



IES Grant #
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Universal Strategy Modeling and Labeling Feelings

Talking about and supporting your child's feelings, big & small, promotes healthy social-emotional development, builds trust, and allows for learning to take place!



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Labeling...

Say out loud to your child when you see others engaging with feelings

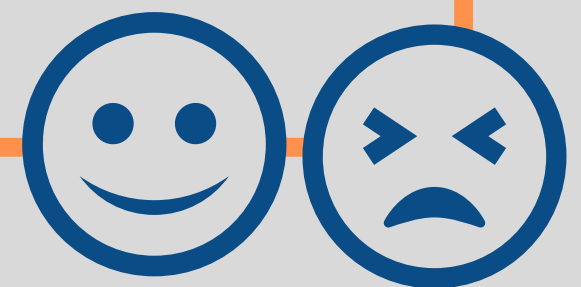
Examples:

- "Maria looks sad this morning at drop off."
- "That man looks happy over there!"
- "Look at how proud Rocky and Rubble are for helping their friends!"

Describe what you see them doing that give you clues about their feelings

Examples:

- "She is crying and hugging her lovie."
- "He is smiling and laughing with his friends."
- "They're smiling and giving each other a high five."



Modeling...

Say out loud to your child when you're engaging with feelings

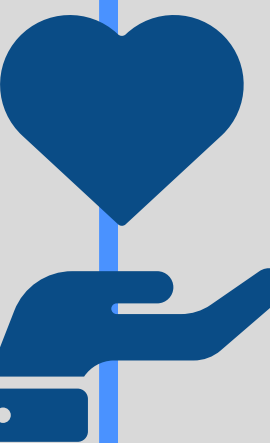
Examples:

- "I didn't sleep well last night, so I'm pretty tired. When I'm tired, I get pretty impatient too!"
- "I'm so proud of your mom for working so hard on her project!"
- "I'm feeling frustrated because we're running late."

Describe what you are feeling, how it feels, and why you feel that way

Examples:

- "I'm feeling frustrated because I thought we had enough noodles to make spaghetti for dinner tonight but we don't. My chest feels tight and I want to cry."
- "I'm so happy that you had a good day. I want to wrap you up in all the hugs!"



Then...

After you've practiced identifying others' feelings and labeling your own feelings with your child, you can start to ask them questions about their feelings!

Examples:

- "I see you smiling and laughing a lot! Are you feeling happy?"
- "You seem frustrated...do you need something?"
- "What are other things that make you feel kinda like this?"

Helpful Hints!

- **Embrace all emotions.** Talk about all kinds of feelings, ones that feel good and ones that don't feel so good, and try not to assign a label of "good" or "bad". This helps your child see that they're not alone in their feelings and helps them feel safe to talk about and express all kinds of emotions with you.
- **Model what you want your child to do.** Your child is more likely to do what they see you do than what you say. Remember to **take care of yourself**, respond to your feelings, and encourage your child to do the same!



For more information on promoting your child's social-emotional development, [click here](#).

