raving to all my friends about it.” (Parent)

“It’s consistent, easy to use and brings you closer to your child which makes you feel better. It makes me feel like a good parent.” (Parent)

“When people, like, take the mick out of me, like, in class I’d just get angry and I just hit ‘em. Now the teacher talks to me and it calms me down – the other kids don’t really pick on me now ‘cos they know that I don’t react.” (Young Person)

“They listen to you and make sure that you’re OK and, like, trying to make sure you’re stable and stuff and all of this helps you.” (Young Person)