

***To my two kids, may you always know that your hearts have room
for all your feelings, just as our family has room for all of you.***

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This is Cleo. Cleo loves hugs,
bedtime stories, and pancakes.

Inside Cleo, **many feelings**
live.

Sometimes Cleo feels **happy**
butterflies inside.

They flutter and tickle when
Cleo plays and laughs.





Sometimes Cleo feels a **sleepy turtle** inside.

Turtle feels slow and quiet,
wanting cuddles and rest.

Sometimes Cleo feels a
worried bunny hopping in her
chest.

Bunny wonders, 'Am I safe?'





Sometimes Cleo feels a
grumpy bear stomping inside.

Bear says, 'Things aren't fair!'

Mommy and Daddy say all
Cleo's feelings are okay.

Cleo knows that **deep inside,**
there's a calm and loving
place.

Butterflies, turtles, bunnies, and
bears—all feelings can stay.





When butterflies come,
Mommy laughs too.

When turtles visit, **Daddy**
holds Cleo close. Every feeling
matters.





Cleo knows how to **help**
bunny feel calm—taking deep
breaths and stroking him
gently.

When bear feels grumpy,
Mommy and Daddy sit close
and say, 'We see your angry
bear, Cleo. **All bears need
love.**'

Cleo gently whispers, 'It's okay,
Bear. We're safe here'.





Cleo loves hugs, bedtime stories, and pancakes.

Cleo knows, no matter what she feels, **she is always loved.**

The end :)

About the IFS Framework

Internal Family Systems (IFS) helps us see emotions as "**parts**" within us, while recognizing there's also a calm, compassionate core called the "**Self**" in everyone.

By naming and validating parts while nurturing connection to the Self, we help children feel **secure, understood, and compassionate** toward themselves, while strengthening their **awareness of their own inner wisdom** and natural capacity for **self-compassion**.

"Self" Qualities

This story gently introduces **Cleo's "Self"** through her ability to embrace all her parts.

According to IFS, even young children can naturally embody the "8 C's of Self qualities": **Calm, Curiosity, Compassion, Courage, Creativity, Clarity, Confidence, Connectedness**.

As a caregiver, you **model how to connect to your "Self" qualities** and can help your child **relate to their emotions from this nurturing center**.

Respecting Your Child's Pace

Every child explores emotions differently. **Never pressure them to talk about feelings**—instead, let them guide these conversations naturally.

Your **consistent patience and acceptance** help build the trust needed for emotional exploration.

When your child (or a part) shows they're not ready or **wants to stop**, **simply transition** to another activity or enjoy quiet time together.

Your role and some examples

Help direct their inner exploration: 'What parts are with you now? Where do you feel them in or around your body?'

Foster curiosity and connection with Self:

- 'Does the bunny know you're here? How does it want to be with you today?'
- 'Is there something it would like to tell you?'

Help welcome all parts: 'Wow the bunny is so smart, I want to thank it for sharing this, it makes total sense to me! '

Extension Activities

- **Feelings Puppets:** Craft simple puppets representing parts, role play conversations.
- **Emotion Dance:** Play gentle music and explore different feelings through movement. Ask your child, "How does your bear stomp? How do your butterflies dance?"
- **Body Awareness Game:** "Where do you feel butterflies?" Invite simple breathing or cuddling a favorite stuffed animal to help connect from Self.