

Building Emotional Vocabulary

To help your child begin to understand and express basic emotions (e.g., happy, surprised, sad, angry and afraid), and move toward richer feeling words (e.g., proud, jealous, lonely and frustrated):

- Help them name their own feelings and encourage their use of feeling words
- Use expressions (“I feel...” or “That must have made you feel...”) when talking with your children
- Model and encourage your children to express and act out different feelings during dramatic play
- Sing songs and read books about feelings. <https://self-reg.ca/self-reg-song/>
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/family.html>
- Offer learning and play materials (e.g., dramatic play, blocks, and art) that encourage your children to creatively express feelings



Enthusiastic



Frustrated



Worried



Miserable

To help your child begin to understand and use non-verbal communication cues (e.g., facial expressions, gestures, eye gaze, body language and tone of voice):

- Help them recognize and understand how a peer or sibling might be feeling by pointing out facial expressions, body language, tone of voice or words
- Describe others’ feelings during difficult situations. (“Look at Yeshi’s face. She looks lonely. What could you do to help her feel better?”)
- Emphasize tone of voice while reading books
- Ask them to explain their thinking (“What makes you think that?”).

To help your child begin to describe reasons for his/her own feelings and situations that cause them to practise social problem-solving (“I feel upset because...”):

- Use activities that involve discussions about feelings and how to respond to them (role playing, puppet theatre, books).
- Prompt your children to identify characters’ feelings in books and explain why they feel that way
- Model language that your children can use in conflict situations

To increase your child’s ability to manage their own feelings:

- Name/label your own feelings, talk about things that make you happy/upset/ frustrated.
- Notice and name their learning “I see you were feeling angry and used belly breathing to calm your own body”



**All feelings are ok,
it's what we do with
them that matters!**