





Everyone Has Feelings

We all have feelings that change naturally throughout each day. Finding positive ways to express and handle our shifting emotions can improve our relationships and help us enjoy life more. Without positive ways to express feelings, children and adults can feel overwhelmed and might express themselves in harmful ways.

Our recent health lessons have focused on helping students manage their feelings. Your child has begun learning to recognize and express four basic groups of feelings—happy, upset, surprised, and calm—and to name them with words such as those listed here.



Happy 	Upset 	Surprised 	Calm 
glad	sad	scared	quiet
friendly	mad	excited	peaceful
lovable	afraid	anxious	capable
proud	lonely	confused	contented

Expressing Feelings and Showing Respect

What to Do With Strong Feelings

At times, everyone has strong feelings about something or someone. Settling down helps us think clearly before we do anything. Your child has learned several ways to feel calm again.

- Talk with a trusted friend or adult about your feelings.
- Tell yourself, "Uh-oh! I need to stop and think."
- Tell yourself, "I need to take a minute and settle down."
- Sit down away from the situation for a minute. Take a timeout.
- Count to 10.
- Rest your head on a desk or table.
- Find a quiet activity to do for a few minutes, such as look at a book, draw, or listen to music.
- Shake your hands or shrug your shoulders.
- Ask permission to run around the house or yard.
- Ask permission to sit away from other people or to play alone or walk alone in the yard.



Using these ideas can change how a person feels or the strength of a feeling. If your child has strong feelings, especially feelings of anger or sadness, that don't seem to change, it's time to get help. Talk with friends and family about how they see your child. Consult with your child's teacher or school's counselor to see if there is something that can be done to help.

As many as one in ten children between ages 6 and 12 experience constant feelings of sadness. This is a sign of depression in people of any age. More girls than boys are depressed. People are more likely to be depressed if they:

- are under a lot of stress.
- have experienced loss.
- have attention, learning, or conduct disorders.
- have a family history of depression.



What YOU Can Do to Help!



- Encourage your child to ask you any questions he or she has about feelings.

- Use the ideas for settling down the next time your child gets overly excited, sad, or upset.

- Talk about your feelings and encourage your child to share his or her feelings with you.

- Take time to listen when your child shares feelings and events that are important to him or her.



- Use the courtesy words at home and encourage him or her to say them, too.

- Be sure to mention when you notice courteous actions. Tell your child you heard him or her using “please,” or “thank you,” and give him or her a hug, a smile, or a privilege.



- Name and share feelings at home.

- Ask your child to name feelings in stories you read or on television programs you watch together.



- Have a family contest to see who uses the courtesy words most frequently. Create a “score sheet” with all of your names, and put it in a convenient place. Or, put a coin in a jar each time someone is “caught” using a courtesy word. When the jar is full, rent a movie as a family, ride your bikes to the ice cream store, or do something else your family would enjoy.

- Recognize the positive things your child does. It will boost his or her self-confidence.

- Visit the Family Corner of the Educational Materials Center website at www.emc.cmich.edu/family. Research children’s books or a health topic of interest to you.