



Staci Danford M.B.E.
www.thegratefulbrain.com

Boosting a Child's Brain (Part# 1)

Raising children is the hardest job anyone will ever do. But, the good news is that it's never too late to make an impact in their life.

*Emotions change BRAIN FUNCTION.

*There is a direct correlation between emotional self-regulation and one's quality of life... including~ health, academics, financial income, family longevity & less alcohol or drug problems.

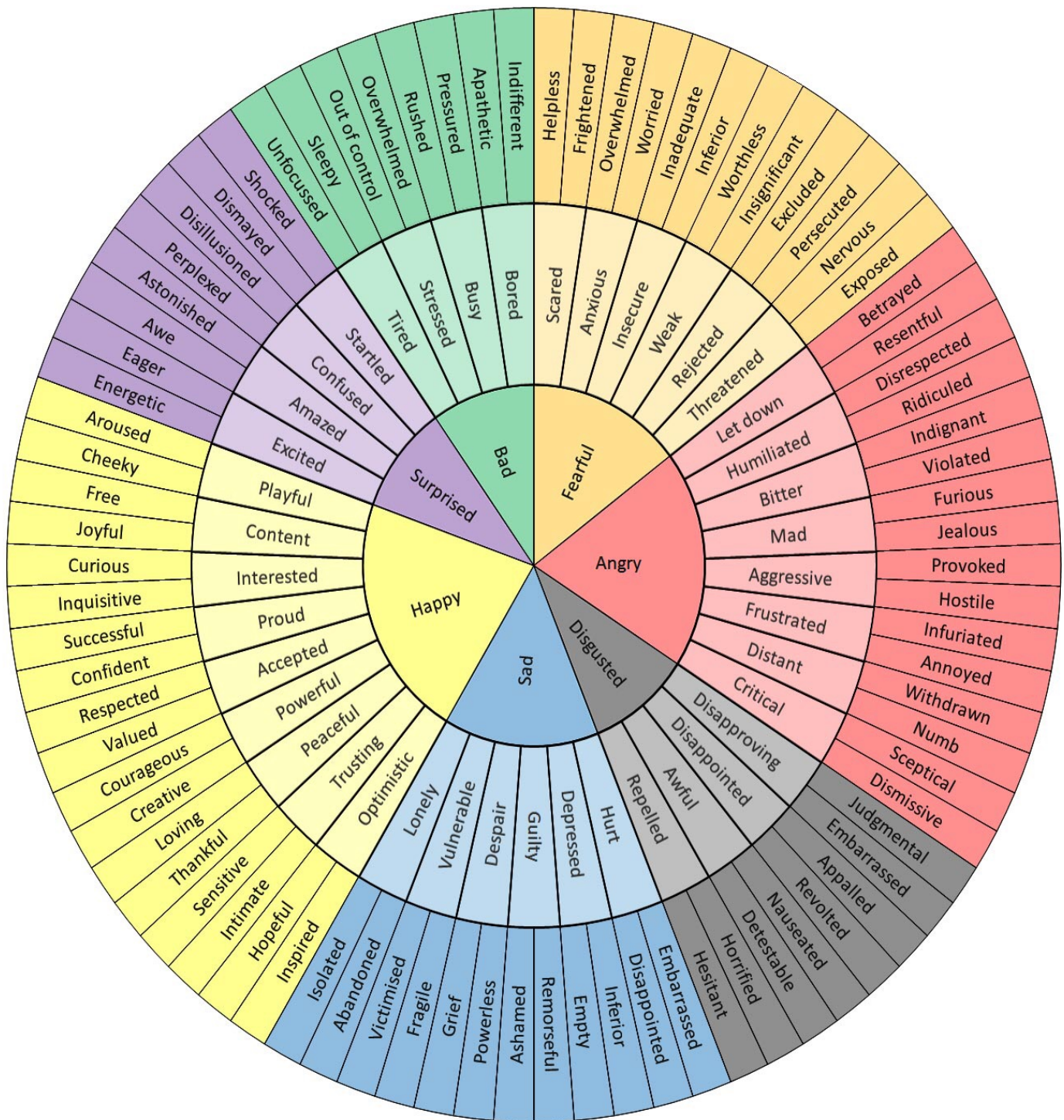
*ACTION is one of the quickest ways to alter brain wiring

3 Ways to Improve Your Child's Emotional Health

1. Let them FEEL their Emotions:

Parents tend to become one of the 4 D's

1. Dismissive- ex. telling them to get over it
2. Disapproving- ex. punishing them for behavior YOU don't want
3. Disengaged- ex. ignoring it because you don't know what to do
4. Direction- ex. guiding children by helping them
 - A. Create a Signal (refrigerator magnet) for when they need a few minutes alone to just calm down or think before speaking
 - B. Remember it's BIG to them- children don't have the luxury of decades of experiences to process the fact that their "issue" is small in the grand scheme of life. For their BRAIN age... this is a BIG deal!
 - C. Help them NAME THEIR EMOTIONS- most children tend to put their emotions into only 3 basic groupings. (glad, sad, mad) When you give the FEELING a name, it helps the BRAIN build new pathways to deal with those specific feelings.
Use the EMOTION WHEEL to help give names to these feelings.



This Emotion Wheel image was developed by psychologist Dr. Robert Plutchik. It describes 8 of our most basic emotions: trust, surprise, sadness, fear, joy, disgust, anticipation, anger. Each of the center sections contain varying degrees of each of those basic emotions.

2. The 4 most POWERFUL times of the day with your children:

1. First contact in the morning (ex. waking them up in the morning)
2. First separation of the day (ex. dropping them off at school)
3. First reunion of the day (ex. picking them up at school)
4. Last contact of the day (ex. putting them to bed at night)

Remember when it comes to children QUALITY of time is more important than Quantity of time. You can be around them all day long and still not have powerful BRAIN moments, or you can be around them for only an hour and have a wonderful bonding experience.

3. Take a NEW View of Failure:

***It is crucial that children look at the perceived FAILURE as an event rather than a personal quality.**

1. Help them practice failure- if they don't learn to fail in small ways, then a big failure can become catastrophic
2. Become an EMOTIONAL Role Model to teach them how to deal with failure. (Research shows that the best way to teach a child a behavior is for them to see it in ACTION)

* Be as truthful as possible about messing up (ex. yes, I burned the breakfast... I guess I will have to start over and do it again)

* Make visible mistakes (when children don't see adults make "mess ups" they assume they don't make them... leaving them feeling like even more of a failure)

* Say You're Sorry (this helps children see that they are valued as a person when we apologize to them) (ex. Son, I'm sorry I snapped at you this morning, I was running late, and my frustration came out toward you.)