

# Coping Skills

## for Younger Children (up to age 6)

Learning to manage our emotions begins when we are young and continues throughout our entire lives. Help support your child in developing healthy habits and skills to manage her emotions and to deal with stress with the following coping methods.

**Practice coping skills regularly, not only when your child is upset. Practicing (and introducing) these skills when your child is calm helps her to be more prepared when the emotions or stress hit.**

- Listen to music or sing a song
- Make up a silly dance
- Take deep belly breaths
- Have a drink of cold water
- Take a quiet break
- Cuddle or play with your pet
- Blow bubbles
- Color or draw
- Hug a stuffed animal
- Read a book with someone
- Play a game
- Close your eyes and count to 5
- Play with Play-Doh or sand
- Build with Legos or blocks
- Close your eyes and think of something that makes you happy
- Do 10 jumping jacks or run in place for 10 seconds
- Bounce a ball

### Tips

- ✓ Help your child label her feelings, and encourage her to use coping skills. For example: "It seems like you feel disappointed when we have to leave the park. What are some ways you can help yourself feel better when that happens? I know that listening to your favorite song usually helps you feel happy."
- ✓ Model coping skills for yourself and the whole family. Explain the connection between feelings and healthy coping strategies. For example: "I'm feeling stressed after a hard day at work. I am going to take the dog for a walk to help me calm down. Would you like to join me?"
- ✓ Help your child build a long list of coping skills so that he has lots of options to pick from (because what works one day may not work the next). The list should include things he can do inside or outside, things that don't cost any money and things you can do together. There is no age limit on coping skills, so let your child pick which ones work best for him.

# Coping Skills

## for Older Children (ages 7 to 14)

Learning to manage our emotions begins when we are young and continues throughout our entire lives. Help support your child in developing healthy habits and skills to manage her emotions and to deal with stress with the following coping methods.

**Practice coping skills regularly, not only when your child is upset. Practicing (and introducing) these skills when your child is calm helps her to be more prepared when the emotions or stress hit.**

- Take deep belly breaths
- Listen to music
- Take a quiet break
- Go for a walk, run or hike
- Look at pictures from a happy memory
- Do 10 jumping jacks
- Play an instrument
- Tighten muscles, then relax them
- Bounce a ball
- Have a drink of cold water
- Play a board game
- Work on a puzzle
- Make a list of your strengths
- Journal or write someone a letter
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Stretch
- Close your eyes and think of a safe, happy place
- Jump rope or hula hoop
- Sing a song
- Build with Legos
- Draw, paint or color
- Clean or organize
- Count to 10 or count backward from 100
- Share your feelings with someone you trust
- Cuddle or play with your pet
- Write a song or poem
- Blow bubbles
- Think about something that makes you laugh
- Read a book or magazine
- Put on a favorite song and dance

### Tips

- ✓ Help your child label his feelings, and encourage him to use coping skills. For example: "It seems like you feel disappointed when your team loses a game. What are some ways you can help yourself feel better when that happens? I know that listening to your favorite song usually helps you feel happy."
- ✓ Model coping skills for yourself and the whole family. Explain the connection between feelings and healthy coping strategies. For example: "I'm feeling stressed after a hard day at work. I am going to take the dog for a walk to help me calm down. Would you like to join me?"
- ✓ Help your child build a long list of coping skills so that she has lots of options to pick from (because what works one day may not work the next). The list should include things she can do inside or outside, things that don't cost any money and things you can do together. There is no age limit on coping skills, so let your child pick which ones work best for her.