

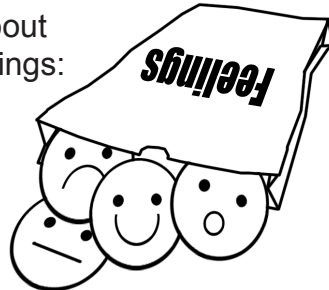
Expressing Feelings Honestly to Build Positive Relationships

In school this year, your child will learn about ways to manage feelings, show respect and caring, and handle conflicts. These skills will help your child create positive relationships with other students and adults—now and as he or she gets older.

A Mixed Bag of Feelings

In class today, we talked about four main categories of feelings:

- Happy
- Upset
- Surprised
- Calm



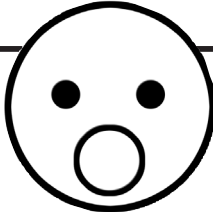
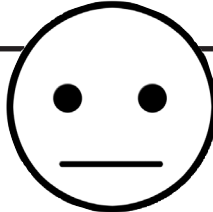


We discussed that feelings can change and that we can feel more than one emotion at the same time. We also talked about how feelings can have different names and different levels of intensity. For example, if we felt just a little angry, we might say we felt irritated or annoyed. If we were very angry, we might say we felt furious.

Here are some of the words we have used in class to describe different feelings:

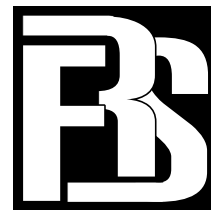
One way you can help your child develop relationship skills is to encourage him or her to identify feelings. As you watch your favorite television show or read a favorite book with your child, have everyone write down all the feelings they see and hear the characters express. Compare your lists at the end of the program or book. See how many of the feelings you label the same. Notice how many different words you used to describe feelings.

You can also discuss how the different characters handled their feelings. What was helpful or harmful about what they chose to do? Were there ever times when someone seemed to have two different feelings at once? How did different characters' feelings change? What happened when feelings were strong?

			
<p>Happy capable friendly likable lovable joyful helpful busy understanding generous satisfied</p>	<p>Upset sad sorry left out lonely angry scared jealous helpless shy bored</p>	<p>Surprised puzzled anxious unsure confused amazed worried excited scared startled stopped</p>	<p>Calm quiet capable understanding busy contented able interested neutral willing helpful</p>

Managing Strong Feelings

Everyone has strong feelings sometimes. To be happy and healthy, people need to manage strong feelings and think before acting. Your child has learned how to use the ACT steps to handle strong feelings:



**FAMILY
RESOURCE
SHEET**
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Acknowledge how you feel.

Calm down so you can think clearly.

Talk to the other person. Use what's called an "I-message" to share these three things:

1. How you feel about the situation
2. What the person did that upset you
3. What you want him or her to do instead



We talked about how to tell when we're having strong feelings. We also listed several ways to calm down:

- 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.
- Count to 10.
- Lay your head down.
- 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.
- Use positive self-talk to reduce strong upset or surprised feelings.

A simple way to use I-messages when talking with other people in difficult situations is to follow this pattern:

"I feel . . . that [or 'when']. . . .
Please. . . ."



For example, "I feel angry that you haven't returned my book yet. Please give it back to me."

Skills for building positive relationships must be learned and practiced. You can help your child learn these skills by practicing them together. Try different ways to calm down with your child. You can also talk with your child by using I-messages to help him or her learn how to speak with respect and kindness in daily life.

When you notice your child practicing any of the ACT steps, please praise him or her. Positive words and actions from you, such as a hug or a privilege, will help your child learn to manage strong feelings in many situations.

You may want to set some family rules about how to express feelings honestly and lovingly, especially during upsetting situations. While fifth graders often think they want more freedom and less direction from parents, they still need the support and guidance of their families. They need, and often want, the structure and limits adults determine are best.