

Managing Your Emotions



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In the *I'm on Board* program, coaches introduce players to life skills such as emotional management.

Your role is complementary: You can reinforce these lessons by helping your child recognize how they feel, name their emotions, and use strategies to respond appropriately—both in hockey and in everyday life.

What is Emotional Management?

Emotional management is the ability to recognize what you're feeling and use strategies to respond appropriately to the situations you experience. It allows you to experience your emotions without ignoring them, while staying in control of your words, actions, and decisions when emotions become especially strong.

Key words

- Recognizing your emotions
- Putting your feelings into words
- Calming yourself
- Refocusing
- Making good decisions



"Controlling your emotions is important for team chemistry."

Rafaël Harvey-Pinard,
Montreal Canadiens



Why is Emotional Management Important?

Emotional management helps players stay **focused**, make **good decisions**, and respond **respectfully** toward others. When an emotion becomes very strong, it can sometimes prevent us from listening, thinking clearly, or playing the way we want to.

Learning to manage emotions helps players **enjoy hockey more**, build **positive relationships** with others, and **give their best effort**, even during challenging moments.

Managing the intensity of positive emotions is just as important, because they can sometimes affect us, or others, in negative ways:

- **Pride:** I show my pride in an arrogant way
- **Excitement:** I can't stay focused, I act impulsively, I put myself at risk of injury, and I run out of energy before the game is over
- **Confidence:** I stop taking my training seriously and ignore my coach's advice
- **Determination:** I set goals that are too ambitious or unrealistic

How to Support Emotional Management at Home?

You can support this learning by encouraging your child to:

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| ➤ Identify the emotion they are feeling | ➤ Take a few deep breaths to calm down |
| ➤ Notice what is happening in their body when an emotion becomes strong | ➤ Take a step back before reacting |
| ➤ Focus on one simple action to return to the present moment | ➤ Recognize that anger, fear, sadness, happiness, and excitement are all normal emotions |
| ➤ Talk to a trusted person when something is bothering them | |

Concrete Examples to Discuss

Breathe: Take 3 to 5 deep breaths, exhaling as slowly as possible to help calm yourself

Take a step back: Step away from the situation for a few moments before reacting too quickly

Focus on the task: Intentionally direct your attention to the next action to perform instead of dwelling on a previous mistake

Self-talk: Use words or phrases to refocus, such as “*stick on the ice,*” “*keep your head up,*” “*breathe out slowly,*” “*reset,*” or “*it’s okay*”

Reset: Imagine a reset button on your stick or on the bench. Press it to let go and move on when things aren’t going well

Talk: Share what is bothering you with someone you trust (e.g., a friend) so they can help and support you

Questions to Ask Your Child

- What emotions do you feel most often during a practice or game?
- How does your body show you that an emotion is becoming strong?
- What can you do before reacting when you are upset?
- Can an emotion sometimes help you play better? How?
- Who can you talk to when an emotion becomes difficult to manage?



By regularly helping your child **recognize**, **express**, and **manage** their emotions, you help reinforce the messages shared by coaches and support the development of an essential life skill—one that matters both in hockey and in life.

Recognizing and Reinforcing Emotional Management

- ☐ Recognize moments when your child successfully calms down before reacting.
- ☐ Help your child put their feelings into words.
- ☐ Acknowledge their efforts to remain respectful, even when feeling frustrated.
- ☐ Talk about the emotions they experienced after a practice, game, or challenging situation.
- ☐ Lead by example by naming your emotions and using strategies to calm yourself down.