

# Feelings & Emotions



## EYFS 2021

Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Helping children develop emotional understanding requires repeated and intentional practice.

Adults support children's development when they help children identify, label and talk about emotions, and when they support children's efforts around problem solving.

# Ideas for teaching children about emotions.

## Daily Ideas

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- Make different emotion faces and have children guess what you might be feeling.
- Throughout the day, help children learn to label their own emotions (e.g., it looks like you are feeling mad / angry / upset / frustrated that we can't go outside; what can we do to help you feel better?)
- While reading stories to children, have children guess how the characters in the story are feeling. Ask questions like "How can you tell that the character is feeling that way? Can you make a face that shows that feeling?"
- During mealtime, tell children about a situation that makes you feel a particular emotion (e.g., happy, sad, frustrated, angry, jealous, etc.). Then ask children to share the things that make them feel that same emotion.
- Make up silly songs about different emotions, using any tune. For example (to row row your boat) — I feel happy when I play outside. Let me show you my happy face (everyone makes a happy face together). I feel angry when someone takes my toy. Let me show you my angry face (everyone make an angry face together). I feel scared when I hear a loud noise. Let me show my scared face (everyone make a scared face together).
- Use puppets to act out different situations (e.g., one puppet takes a toy from another puppet); ask the children what emotion(s) the puppets might be feeling (have them choose from pictures of children making different emotions). After labelling the emotions, have children practice making the emotion with their own faces. Then ask what the puppet should do next to help when feeling the emotion. Have the puppet model coping with the emotion.
- Play an emotion walking game while outside. Ring a bell and have everyone walk around the playground like they are sad. Ring the bell again and have the children walk like they are mad. Repeat the activity until you have practiced several emotions.
- Sing an Emotion Hello Song to start the day. Start with "Hello, Hello, Hello and how are you? I'm fine, I'm fine, and I hope that you are too." Ask the children to volunteer other ways they could feel and/or have pictures of feeling faces to choose from. Sing the song with that emotion in your expressions, voice, and actions.
- In any storybook you are reading, ask children to identify how the characters are feeling. They don't have to be "emotion books." Even familiar stories like Goldilocks and the Three Bears has lots of opportunities to talk about emotions (disappointed they have to wait for the porridge to cool, curious what the beds feel like, surprised to see Goldilocks, scared to see the bears...).
- Frequently direct children to look at each other's faces and think about how they are feeling. This should happen not only when children are expressing sad or angry emotions, but also happy, excited, etc. "Desiree, look at your friend Grayson's face! He is so happy that you gave him some play dough!" Share your own emotions. At meal times, talk about something that happened in your life that made you feel frustrated, sad, happy or scared. Talk about what you did to feel better. "I was at the supermarket yesterday and somebody jumped the queue in front of me! I was so frustrated.... have you ever felt that way"
- Play an emotion guessing game. Take a piece of paper or small blanket and hold it in front of your face. Slowly lower it down to reveal your face showing an emotion. Children guess the emotion you

are feeling, and then show everyone their face with that same emotion. Then, talk about what might make you feel this way.

- Change familiar songs (e.g. Twinkle, Twinkle, or Happy Birthday) by singing it with a different emotion. Have a child pick which way they want to sing the song (in a sad voice, in a silly voice, in a frustrated voice, in a bored voice). It takes some creativity, but is really fun!
- Model the silliest face you can make and have the children participate as well.
- As children come in for the day have them say how they are feeling. Ask the group for appropriate ways to respond to their feelings. For example, if a child says they are happy, a friend could give them a high five. If a child says they are shy, a friend could hold their hand during circle.
- While reading books have the children raise their hands when they can tell how the characters are feeling. Then have them act out those feelings or make faces that correspond with the feelings as you read the book. For example, maybe the character in the story is feeling frustrated, all the children can make frustrated faces until the character lightens their mood and is happy and then the children can change their faces as well. This activity helps children recognise how our faces change depending on how we are feeling. We do this naturally with wrinkling of the brow and laughter. Enable the children to do this everyday as a part of the story routine, that way, it will become more and more natural.
- Have a “feeling face” snack time! Pull a feeling face and ask the children to eat snack showing the matching emotion. For example, during “sad snack” children might eat while frowning and pretending to cry. This can facilitate some great conversations about how our friends look when feeling these emotions and what might make them feel that way.
- At the end of the day, have a debriefing session when each child gets to express an emotion they had during the day. Give them a prompted sentence to work with such as "Today, I felt \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_ happened." Encourage the children to tell their parent / carer their emotion sentence, which will hopefully encourage discussion on the way home.
- Join in play in the Role-Play area and start conversations about how the imaginary characters the children are acting out feel. Help the children to make their characters even more real by giving them emotions and acting those out.
- Communicate on eye-level with all children and show them how your face looks when you feel different emotions. For example, you might say, “ I’m feeling sad because my friends weren’t listening to me when it was my turn to talk, see how my mouth and eyes turn down and I got really quiet.”
- Praise children specifically when they use emotion words to talk to their friends or teachers. Explain to them and nearby peers how using emotions words helps those people around them to know exactly how they are feeling which is why you are so proud of them.
- Always use emotion words when talking to other adults and other children. Use any examples of what is going on in your life to teach the children how you are responding to emotions. Have children look in mirror and practice making mad/sad/happy faces. Provide small individual mirrors for each child to use in a large or small group.
- Say the silliest sentence you can think of without laughing. Have the children do the same and see who can say the longest sentence without laughing.
- Make an excited face and explain to the children the facial features that would indicate you are excited. Have the children make an excited face after you have modelled the expression.
- Sing ‘when you’re happy and you know it’ with verses using happy, mad, sad, excited, scared etc. Include the actions you might do when you are feeling each emotion. For example, “If you’re angry and you know it, scrunch your face, give a growl, cross your arms, etc.” Have children generate different ideas.
- Have each child look in the mirror when they arrive. Label what emotion you think they are feeling by describing the facial features of that emotion.
- At lunch, tell the children what is your favourite food and why. They ask them what their favourite food is and why.

- Mirror Faces: Have children line up in pairs that face each other. One child pretends he is looking in the mirror and makes an emotion face. The other child acts like the reflection and copies the emotion with his/her own face.
- Include emotion words in your discussion of letters and letter sounds. For example: What emotion words start with /s/? Sad, Sulky, Surprised, Silly, etc.
- Look in the mirror together. Help the child describe him/herself, and you.
- Transition children out of a large-group activity by asking them to make an emotion face ("Carmen, show me a sad face. Great! You may walk to the door." )
- During mealtime, tell children about a situation that makes you feel a particular emotion (e.g., happy, sad, frustrated, angry, jealous, etc.) Then ask children to share the things that make them feel that same emotion.
- Listen to different types of music during Music and Movement. Talk about what kind of things the music reminds them of or how it makes them feel.

Georgetown University Centre for Child and Human Development

<https://www.ecmhc.org/ideas/emotions.html>

## Activity – Creating Satsuma Faces

### What you will need:

Seedless satsumas

A range of media – such as googlie / wobbly eyes, buttons, cloves etc

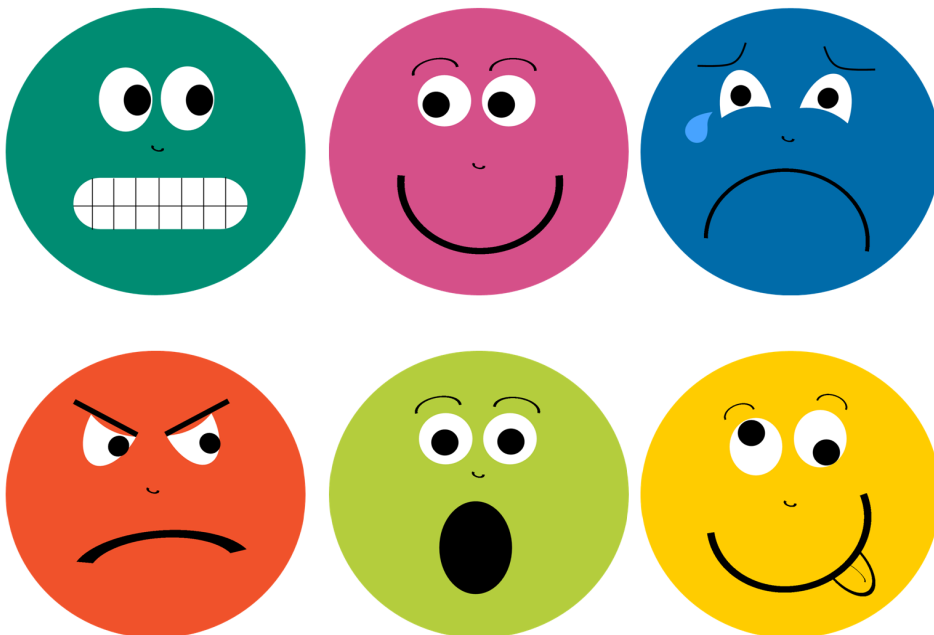
Sharpie pens in a range of colours

A mirror / mirrors

Emotion documents

**Intent:** children need to develop strategies for managing their emotions, so that they can build social-emotional skills. When children are more socially and emotionally aware and skilled, they can more effectively navigate relationships, calm down and problem solve when challenges arise. To help children frame how they are feeling so that they can talk about the problem. Encourage children to share their feelings with each other. Help children make the connection that all feelings are ok.

**New Vocabulary:** emotions / feelings / frustrated / surprised / worried / unhappy / reflection.



# FEELINGS CHART



SCARED



HAPPY



SAD



ANGRY



EXCITED



WORRIED



SURPRISED



SILLY



FRUSTRATED





## Implementation

Introduce the children to the activity.

Start by asking the children to look at themselves in the mirror and describe their appearance. Then look in the mirror together. Help the child describe him/herself, and you. Are there any similarities – what differences can they see?

Mirror Faces: Have children face each other. One child pretends they are looking in the mirror and makes an emotion face. The other child acts like the reflection and copies the emotion with their own face.

Model the silliest face you can make and have the children participate as well.

Introduce the emotions cards. Ask the children about them and to describe the emotion they think each picture represents.

Explain the resources available and ask the children how they might use them?

Stay and play with the children, Role model new vocabulary in conversations with them.

Ask open questions e.g. what makes you happy / sad / angry / upset?

When you feel angry / upset what could you do to feel more calm? (You could suggest going outside for a run around, having a 1-1 story time, having a hug, pummelling clay or playdough).

Have a note pad to hand to record childrens voices and evidence of new learning.

Ask the children to take photos of their creations for display.

Allow the children to peel and eat their satsuma if that is what they want to do.

