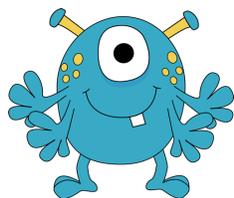


ECFE Learning Links—Fall 2016

Monsters and Feelings



Child's Perspective:

I have feelings, too. I need you to accept my many emotions and help me manage them.

Parent Learning:

Parents support their children's emotional development when they:

- * Respond to their children's emotional and physical needs in warm, caring, and engaged ways
- * Help their children identify, express, and understand their emotions and those of others.

Minnesota Parent Education Core Curriculum Framework, 2011

What Is Your Child Feeling?

Books: *The Way I Feel* Cain

Glad Monster, Sad Monster Emberley/Miranda

My Many Colored Days Seuss illustrated by Johnson/Fancher

Dramatic Play: Hospital/Doctor's Office

Fine Motor Activities: Puzzles

Sensory: Monster Hands Art Project

Sensory Table: Colorful pasta with toy eye balls and bones with tweezers and cups

Art: Monster Straw Art

Math & Science: Monster Balloons

Miss Christina's Songs

If You're Happy And You Know It

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.

If you're happy and you know it, your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.

(Make up additional verses with other feelings; such as: If you're angry and you know it, stomp your feet, or If you're scared and you know it, hide your eyes.)

Hands Go Up

tune: Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Hands go up, and Hands go down!

I can turn myself around.

I can stand up On one shoe.

I can listen,

I can sit. I'll show you how!

Story time is starting now!

I Look In The Mirror

I look in the mirror and what do I see?

I see a happy face smiling at me.

I look in the mirror and what do I see?

I see a surprised face looking at me.

(Use this song while you and your child are looking in the mirror. Make up other verses as you make additional "feelings" faces.)

So often, children are punished for being human. Children are not allowed to have grumpy moods, bad days, disrespectful tones, or bad attitudes, yet we adults have them all the time! We are human, and none of us are perfect...let us try not to hold our children to a higher standard of perfection than we can attain ourselves.

—Rebecca Eanes, *The Newbie's Guide to Positive Parenting*

Emotions are the language we share with all other humans. During their first five years, children experience the most rapid emotional growth of their lives.

They go from indistinguishable expressions of feelings to sizable emotional vocabularies.

Children learn to recognize and name many of their feelings, and begin to learn the socially appropriate ways to express them.

Four Practical Steps for Helping Your Child Manage Emotions

- * **Feel It.** While it may seem obvious to feel emotions, many families focus on pushing away negative emotions. “When we’re saying ‘don’t be sad, don’t be angry, don’t be jealous, don’t be selfish,’ we’re not coming to the child in the reality of her emotion,” Dr. Susan David, author of the book *Emotional Agility*, said. “Validate and see your child as a sentient person who has her own emotional world.”
- * **Show It.** Similarly, many families have what Dr. David calls “display rules” around emotions — there are those it is acceptable to show, and those that must be hidden. “We see expressions like ‘boys don’t cry’ and ‘we don’t do anger here,’ or ‘brush it off,’” she said. “We do it with very good intentions, but we are teaching that emotions are to be feared.”
- * **Label It.** Labeling emotions, Dr. David said, is a critical skill set for children. “We need to learn to recognize stress versus anger or disappointment,” she said. Even very young children can consider whether they’re mad or sad, or angry or anxious or scared. “Labeling emotions is also at the core of our ability to empathize. Ask ‘How do you think so-and-so is feeling? What does their face tell you?’” As children get older, she adds, we can talk more about emotional complexities. “We can be simultaneously excited and anxious and frustrated, and we also need to learn to recognize that in other people,” she said.
- * **Watch It Go.** Even the hardest emotions don’t last forever. Dr. David suggests helping your child to notice that. “Sadness, anger, frustration — these things have value, but they also pass. They’re transient, and we are bigger than they are. Say, ‘This is what sadness feels like. This is what it feels like after it passes. This is what I did that helped it pass.’” We can also help children to remember that we don’t necessarily feel the same emotion every time we have a similar experience. A new experience may be scary the first time, but the next time the feeling may change to joy.