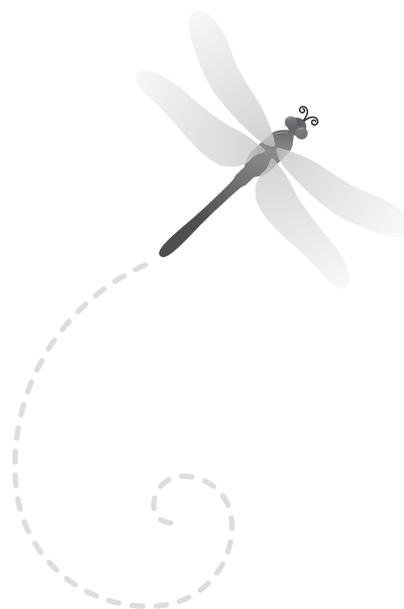


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# Helping Children Understand and Express Feelings

This book has been developed to assist children and parents to understand and become more aware of their feelings and how they are affecting others around them and themselves. It offers children ways of exploring and processing emotional hurts in a fun, creative way, using Art, Drama, Dance, Movement, Story-Telling, Journal Writing and other self-expression activities.

This book can be used by parents, teachers, child-care workers, counselors and others to help children with their social/emotional development.

A proactive approach is offered, which can help children to develop skills and techniques that can be used to process and release feelings. Strategies for children include: deep breathing to change the energy state; breathing out feelings; doing physical activity such as dance to release pent up emotional energy; using art to express inner feelings; using drama/role play to help them to express and understand their own and other people's feelings; using story-telling and journal writing to process and express their feelings.



# Activity 1

## GUESS the FEELING



**Objective:** To help children be more aware of how they and others may be feeling, using clues such as body language, movement and facial expression.

**Note:** This activity can be used as a warm up, fun activity.

### What you need

- Feelings Cards on pages 85-92 (If using this activity with younger children you may need to select some of the easier feeling words such as Happy, Sad and Angry.)

### What to do

- Ask one of the children in the group (or the individual child if using one on one), to choose a card at random from the Feelings Cards set, without looking at it or showing it to anyone else. Ask them to hold the card so that the other children can't see it.
- Ask the child to look at the card and mime out the feeling on the card, using facial expression, body language and movement. Younger children may need assistance from the facilitator.
- Ask the others in the group to guess the feeling that is being mimed. If no one can guess the feeling then sound and voice can be used to help to identify the feeling.
- The child who guesses correctly has the next turn.

# GUESS the FEELING

Draw pictures or write descriptions about the Facial Expressions, Body Language and Posture, Tone of Voice and Words of each of the feelings.

|         | Facial Expression | Body Language & Posture | Tone of Voice/<br>Words/Language |
|---------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Angry   |                   |                         |                                  |
| Excited |                   |                         |                                  |
| Sad     |                   |                         |                                  |
| Happy   |                   |                         |                                  |

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# What is a 'Calm Down Corner'?



A 'Calm Down Corner' is a place in the classroom or home, which has been set-aside for Time Out. It may include Cushions, Relaxing Music or Relaxation CD's, Art Materials and Personal Journals.

## What is the Purpose of this 'Calm Down Corner'?

- To encourage children to recognize when they need some personal space and to choose to go to the 'Calm Down Corner' to be on their own for a short time.
- To allow children to choose to remove themselves from situations which are uncomfortable or unpleasant for them.
- To provide children with an area where they can choose to take time out to change their emotional state. For example if a situation is becoming heated and developing into a win/lose battle, then children may choose to take time out to think about what is happening and to look at ways of expressing their emotions without blaming others.
- To allow children to relax and recharge or refocus.
- To allow children to express how they are feeling using Art or Journal Writing or other Creative Expression Activities.

You may want to create a poster for your 'Calm Down Corner', similar to "The Calm Palm," illustrated on the previous page. You can also use a pole or broomstick for the base and attach palm leaves using green construction paper.

It will be more effective, if you as a Parent or Teacher also use the 'Calm Down Corner' and act as a Role Model for your children.

# Activity 8

## How do I respond?



**Objectives:** To help children be more aware of how they respond to other people's emotions and the choices they make. To encourage children to make responses which are more beneficial to them and others, with healthier outcomes for all.

### What you need

- Feelings Cards (If using this activity with younger children you may need to select some of the easier feeling words such as Happy, Sad and Angry.)

### What to do

- Ask the children, "Why is it important to know when someone else is sad, angry or feeling another way?"

Possible answers: So we can respond in an appropriate way. Perhaps we would choose to move away from them if they are angry and we feel scared or maybe we would comfort them if they were sad and needed our support

Work through the following examples to further explore this topic.

### Example One

- Show the children the "Sad" feeling card.
- Discuss why the dog is feeling sad – perhaps he is lost or hungry. Ask the children to think of other words that mean the same as sad – such as unhappy, miserable.
- Ask, "If someone is sad, how might you feel? How could you respond? What would you do?" Possible Answer: Ask them if they want to be alone or would rather talk.
- Discuss possible outcomes for each suggestion. Ask, "Would this be okay or would it possibly make the situation worse?"