

THE LANGUAGE OF FEELINGS

All of us have many feelings every day. When children are very little, they express their feelings through actions (crying, screaming, hugging, hitting). As they grow older you can help them learn to also express their feelings in words. Good books can help you start conversations with your child about feelings. Here are a few of the many books about feelings that you can find at your local library:

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst

Nothing goes right for Alexander. His mother says everybody has a bad day sometimes. After reading the book together, you might ask, “Have you ever had a really bad day like Alexander’s? What happened? What helped you feel better?”

Love You Forever by Robert Munsch

As a mother and son age, the mother expresses love for her son by singing and rocking him. At the end, the son rocks his mother, and then his own child. Ask your child how the mother shows she loves her son. “How does the son show he loves his mother?” Ask your child how he or she knows they are loved. “How do they show love to others?”

Feelings by Alikl

Many feelings are shown: fear, anger, joy, love, jealousy, sadness. As you look at the pictures together, ask your child to describe how they think the child in the picture is feeling, and what clues help them know that. Are there times they felt the same way?

Ask your child to draw a smiling face, a sad face, an angry face, or look through a magazine for faces that show different feelings. Cut them out and glue them to a piece of paper. Hang it in a place you both pass every day. Every few days ask your child to point to the face that matches how they are feeling. Let them tell you why their feeling matches that face.

Play the “Mirror Game” with your child. Sit facing each other. Ask your child to make a happy face and tell them you are going to mirror their face. Make the same expression. Tell your child what that face “feels” like. “That feels like a happy face.” Let your child play with you by making other faces that you try to match with your face, and then name the feeling that goes with the face. Trade places and let them match the faces you make, and name how those faces feel.

This tip sheet is being brought to you by the YMCA. YMCAs across Canada serve over 500,000 children in various programs. YMCA Canada is a member of the Abundant Assets Alliance, a partnership of YMCA Canada, the YMCA of the USA and Search Institute, working together to help young people obtain the 40 developmental assets that they need in order to thrive. To learn more about the developmental assets and how you can help your child build these assets, visit www.abundantassets.org.

One of the developmental assets that helps young people thrive is “Reading for Pleasure.” This series of tip sheets and the resource, *Raising Kids Who Read*, created by YMCA Canada, helps adults build this asset with the young people in their lives. To download copies of any of these resources, go to http://www.ymca.ca/eng_ycdareources.htm#Res6.



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