

Teaching Emotions

Barnet EYSEND

This resource has been developed by members of the
Barnet EYSEND Advisory Team

Teaching Emotions Definition



Definition:

You need to teach children about emotions - about what being happy, sad, angry and other emotions look and feel like.

Teaching Emotions Strategies



Mindfulness activities

Simple language

Model language

Repeat activities across the session

Visuals: photos, puppets, books

Use of facial expressions

Emotion coaching

Naming and labelling emotions in child/self

Use of calm safe spaces (sensory/low arousal)



Teaching Emotions Targets

Some sample emotions targets for children in Early Years

Target: To name 2 or 3 emotions (happy, sad, angry) from a picture on 2 out of 3 occasions

Target: To identify 2 or 3 emotions that an adult or peer is showing on 4 out of 5 occasions

Target: To identify why a child/adult is feeling happy/sad/angry on 4 out of 5 occasions

Target: To facially show 2 or 3 emotions when given the name of the emotion on 4 out of 5 occasions

Target: To say what makes them feel happy/sad/angry on 4 out of 5 occasions

Target: To accept a regulatory activity when offered by an adult on 4 out of 5 occasions

Teaching Emotions Activities

Sing Songs about Emotions

Sing songs about emotions and act the emotions out.

For example:

“If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands.

If you’re surprised and you know it say “Oh my!”

If you’re sad and you know it rub your eyes “Boo hoo”

If you’re scared and you know it shiver and shake.

If you’re sleepy and you know it close your eyes.”



Exaggerate your expressions

- Use an exaggerated expression. Label the feelings you believe the child is experiencing



Emotion Cards

- Have emotions cards such as happy and sad near activities. As the child completes an activity show them the emotion card.



Emotion Keyrings

- Use emotion keyrings with the child.
- On one side of the card have the symbol showing the emotion.
- On the other of the card give suggestions of activities to support emotional regulation.
- E.g. Angry – blow bubbles; count to 10; squeeze a cushion; ask for help

Read Stories

- Read stories to the child such as Rosie Walk, The Hungry Caterpillar and label how the character is feeling at different parts of the story.
- Use a puppet to make a happy face or a sad face.
- Show the emotions card as you label the emotion.
- Look in the mirror and pull your face to show that emotion.
- Can the child copy you?