



**Discovery Community School**  
<http://dcs.ourschoolpages.com/Home>

**DCS Community Meeting Minutes**  
**February 25, 2021**  
**Location: Zoom**

Presiding: Chris Barrows

Minutes: Erin Moreland

*Opening – 6:32pm*

**Welcome - Chris Barrows**

Introduces Melissa Benaroya to present to the community on emotion coaching.

**Guest Speaker - Melissa Benaroya ([melissabenaroya.com](http://melissabenaroya.com))**

Building your child's social emotional awareness supports their academic education. Goal is to help parent's guide their child's emotional development. Approaches/associations include: Gottman method; positive parenting; bringing baby home, etc.

After a breakout session parents shared their top three current parenting challenges:

- lack of initiative
- lack of motivation
- blaming mom
- anger expression
- messy room
- not listening
- distracted

And then identified a few qualities they want to nurture in their children:

- self control
- getting along with siblings
- confidence
- initiative
- determination
- curiosity
- responsibility
- resilience
- inclusive

To connect between the current challenges we face to raising the people we want them to become, first acknowledge that we're looking through a lens of pain/frustration and try looking through a new lens to see the challenges as an opportunity to teach, coach, guide, and build connection.

Material covered tonight will include:

Creating awareness around emotions

Dr. Gottman's parenting style

Five steps of emotion coaching

- which includes problem solving

Emotions are necessary to:

- connect
- communicate
- create meaning

Kids learn what you do rather than what you say. They'll learn more from your attitude than from what you try to teach them.

There are benefits to allowing them to express their emotions: reduced stress hormones, lowered heart rate, reduced sickness, increased ability to recover from stress.

Parent question: what about when we lose it?

Answer: Try to show how we manage and express our emotions. Model how to regulate emotion. "I'm so angry, I need to take a five minute break and then we can talk about this."

Generalized parenting styles include:

- Laissez-Faire (anything goes)
- Dismissive (just be happy, distract when sad)
- Disapproving (respond to emotions as misbehavior)
- Emotion Coaching (help them understand their emotions, provide coping strategies)

Emotion coaching is great but not necessarily always appropriate in the moment. You can come back to it. Don't do it when:

- you're late for work
- depending on who's around you, who's listening - kids can be really uncomfortable having that conversation around others (even family)
- when safety is an issue
- when we're too upset to be productive (am I escalated? - take the time to cool off -- they'll learn from that as well)
- when emotions don't match the child - hungry, didn't get enough sleep - not the time to have this conversation.

### **Five steps of emotion coaching**

- 1) Be aware of your child's emotions and pay attention to cue's to how your child is feeling. Tune into body language/facial cues.
- 2) Recognize the emotion as an opportunity to teach and connect.
- 3) Listen empathetically and validate your child's thoughts and feelings. Let them tell their story. Paraphrase back to them what you hear them saying - validate their emotion.
- 4) Help your child label their emotions. (Don't tell them how they feel, ask. Provide potential options if they're having trouble identifying/naming their feelings or asking for help.)

- 5) Set limits while problem solving with your child
  - a) Set the limit on the behavior while acknowledging the feeling “it’s ok to *feel/need* \_\_\_\_\_, but it’s not ok to *do* \_\_\_\_\_”
  - b) Identify their goals or motivation. Ask what they wanted or needed. (Did they want the ball, the attention, to be included?)
  - c) Brainstorm solutions. “What’s another way to get what you wanted?” If they’re not in their creative mind (“I don’t know”) help them come up with three ideas - coach to a time when they were successful: “remember last week when you...” use examples of what other kids have done. Do you want to hear what I did when I was little? What would <insert superhero fav character> do? (Don’t list solutions unless they ask you too). Don’t shoot anything down. Accept bad ideas (you’re brainstorming, so anything goes) but coach to ensure there is at least one good idea to consider as well.
  - d) Evaluate options. Walk through the process (we do it very quickly, they don’t). For each idea: “What would happen if you did that?” “How would you feel if someone else did that?” If there’s one that is against a family rule, it can be excluded based on that rule existing.
  - e) Let the child choose the solution. Maybe there’s a do-over opportunity, or identify that they can use their solution the next time and maybe help them remember their idea. If they try it and it doesn't go well, that’s ok. Go through it again. “That didn’t go well, that’s ok. Let’s go back to those ideas and see if we can choose another approach.” Maybe it’s an opportunity to repair.

Example scenario:

Two kids are playing with the ipad, one kid grabs the ipad.

- 1) notice the “hey!”
- 2) decide to step in and help (as we use it more, they’ll start to adopt the process and we can step back)
- 3) “What’s going on? I want to hear from both of you.” Make sure you get each person's experience.
- 4) “How did you feel when he took the ipad?”
- 5) “It’s okay to want your screen time, not ok to grab it out of his hands.”
  - a) what did you want?
  - b) brainstorm ideas - what are some other things you can do
    - i) I can take it
    - ii) I can get you
    - iii) etc
  - c) what would happen for each?  
Which do you want to go with?

Choose 2-3 of these steps of emotion coaching to integrate into your problem solving conversation this week.

Question to parents: What did you find most helpful/meaningful?

- just because we’re all home and I see something happen, doesn’t mean that I see what they experience. We know the tendencies of each kid, don't jump to conclusions.
- Not to judge/label emotions as good and bad
- Listen more, let them solve the problem - I’ve been doing a lot of telling lately.
- Each situation is an opportunity to learn (shifting the lens)

Parent question: with the added stress of the pandemic, we're all together but not necessarily connected.

Answer: Implement empathy. We have to connect before we correct/redirect. Check out her empathy course for a deeper dive (Keep Calm Mini Course: [childproofparenting.com](http://childproofparenting.com)). If we lose it in front of our kids, take responsibility for it, say what we'll do differently next time.

Parent question: How do we handle kids not listening? What can we do?

Here are a few ideas:

- 1) use limited choices - reduces power struggle because they get to choose: "do you want to put the plates away or the placemats?" "Do you want to do it right now, or after we come back?" One of the options cannot be a threat, you have to be okay with either choice. Ideally you're doing this all the time.
- 2) We're often multitasking, calling down the hall, etc. Go over to them, get down on their level before you talk to them. Place a hand on them for contact, lower your voice. These actions remove the power struggle and help you connect, often leading to the child being more receptive.

Reference handout is attached. Visit [melissabenaroya.com](http://melissabenaroya.com) to connect with the instructor. Check out courses at [childproofparenting.com](http://childproofparenting.com).

*Adjourn 8:20pm*