"The Emotion Game"

For all ages

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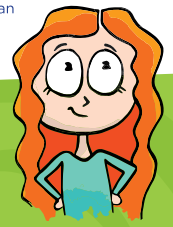
It isn't always easy to put feelings into words. Children who learn to express what they feel and listen to how others feel will, without a doubt, become adults who will have healthy social and emotional skills. What's more, they'll be able to exercise self-control and adapt to a variety of situations. When children have awareness of their emotions and those of others, they're able to develop empathy. They'll be more inclined to reach out to others and to behave in a way that promotes peace rather than violence.

The goal of this game is to help your child develop basic emotional skills and healthy emotional and social lifestyles by using tools for expressing and managing what they feel. The game contains 16 emotion cards ("I'm feeling") based on seven basic emotions (as defined by the American psychologist Robert Plutchik), which are said to be universal, since their facial expressions are recognized worldwide (regardless of the individuals' gender, age and culture); 9 so-called secondary emotions, which are, in fact, complex emotions that are usually a combination of two basic emotions; and 16 desire cards ("I'd like"), which children can use to peacefully manage both positive and negative emotions. You'll be able to find new approaches or adapt them to your child's skills and abilities!

To encourage your child to think about and properly manage their emotions without any distractions, place this game in a neutral corner of the house (not the child's bedroom or game room, but preferably the living room table or kitchen table). Let the child identify their emotion and what they desire (emotions and desires) and then talk with them so that they learn to communicate them and determine desires that are appropriate for the situation. On the left-hand side of the board, they can put various pictograms expressing "I'm feeling," and then on the other, various things "I'd like." After playing the game for a few days, your child should be able to express in words how they feel and how to manage this emotion. The emotion's effects on the body are shown on the back of the "I'm feeling" cards; the back of the "I'd like" cards explains how to put their desires into practice. The "I'd like" cards are so named because sometimes what the child wants in a given situation just isn't possible. The child must understand that they can't always get what they want and should learn to be patient. Sometimes they need to do some deep breathing and take a "time out"!

Next, in order to enhance your child's emotional language and help them find ways to manage their emotions, they must interact. This doesn't happen all by itself! While the game board allows your child to express "**I'm feeling**" and "**I'd like**," it's important to teach them how to appropriately communicate these two aspects using words and an appropriate tone of voice, so that they can make it part of their vocabulary. They need to learn how to calmly express their feelings in a positive way using words. So, without shouting, they'll be able to express to others how they feel.



Here are five important emotional literacy steps:

1. **name the emotion...**
   (the adult first; then the child);
2. **put the emotion in context...**
   (connect it with the context, with what they just experienced and with what provoked this emotion, be it positive or negative);
3. **socialize their emotion...**
   (show them how to peacefully express it);
4. **normalize their emotion...**
   (show them that their friends and adults can also feel this emotion; they're not the only ones);
5. **and determine the underlying need!**
   (which must be recognized).

To be a positive role model for your child, you should also play the game! Use the same game board so that your child will be able to see that all of the individuals who live together can experience various emotions. This will enhance your interaction with them and increase their emotional intelligence tenfold! Since we feel emotions all day long, don't just play the game in specific situations; make it a habit to play it even when everything's going well.

Have fun exploring the world of emotions!

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"The Emotion Game"

A fun game to help your children understand their **emotions**!

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I'm feeling...

I'd like...

I'm feeling...

happy

When I'm feeling happy, I breathe deeply, my heart beats slower and I sometimes feel like jumping around.

I'm feeling...

sad

When I'm feeling sad, I have a heavy heart and I get tears in my eyes. Sometimes I feel like crying, sitting down and doing nothing.

I'm feeling...

angry

When I'm feeling angry, my heart beats faster. I feel hot, my entire body feels tense, I breathe faster, I clench my fists and I sometimes feel like hitting everything.

I'm feeling...

disgusted

When I'm feeling disgusted, I curl my upper lip, turn up my nose, I breathe rapidly or hold my breath, and I sometimes feel a little nauseous.

I'm feeling...

fearful

When I'm feeling fearful, my heart beats faster, I feel my heart beating in my chest and in my ears. I get goose bumps (my arm hair stands up). My stomach feels tight and my hands get sweaty. Sometimes I can't move.

I'm feeling...

surprised

When I'm feeling surprised, my eyes are wide open, sometimes my mouth is open and I make the sound "Ah!" or "Oh!" There are good surprises, which make me happy, and there are bad surprises, which make me a bit sad.

I'm feeling...

confident

When I'm feeling confident, my body is relaxed. I smile, I breathe deeply and I feel like I can do everything alone.

I'm feeling...

Fear + Disgust or Fear + Anger =

shameful

When I'm feeling shameful, I look down, my back is a little bent and I feel uncomfortable in my body.

I'm feeling...

Happiness + Surprise =

excited

When I feel excited, my heart beats fast, I feel like dancing, jumping and playing! I move very fast and I speak very quickly! My eyes are wide open and I sometimes make sounds like "Ah!" and "Oh!"

I'm feeling...

Sadness + Anger =

jealous

When I'm feeling jealous, I want to have the same thing or same privilege as another person. I have to learn to accept that I can't have everything and I should be satisfied with what I have.

I'm feeling...

Sadness + Disgust or Disgust + Fear =

guilty

I feel guilty when I did something that I shouldn't have done. Maybe I broke a rule or played a mean trick on someone. My eyes look down, I find it difficult to swallow my saliva, as if something was blocking my throat.

I'm feeling...

Disgust + Anger =

hateful

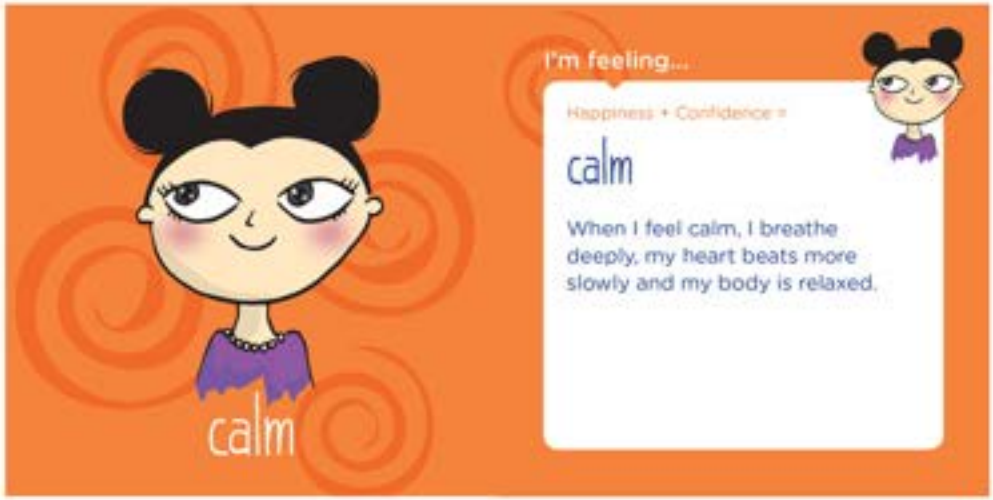
When I'm feeling hateful, I wrinkle my forehead, I turn up my nose and I feel a bit angry or hesitant when faced with the person or object that bothers me.

I'm feeling...

Fear + Surprise =

nervous

When I feel nervous, my body trembles, I find it difficult to swallow my saliva and I sometimes have a stomach ache or feel nauseous.



I'm feeling...

Happiness + Confidence =

calm

When I feel calm, I breathe deeply, my heart beats more slowly and my body is relaxed.

I'm feeling...

Sadness + Surprise =

disappointed

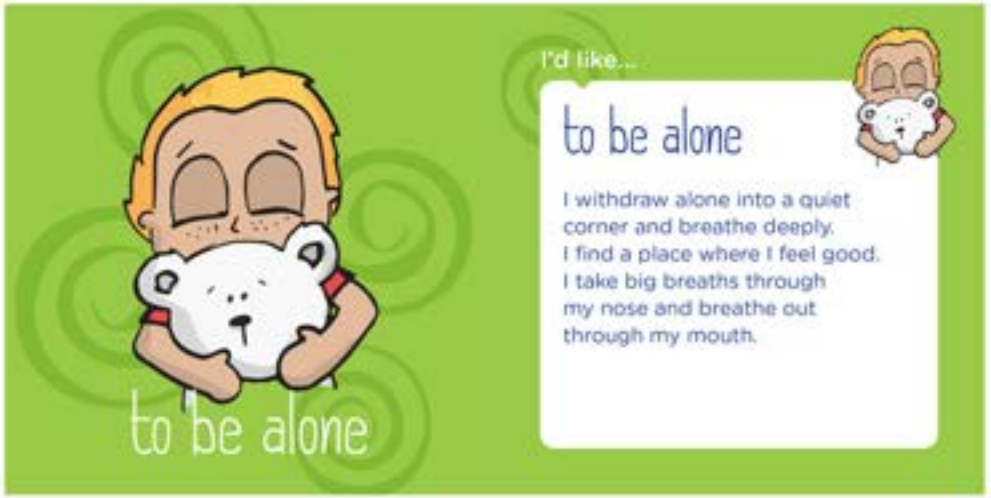
When I feel disappointed, my eyes look down and I sometimes feel like crying. My heart is a bit heavy and I feel a little stuck, as if I can't do anything.

I'm feeling...

Happiness + Surprise =

proud

When I feel proud, I hold my chest high, I tilt my head back a bit, I smile and I make sounds like "Oh!" and "Ah!"



I'd like...

to be alone

I withdraw alone into a quiet corner and breathe deeply. I find a place where I feel good. I take big breaths through my nose and breathe out through my mouth.

I'd like...

to relax

I relax by lying on a couch or bed while doing quiet activities (reading a book or magazine, watching TV, etc.).

I'd like...

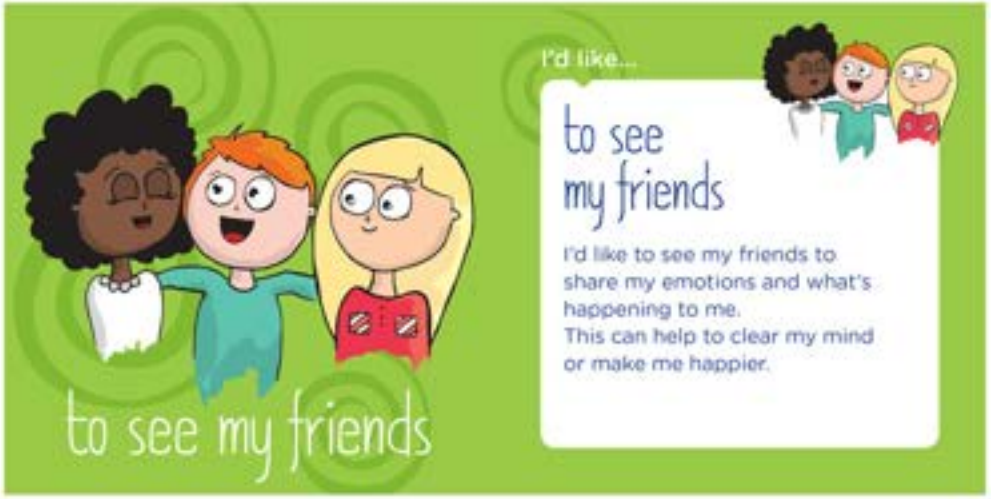
to be comforted/ reassured

I'd like someone to take the time to listen to me, give me a hug and reassure me.

I'd like...

to speak with someone

I'd like to speak with someone about what's happening to me or to clear my mind.



I'd like...

to see my friends

I'd like to see my friends to share my emotions and what's happening to me. This can help to clear my mind or make me happier.

I'd like...

to play

When I have too much energy, I like to play! This can be exercising (running, doing a sport), playing ball with a friend or playing with my toys to clear my mind.

to apologize

I'd like...

to apologize

When I've done something wrong and I feel bad, I prefer to apologize and find a way to fix things*.

*Fix things: Do someone a favour, repair what I broke, play a game with the person who was hurt in order to share a fun experience, etc.

to draw

I'd like...

to draw

To help manage my emotion, I can draw the situation or make mandala anti-stress drawings (which can calm me down).

to calm down

I'd like...

to calm down

I'd like to calm down by breathing or doing a quiet activity (reading a book or magazine, watching TV, listening to soft music, etc.).

to write

I'd like...

to write*

I write words to express how I feel, what's happening to me or to clear my mind. I can use a notebook, a diary or scrap paper.

*Only recommended for 6-year-old children who are learning to write.

to find a solution

I'd like...

to find a solution

I'd like to resolve a situation by finding a solution or compromise so I can feel better.

to listen to music

I'd like...

to listen to music

I'd like to listen to my favourite music in order to clear my mind. I can play it loudly or softly; it all depends!

someone to explain to me

I'd like...

someone to explain to me

I don't understand something or what's happening to me right now. I'd like someone to explain to me the rules or facts so that I can understand them better.

something else...

I'd like...

something else...

I draw or write something that could help me manage my emotion.

someone to help me

I'd like...

someone to help me

I'd like someone to help me with my activities right now. I can't do them alone.

to help

I'd like...

to help

I feel capable of helping and I'd like to learn how to help.