
Working with Families to Help Young Children Recognize and Describe Emotions

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INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with "Teaching Your Child About Feelings." The brief was developed by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning at Vanderbilt University. The questions and activities in this handout can be used in a work session (e.g., professional learning community, professional development session), for individual coaching, or for self-reflection.

Goals

- ◆ Identify ways to work with families to support their children in recognizing and describing their feelings.
- ◆ Learn how working with families helps children communicate their feelings to other adults or their peers.
- ◆ Recognize the value of involving families to help their children understand their emotions.

Activity

- ◆ Before reading the brief, use the prompting question to reflect on your current practices in engaging families around children's emotions.
- ◆ Read the brief.
- ◆ After reading the brief, use the remaining questions to guide your work with families around helping their child recognize and describe emotions.
- ◆ Implement your plan and adjust as needed.

QUESTIONS

Prompting question

Complete before reading the brief

- ◆ List three practices that you use to engage families around helping their children recognize and describe emotions. For example, some practices may include reading books or using a feelings chart.

Reflection questions

Complete after reading the brief

- ◆ The brief suggests three habits that caregivers and families can develop to help children learn about their feelings:
 - Think about a child's temperament
 - Talk about feelings
 - Be a role model for expressing strong feelings in healthy ways
 1. How do you *already* do these things? How have you seen families doing these things?
 2. What has worked best in the past when talking with families about their children's temperament?
 3. How else can you partner with families to help children better understand their emotions?
 4. Plan to share the brief as a resource for families. Create some follow-up questions you can ask families after they read the brief.

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- ◆ Families come from different backgrounds and experiences. How are families *already* doing to support their children in recognizing emotions? How might their culture and language affect how they talk about emotions with their children? How can you support the different ways families support their children to recognize and describe their emotions?

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- ◆ The brief recommends using a variety of emotion words to describe children's feelings. Review their suggested feelings words:
 1. Which words do you use most often? Which do you use less often?
 2. Select a few words to use more frequently with children in the classroom. How can you remind yourself to use these new words to describe children's feelings?
 3. Offer to share these words with families in case they would like to use them at home.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about how you can work with families to support children in recognizing and describing emotions:

- ◆ **Source:** Sesame Street in Communities
- ◆ **Website:** “Exploring Emotions”
- ◆ **Link:** <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/emotions/>
Description: This website includes activities, printables, articles, and videos to support children’s emotional recognition. Consider how you can use these resources to engage families around supporting their children to recognize and describe their emotions.



- ◆ **Source:** National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI)
- ◆ **Article:** “The Backpack Connection Series”
- ◆ **Link:** <https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/family.html>
- ◆ **Description:** This set of family handouts are focused on helping children to recognize, describe, or support their emotions. Teachers may choose to share these handouts directly with families. Blue handouts cover emotions. *Available in Spanish.*