



Purple Playas Puffy's Pointers

Ages: Birth to 18 years old



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Supporting Children with Medical Issues Strengthening their Social Emotional Development & Resiliency

Life shapes us by leading us in various directions... sometimes in extremely unexpected directions. Diagnosis of a chronic illness is definitely an unexpected event that takes a child and family in a completely new, overwhelming, and scary direction. Everyone knows that change is difficult. Both positive and negative change can be a challenge for the entire family because with each change, emotions can range from: happy, sad, angry, excited, confused, hopeful, worried, anxious, exhausted, overjoyed... Widely varied emotions are to be expected. Each family member's individual perceptions can impact how the family processes their emotions. The challenge is to make conscious, thoughtful decisions, instead of emotionally driven, reactive ones. Raising a child with a chronic illness can be frustrating and challenging. By using these "Power Pointers" and other "Power Pointers" included on Purple Playas Foundation's website, parents will be able to strengthen their child's social-emotional skills, beginning at any age, as well as teach their child coping skills that will serve him/her into adulthood.



Teach emotional expression and understanding. Tips to build skills in understanding, expressing, and self-regulating emotions: Printable "Power Pointers" on "feelings" is located in our Purple Playas' Social Emotional Resources section on our website.

-  Talk about your own feelings, as a parent.
-  Talk about feelings of characters in books, videos, or on TV shows.
-  Reflect on particular situations and discuss feelings.
-  Teach new emotion words (i.e., frustrated, disappointed, anxious, confused, hurt, worried, scared, etc.)
 - For young children, print visuals of emotions and allow them to point. Printable visuals in our social-emotional section of our website.
-  Say to your child, "Tell me how you feel."
-  Support, validate and accept your child's expression of feelings; regardless of whether you agree. It is important that he/she feels safe in expressing his/her emotions.
-  Describe your child's expression or expressions in books/magazines.
-  Pretend play with young children using "feeling words" with toys, stuffed animals, puppets, dolls, or action figures.

 Promote drawing pictures about feelings.

 Model how to cope and stay calm using the Turtle Technique: Printable visual steps for the Turtle Technique are located in our Purple Playas' Social Emotional Resources section on our website.

 **Self-regulation.** Teach "Tucker Turtle's" cues on how to cope and control feelings through calming steps

 Step 1: Recognize your feelings.

 Step 2: Think "stop."

 Step 3: Go inside your shell and take 3 deep breaths.

 Step 4: Come out when calm and think of a good solution. (Help your child think of coping strategies and or solutions)

 Practice steps frequently when children are not upset as this is the most optimal instructional time. The more children practice a new skill, the better they recall and use that skill when the need arises.

- Prepare for and help children handle disappointment and/or change
- Most importantly, recognize and praise when your children stay calm to promote the use of this new skill.

 **Teach problem solving steps.** Printable visual steps are located in our Purple Playas' Social Emotional Resources section on our website.

 What is my problem?

 Think of some solutions. (Help your child think of solutions such as: get an adult for help, ask nicely, play together, ignore, say "please stop," say "please," share, trade, wait and take turns, talk to an adult, make another choice, take a break, etc.)

 Will it be safe, fair, and how will others feel?

 Let's give it a try.

If the solution doesn't work, loop through the steps again.

 **Coping Strategies.** Printable visual "coping cues" are located in our Purple Playas' Social Emotional Resources section on our website. Every child is unique and so are ways to cope with difficult medical situations. There are many ways that you can guide your child, and some children even can come up with their own coping mechanism. Adults can use such strategies as:

 Distraction techniques (music, playing a game, TV),

 Counseling,

 Sensory input (squeezing a pillow/Puffy, hugging),

 Pre-talking through a situation, etc.

The key is to help ease what is hard for them and help them through it. Coping strategies is not a one-size fits all. In addition to suggested coping strategies, visit our Purple Playas Pinterest Page for additional ideas.

 **Self Advocacy.** Printable "Power Pointers" on medical self-advocacy is located in our Purple Playas' Social Emotional Resources section on our website. Children should:

 Know medical terms,

 Use their voice and ask for needed information,

 Lead discussions in medical appointments,

 Help make medical decisions about their own body, and

 Speak up and show mutual respect.



Purple Playas
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Hope for kids with chronic conditions

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