

## Expressing Feelings

When a child presents with difficulties expressing their feelings, this could include, but not be limited to:

- Children who find it difficult to regulate their behaviours and emotions
- Children communicating their feelings through actions and behaviours
- Lack of understanding or empathy towards the feelings of others
- May intentionally hurt or be unresponsive to the feelings of their peers or family
- Difficulties matching others' feelings with their own
- Looks to a supportive adult for help in resolving conflict with peers

The first feelings that children usually learn are 'happy', 'sad', 'angry' and 'scared'.

### Advice and Recommendations

Help children learn and use the names for feelings:

- Name how you think they are feeling e.g. "Sam is happy, I can see a big smile on his face" or "I can see you are sad Toby; tears are rolling down your cheeks"
- Model talking about feelings by labelling your own feelings e.g. "I am happy playing in the sand with you"
- Play games with puppets etc. Puppet might feel sad, happy, angry, scared, use the puppets to talk about situations and feelings
- Use mirrors for experimenting with different expressions whilst playing



- Share books together – discuss feelings, expressions, talk about the characters
- Characters and problem solving



Support children to feel that it's ok to show emotion – to be sad, to be angry, to be scared but it's not OK to hurt others.

When children have learned some emotional vocabulary we can help them to tell us how they are feeling.

- Continue naming and describing their feelings for them (when you think you know what they are)



- Leave pauses for them to join in
- Avoid asking questions that put pressure on them
- Talk about feelings in stories
- Create role play opportunities
- Use puppets to ask questions and have conversations that involve feelings
- Provide opportunities for children to communicate their feelings easily



### Additional Links

#### Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service Helpline

You can call the helpline if you want to speak to an Educational Psychologist.

Telephone 0116 305 5100 or email [psychology@leics.gov.uk](mailto:psychology@leics.gov.uk)

Monday to Friday between 9am and 11.30am including school holidays.



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