

Guide to Talking About Emotions With Children

1. Focus on basic emotion words



Mad



Sad



Happy



Scared

- Start with simple emotions that children can easily identify, such as happy, sad, mad, and scared.
- Use these words frequently to help children get comfortable expressing their emotions with words.

Try this with [Feelings Tree!](#)

2. Talk about sensations



Tired



Hot



Hungry



Cold

- Practice talking about physical sensations children may feel in their bodies such as hot, cold, tired, and hungry.
- Ask students to share how these sensations feel in their bodies.

Try this with [Our Bodies' Clues!](#)

3. Start including more complex emotions



Courageous



Curious



Confident



Frustrated

- Use the Emotion Word lists and the Emotion Cards to expand children's vocabulary and understanding. Build on the simple emotions that children already know well.

Try this with [Feelings Ruler!](#)

4. Read books aloud and talk about what emotions are being experienced by the character



Lonely



Confused



Satisfied



Thankful

- Ask questions about characters in the books you are reading: What do you think they feel? How do you know?
- Discuss what different emotions look like, sound like, and feel like.

Try this with [Feelings Stories!](#)

Emotion Word List: Primary School

Help children develop their emotions vocabulary by gradually introducing more complex feelings words. What other words might you add to the list?

Simple



Complex

Happy	Safe	Impatient	Nervous
Sad	Curious	Proud	Worried
Mad	Bored	Confused	Enthusiastic
Unhappy	Afraid	Frustrated	Shy
Calm	Hopeful	Jealous	Concerned
Surprised	Embarrassed	Excited	Cheerful
Tired	Disappointed	Lonely	Optimistic
Angry	Brave	Guilty	Furious



Emotion Word List: Middle School

In addition to using words from the primary school list, consider using more complex emotions words with middle school aged children.

Simple



Complex

Calm	Embarrassed	Excluded	Ashamed
Upset	Overwhelmed	Anxious	Mellow
Joyful	Upbeat	Peaceful	Rebellious
Mad	Terrified	Relieved	Flexible
Scared	Confident	Determined	Energized
Lonely	Grief	Assertive	Considerate
Worried	Included	Optimistic	Relaxed
Sorry	Loyal	Encouraged	Detached

