

Kids in the House 29: Impulsive Behaviour

2 MIN · YOUTUBE · [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=4F3BRN9WT_8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4f3brn9wt_8)
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SUMMARY

Children naturally experience emotions one at a time, which leads to impulsive behavior. This process evolves as they develop, particularly in the prefrontal cortex, allowing for the mixing of emotions and the emergence of self-control. Supporting children through their emotional experiences is crucial for their growth and maturity.

- *Children start off impulsive due to experiencing one emotion at a time.*
- *The prefrontal cortex, responsible for mixing emotions, develops between ages five and seven.*
- *Emotional complexity begins when children express mixed feelings, indicating the start of self-control.*
- *Intense children may take longer to develop emotional regulation, often until ages seven to nine.*
- *Impulsivity reflects immaturity and underdeveloped prefrontal cortex functioning.*
- *Growth in emotional regulation is akin to muscle development; it requires exercise and support.*
- *Parents should be patient and create conducive environments for emotional growth.*
- *Nature has inherent solutions to many childhood emotional challenges.*

We all start off impulsive; it's nature's plan. We've got to be able to experience one emotion at a time. Just like in the eyes, one set of signals at a time, until the signals mix, and then we have depth vision. One hemisphere at a time, and solving problems until both are established, and then we have the bridge, the corpus callosum. The same thing with emotions: one emotion at a time. With every emotion, we feel like doing something; there's an impulse.

And so when we say impulsive, what we mean is that a child is only experiencing one emotion at a time, and that's the way it's meant to be. Now, the mixing bowl of the brain, the prefrontal cortex, is where the emotions will mix. But that doesn't even get going until between five and seven years of age, and it needs lots of developmental support. A child needs to feel his feelings, to have a soft heart, and this process needs to be supported about having mixed feelings.

You'll know when, because a child starts saying, "Part of me feels this way and part of me feels that way." "I'm really mad at you, mommy,

but I don't want to hurt you." "I'm really excited about the school play, but I'm afraid people might laugh at me." And you actually see that emotional discord inside of them. And when that happens, it's the beginning of self-control, and it's a beautiful process. When children are more intense, it takes longer.

Often it doesn't happen until seven to nine years of age, if the conditions are not conducive. I dealt for years with delinquents, and they had prefrontal cortexes the size of a four-year-old's, and so they were impulsive by default. Impulsivity is always indicative of immaturity; always indicative of a lack of prefrontal cortex functioning. The good news is: it's never too late. The bad news is: we have to start at the beginning. It's like a muscle, it grows as it's exercised. As parents we must be patient.

Children will grow out of impulsiveness, if we support the conditions that are conducive for growth. They need to feel all their feelings. It's very important. But they only feel one at a time if they're young, or if they're very intense. And we need to have patience that nature will answer it, as it has answers to most of the problems that we encounter in childhood.