



Navigating the journey of life can be challenging; we don't come pre-programmed knowing everything we need.

**We all need tools and strategies to help ourselves and our families along the way.**

**For more than 20 years Eagles Nest has been providing individuals and families tools for positive change in a safe and encouraging space.** We offer counselling, coaching and support programs to adults, youth and children. All our programs and services are low cost or fully subsidized because we believe **financial barriers shouldn't keep you from finding the tools you need to grow and thrive.**

## program highlight: emoticon

Emoticon is a therapeutic group program for children to help them identify, understand and manage their emotions.

**Why we offer this program:** Childhood is a period of growth, change and development. Learning to identify and regulate your emotions is an essential life skill that builds self-esteem, resilience and healthy relationships.

**What the program looks like:** Emotions are explored using a fun, interactive and evidence based curriculum. Group sizes are kept intentionally small to give each child a customized learning experience. Parents receive weekly emails to help their family reinforce new skills and strategies, creating a supportive environment for lasting change.

## an emoticon story whole family change

*Anna and her son Drake talked to us about their experience with Emoticon. Names were changed with permission for confidentiality.*

**Anna:** The tools (Emoticon) provided are not just 'here you go, use this'. There are options, different ways of doing this. Not one size fits all. There are different choices, he can pick the one that works for him. You aren't just telling the kids, 'These are your options'. You made sure that the information could be used, they are practical.

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**Drake:** *Emoticon was very fun. We drew pictures and talked about emotions, what you feel in your body when you feel a certain emotion. When I'm anxious my stomach flip-flops. Then I learned more – if I was guilty or anxious or sad, what to do. I would do deep breaths to calm down and stop thinking about what makes me anxious.*

**Anna:** He knows that he has to experience certain emotions now. The good thing is that he doesn't feel bad about it now. Before he would struggle, would be embarrassed or quantify that he had to do this, now he manages them.

He became more articulate in terms with what he was feeling emotionally. He can name the emotion. Before, even if he understood that he was sad, he couldn't name it. Now he can articulate it, using more sophisticated terms like 'I feel discouraged'.

**Drake:** *(My favourite thing was when) we went outside and made a giant volcano with baking soda and vinegar while saying stuff that we were angry about. There was literally vinegar everywhere!*

**Anna:** It's not just about the child, everyone needs to change. The whole family needs to change...I needed to be prepared to listen to what he was learning.

**Drake:** *Now when I'm upset or whenever I'm angry I say, 'I need some time to be alone' then I walk away.*

**Anna:** It was good that it was a small group, it was important to him to be seen. He saw that what he said was important. We have a big family, there is not enough time for everyone. There are not many opportunities to be seen in our family because people have different needs and expectations. But at Emoticon he was seen. He felt that whatever he had to say was important to everyone.

It was eye-opening in many ways. I'm connecting things I've read with what (the program) says and what he said. There is research and knowledge behind these tips, it is scientifically proven. When you see how important this is for your child, you take it seriously.

**Drake:** *I would want other people to know you can learn more about emotions and control it, you don't want emotions to take control of them.*

## emotional regulation

### essential

emotional regulation is an essential life skill

### important

unhealthy regulation can lead to behavioural issues, strained relationships and mental health challenges

### pandemic impact

isolation experienced in the pandemic has heightened anxiety and emotional dysregulation in children

### foundational

childhood is a key development period in learning emotional regulation skills

## did you know: emoticon program



### professional

program facilitated by a registered social worker specializing in children & youth



### low cost

Eagles Nest covers 90 - 100% of the program fee \$523/child



### low ratios

adult to child ratio of 1:2.5



### 7 emotions

key emotions discussed: happiness, anger, anticipation, fear, guilt, anxiety & sadness



### safe

100% of parents felt that this program created a safe space for their children