

4 Easy Feeling Activities

Here are four easy feelings activities you can do with your child to help them learn how to identify their emotions and the emotions of others.

1. Use Real Life Photos

Use a camera to take pictures of your child(ren) making facial expressions depicting different emotions. Having a feelings chart handy might be beneficial.

After taking pics of your child, print and cut them out in the size of playing cards. The cards can be used in a number of ways:

- A matching game (match the emotions)
- A go fish game
- A guessing game – Have the child select one card and imitate the expression they see on the card. Have others (e.g., family members) guess how they are pretending to feel. Take turns.
- Spread the pictures all over the floor and take turns tossing a beanbag onto the cards. For whichever card the beanbag lands on, name the emotion and think of a time you may feel that way. You can also add or instead have your child imitate the facial expression.
- Create a feelings chart.

2. Feelings Theater

Find (or create your own) scripts that have a lot of emotions in them. Have your child then play out a script in front of others. Emphasize the use of facial expressions and body language appropriate to each emotion. This game is even more fun if you and/or other family members get in on the action!

This is a fun way for kids to learn more about how facial expressions and body language reflect our feelings.

3. Freeze Dance

Choose someone to be the D.J. to play music. While it's playing, have the child (and others if there are others) dance. The D.J. chooses random moments to pause or stop the music, which then signals the child(ten) to freeze in a posture and with a facial expression that reflects or matches an emotion.

As with many feelings activities, it's a good idea to have a feelings chart on hand. When you review the various feelings with your child for this activity, give them examples of different facial expressions and body language postures commonly observed when a person is feeling the specific feeling. For example, a huge smile on your face and your arms raised in the air might indicate happy, excited, or proud; freeze with your hands on your hips and a scowl on your face to show anger or annoyance.

4. Make Your Own Feelings Chart

A simple way to assist your child in identifying and communicating their feelings is a Feelings Chart. You can find a number of such charts for free or for cost online, or your child can create one of their own. For this particular type of Feelings Chart, we want the child to be able to show the different feelings that they may feel throughout the day. The chart can be made on posterboard, cardboard, or even cardstock paper. Find some colored pencils, crayons, or markers and you should be good to go. Scissors and tape might also be good to have for this project.

Allow your child to create their chart to reflect their personality and interests. Encourage your child to be involved in the design process and determine what feelings should be included. The faces can be hand drawn or you can draw different feelings faces on stickers such as garage sale pricing stickers so you can just stick them on the chart.

After the chart is completed, hang it in the child's room and decide when you both will review the chart together each day (bedtime is often a good choice). Explain that at any time throughout the day, the child can choose to put a face (or check next to a face) on the chart to describe how they are feeling.

Images of real kids showing various emotions can be beneficial in this activity. You can either take pictures of your own child(ren) or you can use stock images of children. Sites like pixabay.com have images you can download for free.

Use this activity as a teachable moment. Have conversations with your child about what happens to someone's face and/or body when they feel certain ways.

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