



Empowering the Young to Grow and Transform

The Emoji Transition to Secondary School



How to prepare yourself and your child for an easy transition from primary school to secondary school, while feeling more confident about the big and exciting changes that are about to happen.

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1

Index

Introduction.....	2
Listening and being present.....	3
The teenage brain.....	6
Communication and the language you use.....	10
Manage your own emotions.....	15
From Manager to Coach.....	16
Social media.....	18
Friendships.....	20
Advice for your child from a year 8 student.....	22
Summary.....	24
A message from Libby.....	25/26

Hello,

If you're reading this mini E Book then I'm guessing your child will be starting secondary school.

How are you feeling? Excited? Apprehensive? Emotional? Or maybe a mixture of all of those?

I wanted to write this book to help you prepare yourself and your child for an easy transition from primary school to secondary school and to help your child enjoy this transition. I am a Mum myself, and my two children are in Secondary school and believe me the time flies by so quickly. I can't believe my daughter is already going into year 8 and my son in year 10. Preparing your child for the start of secondary school will help them to feel more confident about the big and exciting changes that are happening. It will also help them in understanding what to expect at their new school.

My name is Libby and I am the creator of the Emoji Coach - Empowering the Young to Grow and Transform. I am a qualified International Transformational Coach and NLP Practitioner, advanced PSYCH-K and a Mindfulness facilitator. I also have an advanced DBS check.

I work with children, parents and schools and I am passionate about ensuring that children can grow and transform.

A testimonial from a mother

"Just wanted you to know that the shy unconfident Holly that came to your genie programme last year, took part in a school debating competition today, the only girl in her team. Just wanted to say thanks, she has overcome a lot using the skills she learn't at the sessions"

I am married and a mother to two children, (Cameron 14 and Charlotte 12), and as well as being a business woman and entrepreneur, I understand how important it is to have a good work/life balance. Equally I understand how to clear the blocks and challenges that can appear before us, and the importance of keeping the communication flowing throughout the family so feelings can be safely expressed.

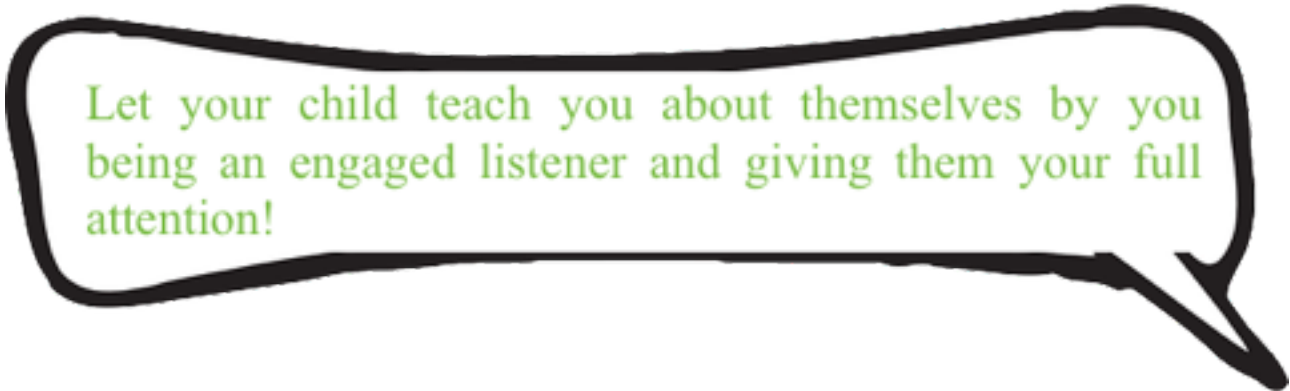


Listening and being present

Sadly, because of society and the busy hectic lives we have, many parents have become desensitised, and are unaware that they're not fully present with their children. Contrary to popular belief, human beings cannot multi-task! Now I know there's a saying that women can but men can't, and there may be some of you reading this who are probably telling me out loud all the things that you do daily which involves multi-tasking, yet can you truly listen when doing something else?

Have you ever been doing something, such as washing up when your child comes into the kitchen and asks you a question of example, if they can go out to meet a friend? You know too well that they should be doing something else (probably homework) but you are so busy being in your head, (planning the week's dinners, thinking about what you've got to do next, etc) that you say, "Yes that's fine" without really noticing it. Then you realise that they are doing something they shouldn't be doing so you question them, to which they reply "but you said yes." Can you relate to that?

The truth is, you can't effectively attend to two things at once. You can't be washing up, putting things away, sending text messages and at the same time be really listening to your child. Your child will not be receiving the **eye contact** they need to know that you're listening, and you can't pick up on body language clues.



Let your child teach you about themselves by you being an engaged listener and giving them your full attention!

If you're busy and they come to you and you carry on with what you're doing only half listening then your child won't feel heard or important, and you may miss that key message. It may also discourage your child from talking to you especially at this age.

TOP TIP

So you can either:
Stop what you're doing and go to your child to listen

or say

"I can see this is really important to you and I want to be able to listen to you and give you my full attention, so once I have finished this, I will come and sit with you and you can tell me whats on your mind and how you are feeling."

Q: What else can you say to your child?

Allocate a time when you and your child know that's when you talk although they may want to come to you in between. If you have other children then make some quality one-to-one time when you can sit quietly or go out together and spend some time with them that way.

By doing this, you are helping your child feel important and valued, you are giving them a safe and secure environment to open up and talk. They will know that they can come to you any time and you will listen without judging them.

Think back to a time when someone listened to you, truly and completely listened to you. How did it make you feel?

This is all your child wants from you.

Not all children talk about what's going on for them, they just "get on with it" and that's okay as long as they're not dealing with something by themselves or pushing a problem down.

You can also listen by watching your child's body language. When you are so in tune with your child you will pick up if there is something that your child is worried about even if they don't communicate it with you straight away.

When I studied counselling they taught us to be there for the client, but not to get caught up in their story. We did this by having one foot in their story and the other foot out firmly on the ground so we were balanced. This enabled us to listen and show empathy whilst recognising it was their story and not ours.

This is something you can practice while listening to your child, so you will be able to comfort them and help them more effectively.

We all have a busy lifestyle whether you have one, two, three or more children and there is always something to do.

Being a Mum myself, I know the importance of being organised with the household chores, work etc, but it's about putting it all into perspective and having a balance.



It's about connection not perfection

Make time to listen to your child.

The next time you listen to someone, be aware of your thoughts and feelings. Are you truly listening to them or are you running an experience of your own and listening to that? Once you become aware, you can put yours to one side and just listen.

TOP TIP

A great technique for being in the present moment is to imagine your thoughts are like butterflies and when your thoughts are taking you away from the present moment, whether it is a worry about something present or past, imagine yourself catching it in a net just like a butterfly and bringing it back to the moment when you can release it, letting go of that thought and coming back to the now.



Or

Imagine you have a stop button and every time a thought comes into your head, imagine yourself pressing it, and bring yourself back to the present moment.



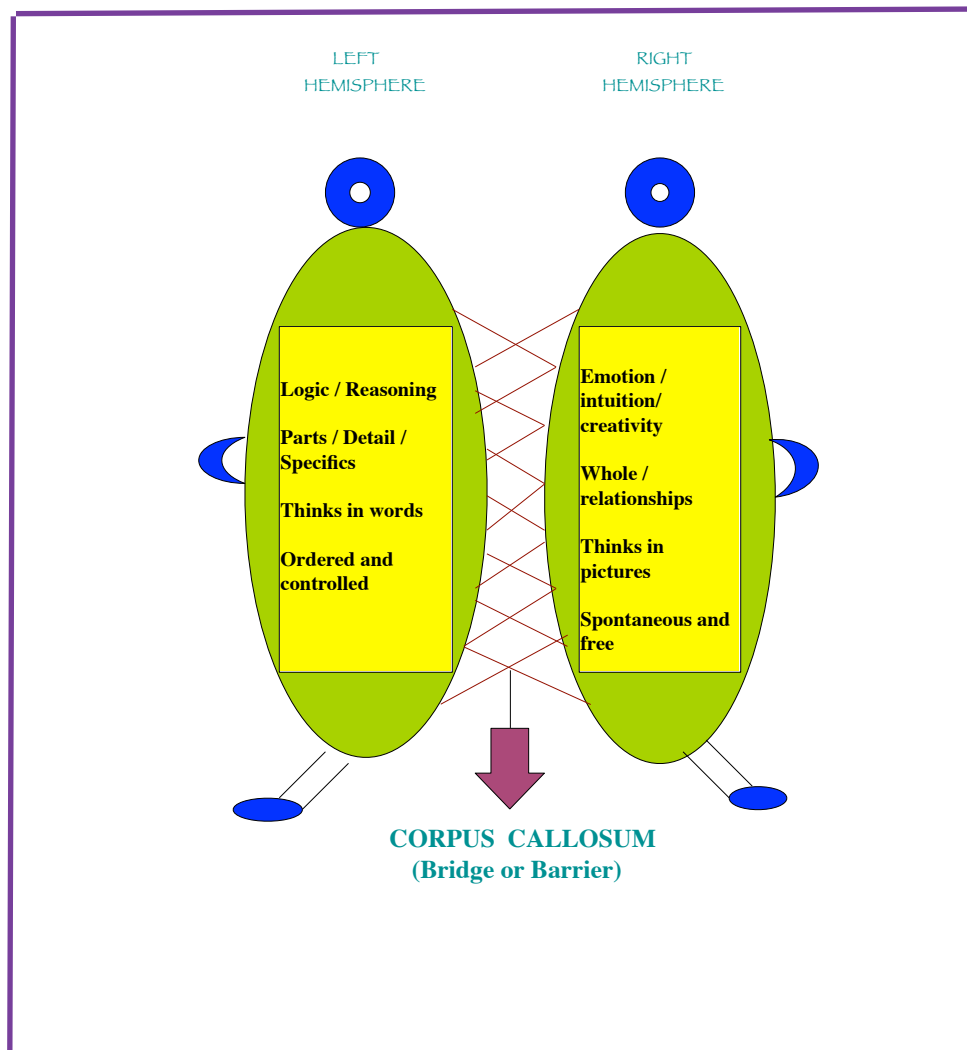
The teenage brain

You may have noticed that your child's moods and behaviour have started to change. One minute they are calm and you can have quite a good conversation with them and then the next minute they can turn into a "Kevin". For those who don't know Kevin, he is a character that Harry Enfield plays in a TV series Kevin and Perry and is very funny as he acts out the extreme behaviour of a teenager. My son watched the film some months ago and he just kept on laughing and looking at my husband and I obviously relating to it!

You may also be noticing sighing, rolling of the eyes, over sensitivity especially if they think you don't understand what they are saying and yet you'll still have those lovely moments with your child. If you're confused and frustrated, imagine how confusing and frustrating it is for your child as they can generally be overwhelmed by their emotions.

As many of you may or may not know, you have a left side of the brain that helps you to organise your thoughts and sentences and think logically. The right hand side of the brain helps you to experience your emotions, tap into your intuition and be creative. It cares about the big picture, emotions and experiences of relationships.

Brain bug Copyright ©2016. All Rights Reserved.



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Now there are other parts to your brain but I'm going to keep this as simple as I can for you.

When your child was very young (first three years) they were right brained dominant, living their lives very much in the moment not having the ability to use logic and words to express their feelings. Do you remember your child starting to ask "why?", well that's when you know that their left brain is starting to join in the fun!

When your child gets to a certain age they tend to flip from one side of the brain to the other. Calm and logical or emotional, and no amount of you logically trying to calm them down will work. It is very important for our two hemispheres of the brain to work together so we can live a balanced meaningful life that is creative and full of connected relationships.

Let's imagine it's like you're dribbling a ball with your foot. Your aim is to keep that ball nice and straight so it doesn't veer off to the left or the right. When you're dribbling the ball you're feeling happy and confident with your thoughts and feelings working side by side. This is a good analogy for being **whole brained**.



If whilst dribbling the ball, you lose control and it veers off to the left getting stuck in a hedge or in this case left side of the brain then your feelings from the right hand brain can be ignored or denied. You can become too literal, which can leave us without a sense of perspective, where we miss the meaning that comes from putting things into context.

If whilst dribbling the ball, you lose control and it veers off to the right or in this case getting stuck in the right side of the brain, then you also need to hold on to your hats lol as all you will feel is a flood of emotions as we completely ignore our logic of the left side of the brain.

This applies to your children as well so, the aim is to help your child become and stay **whole brained** and avoid living in an emotional flood and yet helping them to access some order and structure and organisational skills.

When we are whole brained our brain is integrated and working in harmony and we can understand ourselves and all that's going on around us. This is where we want our children to be and you can help them.

Communication is key!

TOP TIP

Something that I feel very passionate about is, it is so important for children, young people in fact everybody to be able to express themselves. If we don't express how we feel, it then gets pushed down inside of us and can build up and up like a volcano and then erupts, or can stay inside us into our adulthood. Many of my adult clients that come to me for coaching may be struggling with anxiety, or can't express themselves and it all stems from their childhood.

This isn't about trying to change your child or their emotions, it is about communicating that you understand and accept them. #Unconditional love



If your child is communicating from the right side of their brain and is very emotional, parents quite often try to reason with logic and so the child then feels misunderstood and puts barriers up and shuts down feeling less confident about talking to you again.

Have you ever been angry wanting to get your point across and someone tells you to calm down? Did you calm down? I expect not!



Telling a child to “calm down” when they are either very emotional or irrational, communicates that they’re not allowed to experience the feelings that they have. Let’s look at it this way, they are expected to sit all day at school following strict rules, having to listen and work hard in an environment where there isn’t much room for them to express their emotions. So give them a safe environment to do this with you.

If you communicate from the same side of the brain then they immediately feel understood and start to calm down.

Example:

“I can see how upset you are,” or “I can see something is making you unhappy”.

Give them the space to start to talk, and show them you understand.

“It can feel so frustrating when that happens”

“I can see how angry you’re feeling, I always used to punch my pillow at your age, would that help you?”

By putting their thoughts and feelings into words and showing your child you understand, they will start to open up.

Identifying their thoughts and feelings and not dismissing how they feel by wanting them to calm down they will feel safe enough to talk to you and the logical thoughts (left side of the brain) will start to come in themselves.

Communication and the language you use

Once you begin listening to your child, it's very tempting to try to fix things rather than carry on listening. After all, the last thing you want is to see your child in pain.



TOP TIP

When listening to your child it is really good to reflect back to them. If your child says "I'm really worried about starting big school."

Rather than saying, "Oh you'll be fine, don't worry."

Try,

"So, you're feeling really worried about starting big school because..."
Your child will immediately feel understood and tell you more.

If your child says: "What if nobody will like me."

Rather than,

"Oh don't be silly, of course you'll make new friends, you're so lovely who wouldn't want to be your friend?"

Try,

"So you're worried no one will like you?"

This again will encourage your child to tell you more as they will immediately know you understand them and how they are feeling.

Once you have more information you can then build on that.

For Example:

Ask them what they feel they like about themselves and what they think their friends like about them to start building self-esteem.

Q: “Who do you know that’s going to school with you that you like?”

Build on your conversation, reflecting back and allowing your child to talk. Often, just giving them that space enables them to change their thoughts themselves.

Asking questions builds and encourages their awareness and they will start to work through their worries just by talking and answering the questions themselves.

Encourage your child and talk about making new friends and how it’s normal to meet new people when starting school.

Remember, give them your attention instead of giving them your verdict!

I am or I Feel?



Quite often when we talk about our feelings the language we use is “I am angry, I am worried, I am stressed,” and this is something that children also do.

If this is something you or your child does then let's change this now!

When you say, "I am angry" you're taking ownership of that emotion and it's a lot harder to change, it's almost like it becomes your identity.

So change it to "I FEEL angry" or "I feel sad, I feel worried," etc.

It's easier to change your
emotions when you say I
Feel.....

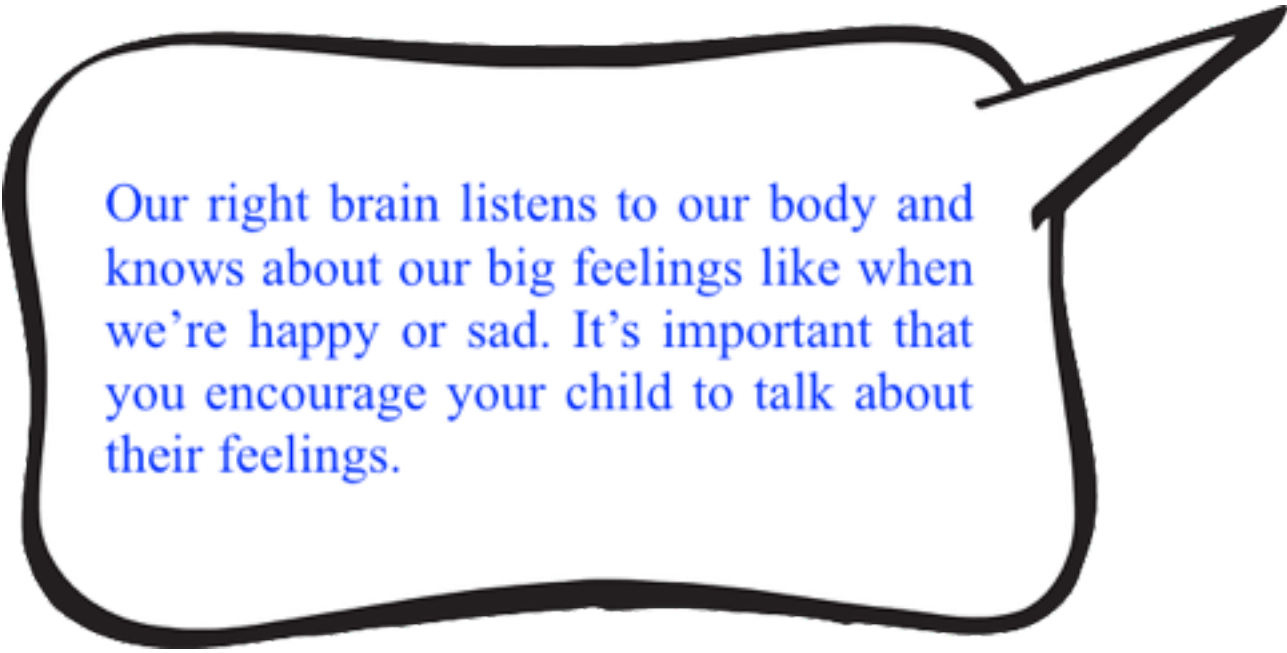


TOP TIP!

If your child is saying "I am worried" it is important when reflecting back to change the I am and say:

"You're feeling worried."

Practice this and you will automatically start changing the "I am" to "I feel."



Our right brain listens to our body and knows about our big feelings like when we're happy or sad. It's important that you encourage your child to talk about their feelings.

Talking about your feelings is great and so important, as is connecting with your emotions.

If your child is quite anxious or worried then ask them:

Where in your body are you feeling this emotion?

What colour is it?

If it was a shape, what shape would it be?

Are there any sounds with it?

Quite often just by connecting with the emotion in this way it can change, so just allow your child some space to sit with it.

You can ask your child, "If it were a calmer feeling..."

- What colour would it be?
- What shape would it be?
- Would the sound be different?

Suggest to your child that they can now change the emotion to the feeling that they want so that they feel calmer and happier.

This will also help your child learn that emotions aren't scary monsters. Emotions also just want us to listen to them!



Practice this yourself and you too can change how you feel.

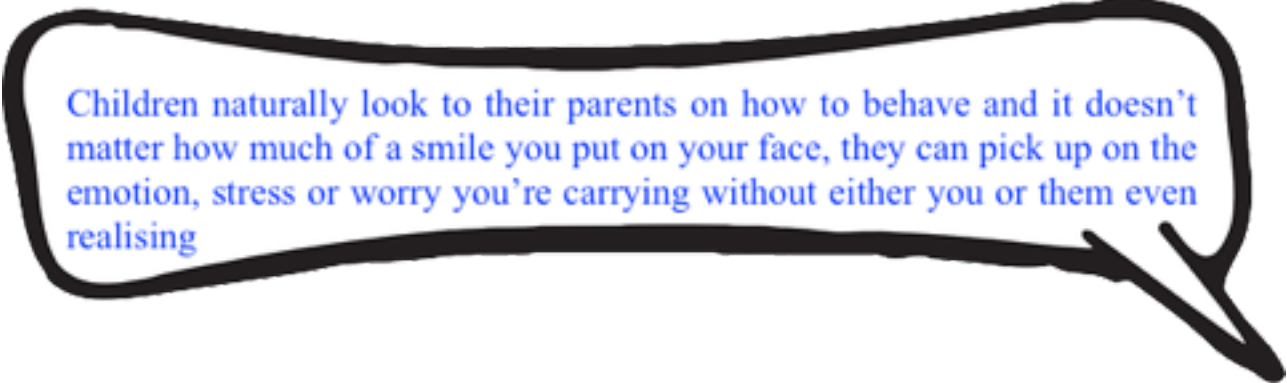
We don't have to try to be perfect in front of our children or hide all of our emotions. Start to talk to your children about how you're feeling so if you're feeling bit grumpy then just say:

"Do you know, I'm feeling a little grumpy today and thats okay as I know I will start to feel better"

Some children think it's their responsibility to help you feel better. By telling them it's okay, you're taking responsibility for your feelings.

Manage your own emotions

From the moment your child is born they will function more from the feeling than from your words. “I’m hungry” will feel a certain way to them, so will “Mum isn’t happy, “This isn’t right” and “Mum is happy.”



Children naturally look to their parents on how to behave and it doesn't matter how much of a smile you put on your face, they can pick up on the emotion, stress or worry you're carrying without either you or them even realising

Whenever my kids are not themselves or are showing different behaviour, I always check in with myself first and see how I'm feeling. Quite often when I clear any negative thoughts or feelings, or change a situation that I wasn't happy with, their behaviour also changes. Amazing isn't it?

When you see your child upset and in pain you just want to make it better for them, and you would rather their pain was transferred to you. It is important to understand that it's not actually their pain you're feeling, it's yours! Often our subconscious minds bring up past experiences without us even realising it.

It's really important to remember that the current anxiety your child is displaying is their stuff and not yours. Although you can see they are worried, upset, etc, it doesn't mean that those emotions present themselves in the exact same way as you might have experienced them in the past. For example, you may have had an unhappy experience at school and your child's worries might trigger those experiences for you. Therefore you might feel more anxious and really worry when you see or hear your child's concerns. Or perhaps you had a great time at school and loved it, so when you see/hear your child feeling concerned, you just don't get it!

Your child may want to be more independent which is natural at this age. Let them go and make mistakes and learn from them.

As a mindfulness facilitator I know the importance of being in the present moment and ensuring that you're listening to their story and not the one of your past.

From Manager to Coach, Empowering your Child

From the moment your child is born you become their manager and they depend on you.



They start to build friendships and you organise all of the play dates and activities for them. There comes a point when this role changes and this is the point!

This is when you become their coach and empower them. So this means guiding and supporting them and helping them when they want the help, empowering them rather than controlling them and what they do.

If you try and control them they will push back and when you are still trying to manage your child at this age there could be some problems.



TOP TIP

Give them the confidence to say no if they want to, just as it's okay for you to say no. It's okay for them to have their opinion and say what they feel as long as it's done respectfully. What I will also say is that it works both ways. We have to respect them and their needs and the way we talk to them as much as they do to us. If you find that hard then maybe it's about looking at what's going on for you and managing your own emotions like we talked about on page 15.

Rather than telling them that they have to do their homework try:

"I see you have some homework, Is there anything I can do to help you? What materials do you want to do this piece of homework?"

"I can see you're frustrated that you have homework and you also want to be with your friends. I would feel that way too when I was your age. So what can you do so you can still get to see your friends?"

Are you going to do your homework now or after dinner?

What can you do so you feel more organised for school?
How can I help you?

On a scale of 1 - 10, 1 being a manager and 10 being a coach where would you put yourself?

Are you more of a manager or a coach?

What do you want to start doing more of to help you coach your kids rather than control and manage?

Social media

This is something I hear parents complaining and worrying about time after time and having two children in secondary school myself I see what a huge part of their world social media is. It's their way of staying in touch, being in the group chats being accepted, feeling grown up and they can access it so easily now on mobile phone, iPods and other devices.



And do you know what? It's going to get bigger and there is nothing we can do about that but there is something we can do to ensure our kids stay safe. Your child may or may not already be connected to social media. If they're not then they may be introduced to social media when they start secondary school and this is a huge subject as it can cause so many issues especially bullying.

TOP TIP

For more information you can go onto NSPCC online safety and that will give you more of an insight of what children do online and the risks they face. Schools will also hold talks on this for your children.

Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and many more are out there for your child. If you want to give your child some freedom then it's about keeping a close eye on what they're doing. Maybe be friends with them on there so you can see. Explain the dangers of social media and trust they will be sensible. Every child is different and you are the expert and know your child so trust your intuition remembering to keep your story out of it.



So it's encouraging your child to be their own person and to have the confidence to move away from it if they're not happy.

Firm boundaries will be needed and it's your choice whether or not they are allowed to go on. Remember this is about empowering and the majority will want to do it because their friends are doing it.

Friendships



Friendships are important when it comes to emotional health. As parents we want to see our child/children making and keeping new friends. I feel this is really big for parents and have many conversations around this subject.

Have realistic expectations about your child's friendships. What you want in a friendship may be very different to what your child wants.

You might like to see your child with lots of friends but your child might be happy with just one or two.

Not all of them last, even if the parents stay best friends, and that's okay!
There is no point in comparing their siblings' friendships as we are all different.

Friendships are so important to children and ourselves. They see each other making new friends and want that too. Some children find it really easy to make friends and others are a little more wary.

Once your child moves to secondary school friendships may change again. If your child is going to secondary school with friends from their primary school then they will most likely want to be with them understandably especially on the first day. It's important to encourage your child to make an effort with other children and not to just stick with the people they know. Again this is about guiding and helping, not telling them what to do.

TOP TIP

Help your child learn how to cope when friendships go wrong. Sometimes a friend may do something that upsets your child, this doesn't always mean that the friendship is over and has to end. This will help your child to understand that everyone makes mistakes and that disagreements and conflicts are a normal part of growing up. Mostly conflicts are not considered bullying, no matter how upsetting, but they do need to be resolved. However if another child oversteps the mark and continues unacceptable behaviour towards your child, it's important that your child learns that they don't have to accept that and it's okay to move on.

Help your child to see that to forgive doesn't mean they accept the other person's behaviour or even trust the other person, but that it means they can move on and let go of the hurt.

Again, it's easy to want to solve this for them and sometimes on rare occasions it is right for the parent to step in and talk to the school or parents about it.

TOP TIP

Talk to your child about ways of making new friends. What do they think they can do to help them make new friends? For example: smile and look at other children, say hello etc.

Remember you're not the problem solver; empower your child by encouraging them to come up with ideas for themselves.

Look at the school clubs with them if they are interested and encourage them to join school clubs where they will make new friends.

Let them choose and make their own friends. They may make friends that you don't feel is right for them. Again, it's about taking a back seat and being there for them if they want you. If you feel they may be in danger then of course, it goes without saying you would intervene but this is about trusting your child to make the right choices for them even if it's not straight away. They learn by making mistakes.

TOP TIP

Advice from a year 8 student for your child:-

- Be open to new friendships.
- You may be starting school with your friends from primary school and that's great but it's important to remember to also be friendly to others. It's too easy to think "oh I'll just stay with my friend who I know". You'll have the chance to meet so many new people so take that opportunity because if your old friends aren't there at lunchtime or are off school you will have other friends to be with and will feel grateful for that otherwise you could be sat by yourself and feel alone.
- So, whether you're a boy or a girl, smile at people. When you smile at others it really helps as they may be feeling shy and wanting to smile at you so give them one of yours. I remember I started to talk to a girl and she said that it was my smile that encouraged her to talk to me as I looked really friendly.



- Make your own friends who are like you and suit your personality. I've seen so many kids ditch their friends to be with popular kids and deep down they're not really happy and don't have true friends. It's really easy to get drawn into that as you just want to be liked and belong but just stay true to your self.
- Join clubs at school as that's a great way of making friends.
- It's also very easy to become a group when you make friends. Again you may find that you're in your primary school group or a new friends group. Some groups even call themselves a name, and if that's what you want then that's fine, but I personally stayed away from that and have friends from different groups that I see at different times, and that suits me better and they have become my true friends.
- Talk to your friends and tell them how you feel. This may not come as easy to you if you're a boy but you have every right to say how you feel if you're not happy with something or just want to off load.

- Talk to your parents or another family member if something is troubling you. You will feel so much better having that support. Even if it's how you want some help with something.
- If there is something you're not happy with at school then find your year leader or teacher that you feel comfortable with, even though it's not cool to others, but if it helps you then do it.
- Stay organised! You will have a lot to think about when you start secondary school and a lot of homework. I have a file box that I keep in my porch. I get my bag ready the night before and again whether you're a boy or a girl you can do this. I keep all of my books in the file box and put the books that I'm not using in the box and then get the ones that I need. Then, If I remember something as I'm about to walk out of the door, then I can just get it from my box file.
- If you have a packed lunch then make your pack up the night before so you're not rushing in the morning.
- Set off to school in plenty of time so not to add any pressure.

If there is anything else you can think of then write it down here.

Enjoy your time at secondary school!

Summary

It is important to have clear communication throughout the family and to be clear on the type of parent you want to be and feel confident with that. Make the boundaries and if they're not working then change them. You can't change your children but you can change yourself and the way you respond to them and handle situations. It's all a learning process not just for the kids but for you too. So be confident with who you are and how you parent.

As they get older it's too easy for the hugs and contact to stop especially with boys although not in all cases.

TOP TIP

Place your hand on their shoulder as you walk past or are standing next to them or just touch their back, It doesn't have to be for long but you will have that connection with them.

Tell them you love them even if they don't say it back.

It may feel hard to show your love to them as they don't always make it easy do they? Deep down they want to feel loved and will appreciate that hand on their shoulder and the fact that you offering your help and listening to them even if they make out they don't want you to know anything or your help.

This mini eBook is designed to help parents and children prepare for a happy and successful transition from primary school to secondary school. I'm sure your child will have an amazing time at secondary school and the transition will be a smooth and happy one.

Please let me know how you get on. You can email me libby@theemojicoach.com

I have many more tools and tips to help you or your child. If you are concerned about your child regarding school or if you feel you are struggling, then please do contact me as I offer one-to-one coaching working with parents or children. I also offer family packages when there is more than one family member.

COMING SOON:

- The Emoji Chart to help your child express themselves and manage their emotions. It is something they can use daily and is so simple and yet really powerful.
- Online courses for parents, teachers and children/young people
- Guided visualisations for parent, teachers and children

If you feel your child's school would benefit from the Emoji Coach programmes, please direct the appropriate person in the school to the website www.theemojicoach.com or you can also email me at libby@theemojicoach.com

If you would like to sponsor a school to run the 8 week programmes then contact me to find out how to do so.

See you soon

Libby

The Emoji Coach

Empowering the Young to Grow and Transform

Working with children/young people

- Parents
- Families
- Teachers
- School programmes
- Workshops

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I am passionate about helping kids and young people grow their self-esteem and confidence so they can be who they truly are instead of being lost in the dark, so they can feel happy and free and live a healthier and more resilient life.

I have the empathy and understanding to be able to connect with children, as they all deserve to believe in themselves and understand themselves. Everybody does!

I was a very insecure girl with no confidence, and quite often I felt alone and scared. I have a huge amount of passion to make a difference to the lives of children and young people.

This is where my heart lies.

“Libby has worked on a one-to-one basis with children and youths who have self-harmed or suffered with depression and anxiety, and she has successfully helped them to leave it all behind and move towards the happy and healthy life which they deserve.”

“Libby has recently co-run a programme for year 7 girls in a free school helping them with their confidence and self-esteem. She has had great results!”

“Libby also co-wrote another programme designed for KS2 children to help them with their confidence and self-esteem.”

“Her expertise and experience enables her to specialise in helping children to tap into their potential by providing interactive programmes to help and support them to access and control their emotions.”

“OFSTED said WOW!”

Libby

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