

Parenting Tip of the Month

March 2017



Lower Elementary Teachers

How to Build Emotional Intelligence in Your Child

By Anna Partridge

You have probably heard the term “emotional intelligence” many times but what exactly is it? And why is it important for children to develop their emotional intelligence?

Emotional intelligence, or emotional quotient (EQ) is a “person’s ability to identify, evaluate, control and express emotions.” It helps us communicate with others, negotiate situations and develop clear thought patterns.

Leading psychologist and author, Daniel Goleman argued in his *New York Times* bestselling book, Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ (1996), that EQ is a more important measure of how successful a person is, than Intelligent Quotient (IQ). Goleman’s revolutionary ideas around the science behind EQ started the movement towards incorporating EQ into many organizations and school curriculums



IQ measures a person's academic intelligence, whereas EQ measures emotional intelligence — a person's ability to interact with others or 'social intelligence'. People with high IQ do not always have social intelligence and may lack the skills to be successful in many current work environments.

According to a [Forbes article](#) in 2013, "research carried out by the Carnegie Institute of Technology highlights 85 percent of financial success is due to skills in 'human engineering' including your personality, ability to communicate, negotiate and lead.' And only 15 percent is due to 'technical knowledge.'" People with a strong EQ make good leaders and managers and are better at working collaboratively in team environments.

If we foster EQ with our children when they are young, we are setting them up to communicate well, develop strong relationships, negotiate tricky situations, be leaders in their field and [according to TalentSmart](#) even earn more money. They will be more empathetic and compassionate to their friends, partners and own children, relate more easily to others and have a greater self-awareness.

Can we teach our children emotional intelligence?

Absolutely. Some kids are more instinctively in tune with their EQ and will be ready to deal with new or different situations and people more easily. Others have a lower EQ from the start and need us to teach them in a more focused way. Regardless, all children need to have their EQ nurtured and be supported through the minefield of emotional experiences as they grow.

Since its inception, the education system has strongly focused on developing IQ and improving children's intellectual ability. However, since the advent of the EQ movement started by Daniel Goleman in 1996, many schools are now teaching children to identify their own emotions and perceive the emotions of others around them. However, there is still along ways to go in many educational settings and so parents need to play a pivotal role in fostering their children's EQ.

Here are four ways to build emotional intelligence with your child:

1. Help your child recognize their own emotions.

Once you help your children "name" their own emotions, whether it be frustration or anger or disappointment, they can start taking ownership. Here you will not only spell out what they are feeling, but in what context it is affecting others. When they are feeling upset or discouraged, ask them to describe what they are feeling or get them to write it down or draw it. Do it often so they get to know what it feels like to be sad or angry or frustrated and they will learn to name their own emotion. Don't forget to do it with good emotions too. My daughter's preschool teacher uses images of emotional teddy bears and the children pick which bear they are feeling. They say what made them feel like that way and explain the emotion. For example, my daughter picked the happy bear because she felt happy after playing on the swing with her friends.

2. Talk about your own emotions with your child.

The best way to foster emotional intelligence is to show it. Tell your children how you are feeling and allow them to perceive it for themselves. We often only think about emotions when they are big and hard to deal with, like feeling disappointed or sad or angry and your children will likely know when you are feeling any of these. You can also demonstrate here how you deal with your own big emotions and "get over" anger or disappointment. It is important to talk about the positive emotions too. For example, I am feeling so happy today because we just bought a house. Tell them what it feels like for you. And demonstrate how your emotions might affect theirs. As a parent, our own emotions have been sparked or triggered by something our child may have done (good or bad). One of the most important things here to remember is not to blame your child for making you angry or sad — they haven't made you angry — you have made you angry. This is invaluable to teach our children, however it is a hard concept for adults to understand and even harder for children. Once they know their own trigger points with you and others, it will be much easier to control their emotions.

3. Recognize the mood or feeling inside your house.

The mood and feelings change within your house. If you have people over, it might feel fun and jubilant. If you wake up on a Sunday morning and the house is quiet, it might feel calm and relaxed. Discuss these differences with your children. Allow them to recognize the different moods inside your house and see how their own emotions impact what happens in the house. At some stage, especially in the holidays, the mood feels so high it might explode and this is the time you would take your children to the park or break the pattern somehow — discuss this with your children.

4. Recognize the mood or feeling when you go places.

Going into a crowded shopping mall will “feel” different from being at a playground. Talk to your children about the different moods. A sunny, hot day will feel different to a rainy, cold day and it will be different for each person. As we approach summer, I was asking my own children which season they like best. Two said summer and one said winter so we explored why we liked each better and it came down to memories and activities, but mostly moods. Two liked being outdoors with space to run around and a less crowded, relaxed atmosphere. One liked winter and to be in the house playing games with us because it was happy and fun. Each could explain the feelings or emotions that went with the seasons. Try this activity with new and familiar places you go and at different times. So if you go to the supermarket and it is really busy, ask them what mood they pick up and then if you go the next time and it is really quiet, they will pick up another mood.

Bringing awareness to the emotions and moods that are felt or perceived in different situations helps your child assess the emotional intelligence of each place. If they have just started at a new school, they will know what the mood is or if something changes for the day at school, they will be able to deal with it much more easily after knowing what they feel and how it affects them. They will also be aware of how they pick up the moods of others in their day.

Building emotional intelligence now will help your child be a good manager, good leader, be able to contribute to a team environment personally and professionally and more importantly have the ability to develop strong, connected relationships now and later in life.

Here is another link about Emotional Intelligence from Lisa Firestone Ph.D.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/compassion-matters/201603/why-we-need-teach-kids-emotional-intelligence>

Material of the Month

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The Montessori Checkerboard



Before using the Checkerboard, the child has been introduced to basic operations and hierarchical materials through the use of the Golden Bead Material, the Bead Cabinet, basic operation Finger Charts, Bead Frames and the Montessori Hierarchical Material. The Montessori Checkerboard reinforces those concepts with a new way of presenting the information, while at the same time allowing the child to increase his knowledge and skill level.

The Checkerboard has four rows and nine columns of 7 cm squares arranged in hierarchical colors: green for units; blue for tens; and red for 100s. These are the same hierarchical colors found in previous Montessori math materials. The columns range from the simple class to the millions, while the individual squares account for simple units through one billion! The individual rows not only represent place value, they represent the partial products of multi-digit multiplication. Squares located on the diagonal have the same place value. You can certainly do big math here!

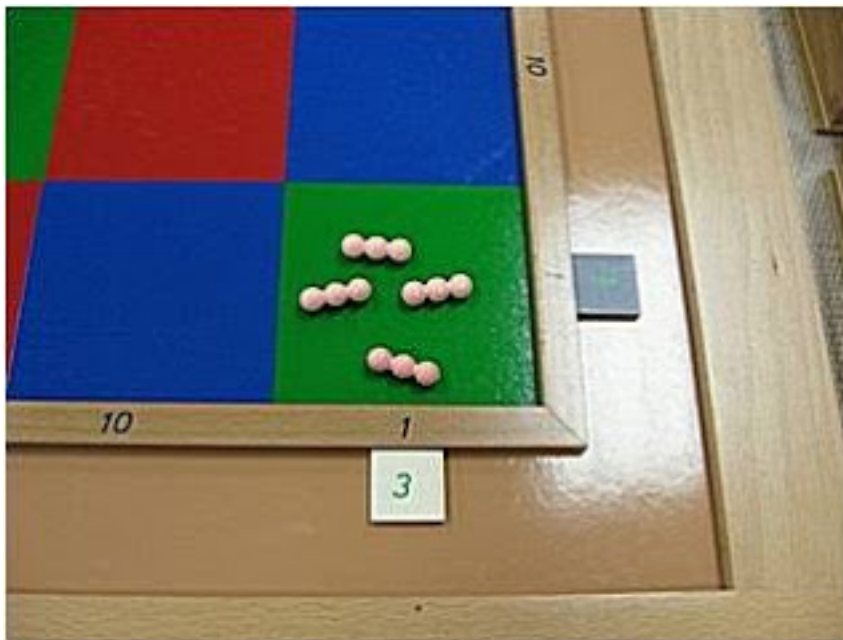
The Montessori Checkerboard is a concrete material that allows the child to move along the passage of abstraction at his own pace. Because the child uses bead bars, there is no need to have multiplication facts committed to memory. A child may multiply large numbers while skip counting on the beads. With increased use, math facts are mastered. This is opposite to conventional wisdom that says a child may not do multi-digit multiplication without memorizing the multiplication tables.

In addition, the Checkerboard is carried over into the upper elementary math curriculum. Students continue to explore and develop their abstract multiplication skills using the Checkerboard to progress into category multiplication. It also serves as the precursor to the Montessori Decimal Checkerboard, which is similar in form and function, but allows students to learn about place value while multiplying decimal fractions.

The colorful checkerboard materials build upon child's prior knowledge. When children begin with the familiar, there is no reason to panic when learning more challenging concepts.

The colors green, blue, and red representing the ones, tens, and hundreds place values are repeated from previous materials to give the child a sense of mastery.

The beads are the same colors and represent the same amounts as the bead cabinet found in Montessori preschools and early elementary classrooms.



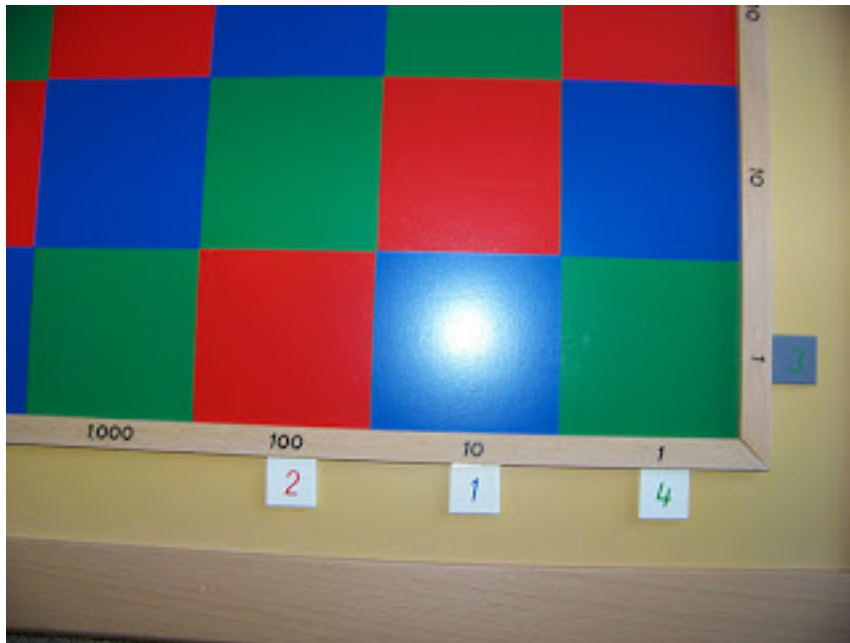
The multiplicand is placed on the bottom and the multiplier is placed along the side.

The child sets out three bead-bars, four times.

The child sees that $3 \times 4 = 12$ and exchanges by putting a two bead-bar in the ones place and carrying a one bead to the tens place.

Here is an example: $214 \times 3 =$

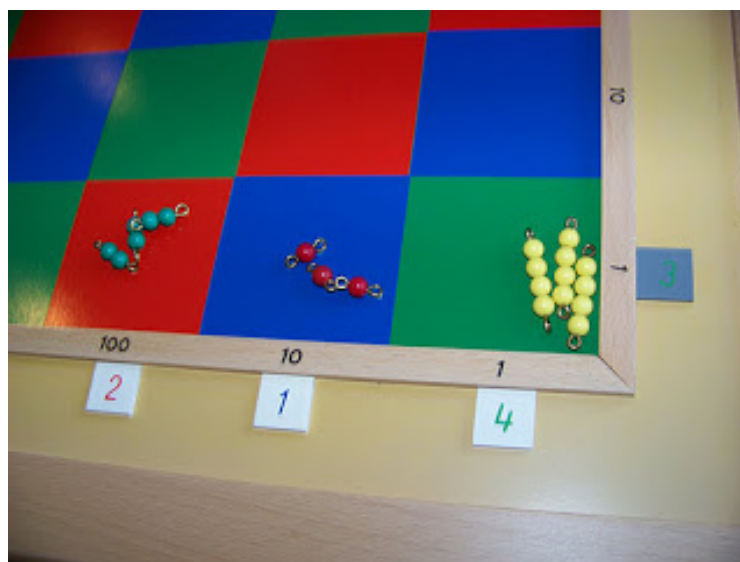
Set up the checkerboard with beads representing the numbers you selected.



Now the board is ready for the child to do some exchanging. We always start with the "units" place so the first exchange comes with those beads in the green square.

If the child knows that $3 \times 4 = 12$, he/she can simply do the exchange.

If he/she has not yet memorized this answer, then he/she can count the beads to come to the answer of "12". (That's the lovely thing about Montessori materials - the teacher doesn't have to correct the child, because the material is self-correcting!)



With the checkerboard, the number 12 would be shown with a 1 in the tens place (blue square) and a 2 in the units place (green square).



The child documents his/her work as she goes.

***iTunes has the *Checkerboard* app. You can purchase and download it in your tablet if you want to try at home 😊. ***