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## Working with Families to Help Children Recognize and Describe Emotions

### INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with the video "Exploring Emotions," which was developed by the Sesame Street in Communities Professional Development Training series. The questions and activities in this handout can be used in a work session (e.g., professional learning community, professional development session), for individual coaching, or for self-reflection.

### Goals

- ◆ Identify ways to work with families to support their children in recognizing and describing their feelings.
- ◆ Learn how working with families helps children communicate their feelings to other adults or their peers.
- ◆ Recognize the value of involving families to help their children understand their emotions.

### Activity

- ◆ Before watching the video, use the prompting question to think about your current practices in engaging families around children's emotions.
- ◆ Watch the video.
- ◆ After watching the video, use the reflection questions to guide your work with families around helping their child describe feelings.

## QUESTIONS

### Prompting question

Complete before watching the video

- ◆ List three practices that you use to engage families around helping their children recognize and describe emotions. For example, some practices may include reading books or using a feelings chart.

### Reflection questions

Complete after watching the video

- ◆ The video recommends that caregivers encourage families to:
  - Talk about feelings
  - Notice feelings as they occur
  - Help kids describe their feelings
  1. How do you *already* encourage families to do these things?
  2. What has worked best in the past when talking with families around their children's feelings?
  3. How can you build on your own best practices working with families or help their children better understand their emotions?
  4. Plan to share the video as a resource for families. Create some follow-up questions you can ask families after they watch the video. How can they support their child on describing their feelings?
  
- ◆ The video recommends using more emotion words to support children's emotional needs. Go through your class roster and make a list of children who:
  - Have difficulty expressing their emotions
  - May have socio-emotional concerns
  - Have really strong emotional reactions to situations
  1. How can you share the strategies you are *already* using with families to try at home during emotional events?
  2. Make a list of emotion words that you can use more often in the classroom. Share these with families for when children experience strong emotional situations at home.
  
- ◆ Families come from different ethnic backgrounds and experiences. What are families *already* doing to support their children in recognizing emotions? How might their culture and language affect how they talk about emotions with their children?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about how you can work with families to support children in recognizing and describing emotions:

- ◆ **Source:** Sesame Street in Communities
- ◆ **Tools for Families Website:** “Exploring Emotions”
- ◆ **Link:** <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/emotions/>  
**Description:** This website includes activities, printables, articles, and videos to support children’s emotional recognition. Consider how you can use these resources to engage families around supporting their children to recognize and describe their emotions.
  
- ◆ **Source:** National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI)
- ◆ **Article:** “The Backpack Connection Series”
- ◆ **Link:** <https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/family.html>
- ◆ **Description:** This set of family handouts are focused on helping children to recognize, describe, or support their emotions. Teachers may choose to share these handouts directly with families. Blue handouts cover emotions. *Available in Spanish.*
  
- ◆ **Source:** Do2Learn
- ◆ **Web Resource:** “Classroom Management - Social Interactions: Nonverbal Cues”
- ◆ **Link:** [Do2Learn Nonverbal Cues Link](#)
- ◆ **Description:** This web resource outlines how teachers can help students with special needs recognize and understand nonverbal cues (e.g. vocal tone, facial expressions to signal how someone’s feeling, etc.). Using the suggested activities, teachers can work with families to support students with disabilities learn how cues help to recognize and understand emotions.