

# Understanding and Teaching Emotions

This pack is designed to support you to teach your child about emotions and how to effectively communicate their needs.

## **“All behavior is communication”**

There are many possible reasons / functions for their behavior

**Communication** (“why are we going to the shops, you said park?”)

**Routine** (“We don’t usually go this way to school”)

Social attention (“Every time I throw my drink on the floor you engage with me.”)

**Sensory** (“When we go on the bus it is noisy, I don’t like it.”)

**Getting a need** (“I’m hungry I need a snack; I’m going to climb to help myself to get a biscuit”)

**Escape/ avoidance** (“I’m really enjoying playing with my cars”)

**Express emotion** (“I feel anxious, but I don’t understand these feelings and can’t tell anyone about it.”)

Emotions your child may show....

**Mad** – feeling of rage, anger, defiance or fury

**Sad** – feeling of grief, loss or regret.

**Glad** – feeling of joy, contentment, excitement and happiness

**Remember all emotions are valid**



## The Amygdala Hijack!

- First, we feel
- Then we think
- Then we act

The emotional brain (Amygdala) existed before the thinking brain (Neocortex). In young children the emotional brain can be in the driving seat! When these feelings they may be strong and will often miss out the thinking and go straight to acting.



Teaching you child about emotions is just as important as learning to read or count.

## Too much information = Sensory Tsunami!

*"A person who struggles to deal with everyday sensory information can experience Sensory overload, or information overload. Too much information can cause stress, anxiety and possibly physical pain."*

This can result in:

- Withdrawal
- Challenging behavior
- Meltdowns



## Self-regulation

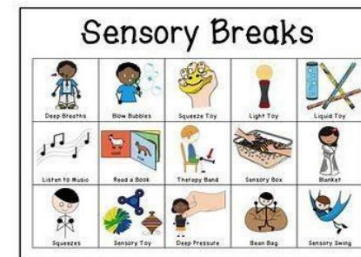
**A person's ability to adjust and control their energy levels, emotions, behavior and attention.**

- Regulating their attention
- Regulating their behavior
- Regulating their emotions



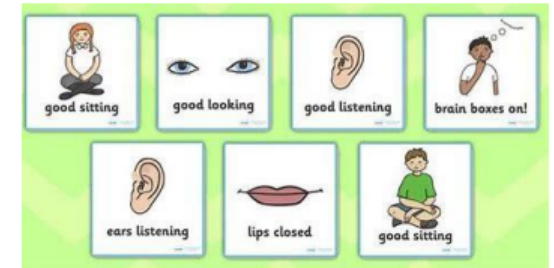
## Some strategies for managing sensory regulation

- Assess the situation- don't assume it is "behavior"
- Environment changes
- Messy play
- Visuals – How do I feel
- Sensory circuits
- Social stories
- Bubbles
- Calm town kit / tent/ quiet area
- Tactile support – firm hugs, rocking or massages.



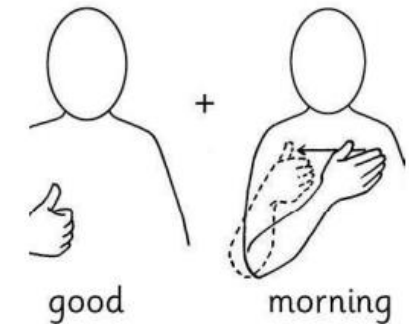
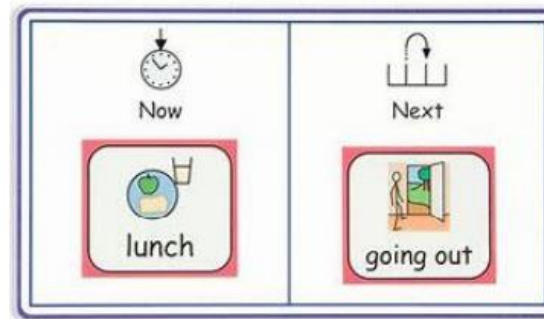
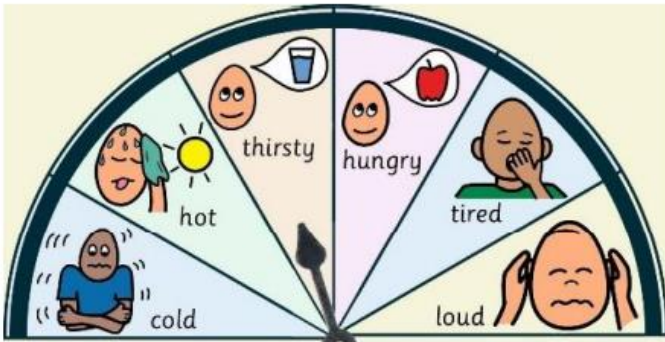
## What practical things can I do?

- Use limited, clear and concise language
- Use a calm voice, limited expression and body language
- Ensure that you get down to the child's level
- When giving instructions use the child's name
- Use positive language and give an instruction e.g 'hands down.'
- Refrain from saying 'NO'
- Try not to refer to negative behavior
- Use count downs when items/ activities are going to end
- Build in an element of choice where possible
- Ensure that you follow a clear routine and always giving advanced warning of change to routine
- Ensure activities appropriately matched to abilities/ interests.



## Visual aids to support understanding

- Makaton signs
- Objects of reference – support understanding
- Pictures or symbols visuals 'now and next'
- Sand timer – so child is clear about time expectations



## Reinforcing positive behavior

- Ignore
- Distract
- Use children's interests
- Praise / reward and appropriate sanctions – need to build self-esteem
- Catch your child being good and praise them
- Movement breaks, sensory input
- Teach social / emotional skills
- Instant rewards, labelled praise or reward charts


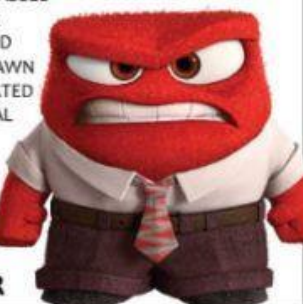

# Idea's to teach Emotions



Emotions are a tricky thing for young children and toddlers. They're overwhelming and hard to understand. To help teach this tough concept, a variety of games and activities centered on emotions for kids can be used:

- ❖ Teach your child about their different emotions by using pictures of themselves showing different emotions.
- ❖ Your child can learn about emotions by building Emotion lego characters, and drawing their expressions on with dry erase pens.
- ❖ Get creative and make some cute Emotions Discovery Bottles, where each bottle is a different colour and has a different emotional expression on it. Very cute and a great way to discuss emotions with your child.
- ❖ Use paper plates creatively and make some paper plate emotion masks with your child. This is a fun way to change emotions and discuss them!

# Naming Emotions

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  <p><b>JOY</b></p> <p>JOYFUL<br/>INTERESTED<br/>PLAYFUL<br/>CONFIDENT<br/>LOVING<br/>SENSITIVE<br/>COURAGEOUS<br/>HOPEFUL</p>   |  <p><b>SADNESS</b></p> <p>SAD<br/>BORED<br/>SLEEPY<br/>UNHAPPY<br/>IGNORED<br/>GUILTY<br/>LONELY<br/>ALONE</p>                    |
|  <p><b>SURPRISED</b></p> <p>STARTLED<br/>CONFUSED<br/>AMAZED<br/>EXCITED<br/>SHOCKED<br/>ASTONISHED<br/>EAGER<br/>DISMAYED</p> |  <p><b>ANGER</b></p> <p>MAD<br/>JEALOUS<br/>EMBARRASSED<br/>FURIOUS<br/>IRRITATED<br/>WITHDRAWN<br/>FRUSTRATED<br/>SKEPTICAL</p> |
|  <p><b>DISGUST</b></p> <p>AWFUL<br/>DISAPPOINTED<br/>HESITANT<br/>REVOLTED<br/>LOATHING<br/>JUDGEMENTAL</p>                   |  <p><b>FEAR</b></p> <p>HUMILIATED<br/>REJECTED<br/>WORTHLESS<br/>INSECURE<br/>ANXIOUS<br/>SCARED</p>                            |










Always start out with the basic feelings :

- \* Happy
- \* Sad
- \* Angry
- \* Scared

Once your child has mastered these then you can start adding new emotions.

How are you feeling today?

?

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p>happy</p>      | <p>sad</p>     | <p>excited</p>      |
| <p>sick</p>      | <p>tired</p>  | <p>bored</p>       |
| <p>confused</p>  | <p>mad</p>    | <p>frustrated</p>  |

*Ask them each day how they are feeling. Talk about these emotions and give them ideas as to why they may feel like that.*

## Observe:

By seeing how a child looks will help you determine how they are feeling. Using visuals to help the child communicate this emotion develops their self awareness skills and be able to verbalise how they feel nice time.

Examples of emotions, questions and comments: *Remember to always name the emotion.*

| Happy   | Sad  | Angry  | Tired  | Scared/ Anxious  | Hungry  |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Label this emotion.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Why are they sad?</li><li>Find out if they are hurt?</li><li>Give them a choice of another activity.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Why are they angry?</li><li>Did they get pushed? Toy taken off them?</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Allow them a space to go that is quiet.</li><li>Read a book with them.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Has something happened to make them scared?</li><li>Distract them by keeping them busy</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Offer them a snack</li><li>Drink of water</li></ul> |
| <p>“ You look so happy.”</p> <p>“You are happy on the bike.”</p>    | <p>“ You look sad, I wonder if that is because you miss mummy.”</p> <p>“You look sad, can I play with you?”</p>                                      | <p>“ That is an angry face, I wonder if someone took the toy you were playing with?”</p>                             | <p>“ Shall we go and look at a book, you look tired.”</p>  | <p>“ I wonder if you are scared / anxious, lets go and play with your favourite toy”</p>   | <p>“ You look hungry, shall we have a snack together?”</p>                                |

# Resources to support you at home

- \* Emotion picture cards
- \* How are you feeling today?
- \* Basic Emotions
- \* Emotion book list

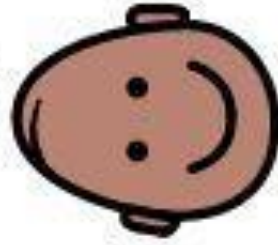




How are you feeling today?



happy



sad



excited



sick



tired



bored



confused

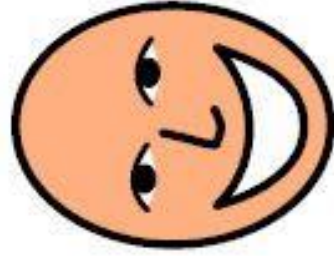


mad



frustrated

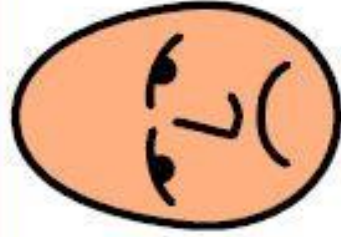




happy



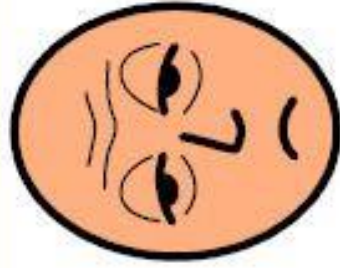
excited



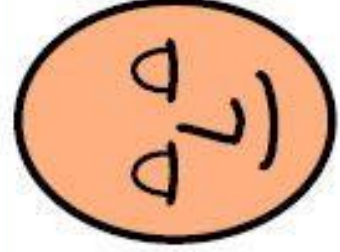
sad



angry



tired



calm

We have a range of books that we share with the children in nursery and have put together a list of books that can support your child at home.



**Ruby's Worry: A Big Bright Feelings Book by Tom Percival**



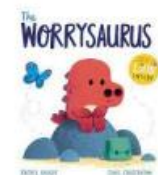
**Ravi's Roar: A Big Bright Feelings Book by Tom Percival**



**Perfectly Norman: A Big Bright Feelings Book by Tom Percival**



**Meesha Makes Friends: A Big Bright Feelings Book by Tom Percival**



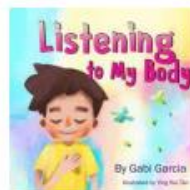
**The Worrysaurus**



**The Colour Monster**



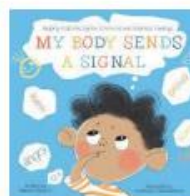
**All About Feelings: 1**



**Listening to My Body**



**The Huge Bag of Worries**



**My Body Sends a Signal: Helping Kids Recognize Emotions and Express Feelings**