

# Inclusive Developmental and Therapy Center

Big Feelings: Helping Your Child Manage Emotions

inclusivetherapycentre.com · +92 314 6040262

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Big feelings in a small body can be overwhelming — for your child and for you. When a child screams, sobs or shuts down over something that seems tiny, it is not them being difficult; it is a brain that is still learning how to handle emotions. And learning is exactly what it is: emotional skills grow with gentle practice, just like walking or talking.

This program helps you become your child's calm guide through their feelings. It is warm and simple, and it works alongside your everyday cuddles and chats. It supports your child but is not a substitute for professional help if worries are deeper or lasting.

## ♥ Who this program is for

- ✓ Children who go from calm to overwhelmed very quickly
- ✓ Little ones who struggle to put feelings into words
- ✓ Children who cry, rage or withdraw when upset and cannot settle
- ✓ Families who want to help without dismissing or over-worrying
- ✓ Parents keen to raise an emotionally confident, resilient child

## ⚡ Important — when to get professional help

This is a supportive home program, not a diagnosis or a substitute for an assessment. Please speak to a professional promptly if:

A low mood, sadness or withdrawal that lasts for weeks and does not lift

Worry or fear that stops your child doing normal things like school, sleep or play

Any talk of self-harm or not wanting to be here — seek help promptly, the same day

Big feelings that are getting more intense over time rather than slowly easing

Emotions that leave your child unable to enjoy the things they usually love

## ☆ Your step-by-step roadmap

Move at your child's pace, not the calendar's — the “weeks” are a gentle order, not a race. Repeat any stage as long as it helps.

### Week 1 – Name the feeling

Give emotions simple words.

Notice your child's feeling out loud: “You look really cross right now.”

Name your own feelings too, so they see it is normal to have them.

Use a picture chart of faces to help your child point to how they feel.

⚡ **Try** Naming a feeling helps to tame it. Words give a big emotion  
**this:** somewhere to go.

## Week 2 – Feelings are allowed

Accept the feeling, guide the behaviour.

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Let your child know all feelings are okay, even the uncomfortable ones.

Separate the feeling from the action: “It’s okay to be angry, it’s not okay to hit.”

Avoid rushing to fix or dismiss it — sometimes being heard is enough.

 **Try** You can accept the feeling and still hold the boundary. Both can be true  
**this:** at once.

## Week 3 – Calm together

Co-regulate before you expect self-control.

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Stay physically close and speak softly when your child is overwhelmed.

Breathe slowly beside them — your steady body helps settle theirs.

Offer a comfort spot with a soft toy or blanket where they can wind down.

 **Try** A child borrows your calm before they can find their own. Regulate  
**this:** together first.

## Week 4 — A calm-down toolkit

Build simple ways to settle.

Teach one easy breathing game, like blowing out slowly as if cooling soup.

Practise the tools when your child is calm, not only when upset.

Make a little “calm box” together with things that soothe them.

⚡ **Try this:** Practise the calm-down tools in the sunshine, so they are ready for the storm.

## Week 5 — Talk it through

Reflect together once calm returns.

After a hard moment, gently talk about what happened once everyone is settled.

Wonder together about what might help next time, without blame.

Praise your child for any small step they took to calm themselves.

⚡ **Try this:** Teach after the storm, never during it. A calm brain is the only one that can learn.

## ✚ Tricks that make it work

- ✓ Stay calm yourself first — you cannot pour calm from an empty cup.
- ✓ Avoid saying “don’t cry” or “you’re fine”; name the feeling instead.
- ✓ Notice and praise calm choices, however small.
- ✓ Get down low and make gentle eye contact when your child is upset.
- ✓ Read stories about feelings together to build their emotion words.
- ✓ Remember these skills take years — go gently on your child and yourself.

## **How you'll know it's working**

- Your child can name more of their feelings than before.
- They settle a little faster after getting upset.
- They come to you for comfort rather than only exploding or shutting down.
- Big feelings feel a little less overwhelming for the whole family.



**Is this based on real methods?** This program draws on emotion coaching and co-regulation, well-recognised approaches where an adult stays calm alongside the child, names feelings and helps them settle, so the child gradually learns to manage emotions themselves.