

Everyone Has Feelings

How many feelings have you heard expressed today? Maybe you have heard someone say:

- “I feel too tired to get up this morning.”
- “I’m sad because we can’t go to the park.”
- “That loud noise scared me.”
- “Oh, boy! Today is the football game. I’m excited!”
- “My brother won’t let me ride his bike. I’m mad.”

It’s natural to feel many different emotions as things happen throughout our day. Naming our feelings and finding positive ways to show them can improve our relationships with other people. We can also enjoy life more!

In our health lessons, we help children learn to name their feelings. We have talked about four basic feelings: happy, upset, surprised, and calm. In class, we use many different words to describe these feelings, such as:

- **Happy:** joyful, glad, loved, excited, pleased, proud, friendly
- **Upset:** sad, scared, angry, mad, frightened, hurt, jealous
- **Surprised:** amazed, startled, puzzled, worried, confused
- **Calm:** normal, quiet, willing, peaceful, helpful, relaxed

We talked about how people may feel different ways in response to the same situation. For example, one child might feel happy about being asked to read a book, and another child might feel disappointed or nervous. We talked about clues that show how someone might be feeling. However, we agreed that the best way to know how someone feels is to ask him or her.

We told students it’s normal to sometimes feel more than one emotion at the same time. Having mixed feelings can be confusing. Children sometimes get overwhelmed when they feel different ways at the same time. We listed several ways to calm down when feelings get strong. Here are some ideas:

- Talk with a trusted friend or adult about your feelings.
- Tell yourself, “I need to stop and think” or “I need to settle down.”
- Take a timeout to sit down away from the situation.
- Count to 10.
- Lay your head on a table or desk.
- Do a quiet activity, such as reading or drawing.
- Shake your hands or shrug your shoulders.
- Ask permission to run around the house.
- Ask permission to sit away from the group or play alone.



We have asked your child to talk with you about questions or concerns related to how he or she feels in different situations. You can build on what your child learned in school by helping your child name the feelings he or she expresses at home.



Things to Do as a Family

You can help your child develop relationship skills by encouraging him or her to identify feelings. Try these ideas to get the whole family involved.

- As you ride together in the car or talk during a family meal, see how many feelings your family can name.
- As you watch television or read stories together, ask family members to name the feelings expressed. You can also discuss how the different characters handled their feelings. What was helpful or harmful about what they chose to do? Were there times when someone seemed to have two different feelings at once? How did different characters' feelings change? What happened when feelings were strong?
- Play a game by having family members act out different feelings while the other people try to guess the feeling being shown. You might try using the following feelings: happy, excited, angry, frustrated, sad, surprised, upset, relaxed.
- Another similar game is to have a family member describe a situation. The rest of the family says how they think the person would feel in that situation.
- Set some family rules about how to express feelings honestly and lovingly, especially during upsetting situations.
- Make a chart of ways to calm down when feelings get strong. Number each idea. See how many new ideas your family can add. When someone needs to calm down, ask him or her to pick a number and try that idea listed on the chart.



**FAMILY
RESOURCE
SHEET**

Looking for a Good Story for Your Child?

Visit the Educational Materials Center website. They have a special "Family Corner" where you can link to resources for parents. Some of the sites suggest books for children.

www.emc.cmich.edu/family