

Feelings in me, feelings in you

Have you looked at the Social and Emotional information on Bumps2Bairns first?

Understanding Feelings

Building Confidence

Managing Friendships

As noted in the training 'Supporting Neurodevelopmental Differences, Awareness Level' (Highland Council 2019) the core features of emotional development are:

- The ability to identify and understand one's own feelings.
- To accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others.
- To manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner.
- To regulate one's own behaviour.
- To develop empathy for others.

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2004)

3Ps

- **Presentation:** What are you observing in your classroom?
- **Profile:** Why might this be happening?
- **Plan:** How can you support?

In this document we are focussing on the emotional section of the 6 areas of development covered in the training. It is acknowledged that there is an overlap between some areas of development so be mindful to view this information in the wider context of the child's overall development.

Feelings and emotions are complex concepts to teach young children and whilst some children intuitively "get it" more easily than others, some need lots of guidance and practice through each of the progressive stages.

Consider trying some of the following activities to support the emotional development of the children in your setting especially those who need extra support in this area. A good starting point would be to use the emotional section of the [Profile Wheel Assessment Document](#) to observe and analyse how a child, who seems to be struggling with their emotions, is presenting.

Presentation - what you might see

- Distressed behaviour
- Lack of emotional response
- Delay or lack of emotional vocabulary
- Extreme emotional responses
- Withdrawal
- Insensitivity to the feelings and needs of others

Children may respond in a range of different ways to emotional experiences, from complete shutdown and withdrawal, to a highly heightened presentation. They may not have the emotional vocabulary to be able to communicate what they are experiencing.

Profile – why this might be happening

- A child may be at a very early developmental stage of learning to recognise their physiological state: hunger/thirst, cold, pain, fatigue, toilet need, stress.
- A child may be struggling to form an attachment to a caregiver/staff member.
- A child may rely on a main caregiver to resolve their distress through co-regulation. What works with that caregiver? Who else could the child build an attuned relationship with to replicate that?
- A child may be at an early developmental stage of needing and learning from sensory experiences. They may engage or withdraw into sensory seeking behaviour, perhaps 'stimming' which could be interpreted as distress but may also represent another strong emotion e.g. happiness. They may do this for both emotions so how might you tell the difference?
- A child may be responding emotionally to the constraints of structure, routine or safety issues which restrict their developmental need to explore and be independent.
- A child may withdraw from overwhelming sensory input but not have the emotional awareness and vocabulary to express this.
- A child's emotional response to a situation or stimulation may be physical because they haven't got the vocabulary or coping strategies to express themselves in any other way.
- A child may have a limited number of coping strategies to support their ability to self-regulate their emotions.
- A child may be developmentally at the stage of learning to recognise and manage their own emotions but not yet aware of the feelings of others.

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Plan – how you can support

Below is a list of ideas and activities to try with the child/children you work with. Remember practice is essential and so it's a good idea to build these types of activities into their daily routine.






Expectations need to be based on a child's developmental stage rather than their chronological age/stage. When emotional development is delayed consider using some of these early activities but think how you might adapt the activity to ensure it's also age appropriate e.g. you may have a four year old who struggles with facial expressions but could use Lego faces to explore this.

This is not an exhaustive list nor is it listed developmentally. Where possible link to the child's own interests and level of play development. Find what works for them and explore the emotional concepts this way.


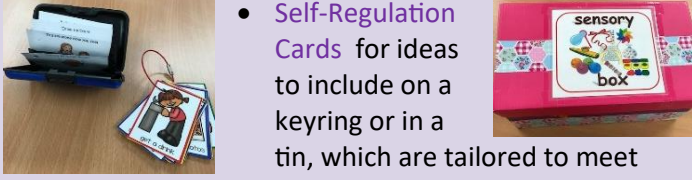



When using emotion images choose ones which the child can relate to best or seems motivated by. This could be photos, line drawings, clip art, favourite cartoon/DVD characters, Lego faces, etc. Start from their interests. The use of the word 'images' in the table below can refer to any of these options.

Activity/game	Resources	Skills developed
<p>An adult labels a child's physiological states as they experience them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> hunger thirst fatigue pain/hurt needing the toilet uncomfortable 	<p>Experiences and opportunities.</p> <p>Natural gesture, Makaton, objects of reference (showing a cup for thirsty, plaster for pain, etc.) or images.</p> <p>Be aware of the vocabulary the child might be used to hearing at home. Consider consistency whilst also introducing words commonly used in your setting.</p>	<p>A child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> exposed to the vocabulary linked to their physiological state supported to make the link between the spoken word and object/gesture/Makaton/images, etc. <p>An adult is developing a nurturing relationship with the child using principles from the Positive Pyramid</p>
<p>An adult labels a child's emotional state as they experience them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> happy sad scared (frightened, afraid) angry (mad, upset) 	<p>Be aware of the home/setting vocabulary as noted above.</p> <p>Use experiences and opportunities as they occur to label emotions you think the child is feeling.</p> <p>Support vocabulary with visual supports as noted above if required.</p>	<p>Building a relationship of trust.</p> <p>An adult showing awareness of, and empathy with, the child's feelings.</p> 
<p>Face to face games using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> songs rhymes music voice intonation facial expressions 	<p>Play@Home books</p>  <p>People games, e.g. Peek a boo, rocking, knee or ankle bouncing, Row, row your boat, etc.</p>	<p>Matching facial expressions to tone of voice and vocabulary.</p> <p>Development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> anticipation; participation; and an awareness of a range of facial expressions.

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Activity/game	Resources	Skills developed
<p>Mirror games:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catch them in the act! Mirror their facial expressions. Wear something to help attract attention to the reflection. Make faces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> happy sad scared (frightened, afraid) angry (mad/ upset) 	<p>First thought: Can the child recognise themselves in a mirror? If not, look at the Play Ideas: Mirror Play for some more ideas.</p> <p>Build a selection of mirrors of various sizes and types, e.g. mirrors to support tummy time games, lap play, wall mounted, etc.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising themselves in a mirror. Recognising their different facial expressions. Matching their expressions to feelings vocabulary. Learning to identify and label these expressions.
<p>Snap or pairs games.</p>	<p>Using images which the child is already familiar with.</p> 	<p>Matching by expressions and associated feelings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can they recognise? can they identify?
<p>Labelling the feelings of others. Extend labelling feelings beyond themselves to adults, siblings and peers.</p>	<p>During routines and play, whenever you see strong emotions, label what you think the other child/adult is feeling.</p>	<p>Recognise and identify feelings in others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By pointing and labelling strong emotions - verbal and visual. By taking the opportunity to model empathy where appropriate.
<p>Sorting images into 2 simple groups.</p> 	<p>Use a selection of images to sort into named groups e.g. happy/sad.</p> <p>Make sure the child is already familiar with the images.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using images to recognise emotions in situations. Learning to sort and name by emotions/feelings.
<p>Exploring and labelling facial expressions during play.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> playdough face mats Velcro faces face jigsaws images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manipulating faces to change expressions e.g. from happy to sad. Matching facial expressions to vocabulary.

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Activity/game	Resources	Skills developed
Lotto/Barrier games using emotions/feelings pictures.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify facial expressions from a small range and then increase the challenge e.g. number of options. Turn taking.
Self-regulation activities to support the child to begin to manage their own emotions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build sensory/movement breaks into their day, regularly. Use these breaks even if they appear not to need them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Regulation Cards for ideas to include on a keyring or in a tin, which are tailored to meet the individual child's needs. Sensory boxes individualised to their needs. Quiet Time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing self-regulation options and supporting the child to choose the ones which suit them best. Encouraging the child to identify the times when they need an activity to help them 'feel better'.
Matching images to the emotions in story/scenarios: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read story books which promote feelings/emotions. Encourage the child to identify the feelings of the various characters in the story and match to facial expressions, feeling fans, emotions pictures, etc. 	Use a range of short stories or scenarios such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears, etc. Use a selection of emotion images e.g. feelings fans, mirrors, flashcards, etc. Use the images the child responds to best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition of feelings in others and labelling them. Recognition of emotions moving towards empathy. 
Matching the speech bubbles to the emotions faces e.g. happy/sad, happy/angry, etc.	 <p>A range of short phrases in speech bubbles to match to various images e.g. happy: Your turn! You can go first! You are my friend! Sad: I want that! I don't want to be friends! etc.</p>	Developing social expressions and empathy.
Matching a solution to a feeling story/scenario.	<p>A range of short stories/scenarios and a range of calming ideas in picture form e.g. 'A boy has left a special toy at home and is upset. What could help him feel better?' Options could be to give ear-defenders or blow bubbles with a friend. Choose the best from these two options.</p>	Developing problem solving strategies and empathy.