



"FEELINGS AND FRIENDS"

FAMILY FUN HOUR HOME ACTIVITY GUIDE



EXERCISES &
STRATEGIES
FOR SOCIAL-
EMOTIONAL
LEARNING



IN THE MORNING

1

Ask questions about your child's feelings.

The morning can be a great time to check in about feelings. Asking about feelings lets your child know that their feelings are important. For example, "What's one thing you feel excited to do today?"

You can even write these questions down on a slip of paper and hide them in your child's pillow for when they wake up!



Practice belly breathing together.

Put your hands on your belly and breathe in through your nose, like you're smelling a flower. Feel your belly filling with air. Now breathe out like you're blowing out a candle.

Deep breathing is one of the quickest ways to help kids (and grownups!) calm down if they are feeling upset or anxious. But it's hard to practice during an emotional moment - so practice when you're both calm. You'll be ready to breathe the next time you have a tough moment.

2

3

Have your child guess your "feeling face."

Try making feeling faces in the mirror. Try making a happy face, a frustrated face, and a surprised face. Can your child guess the feeling? Now it's their turn. With each feeling you might ask, "Have you ever felt like that?"

When kids start to understand what feelings look like, they have an easier time empathizing with others, making friends, and working together at school and everywhere else they go.



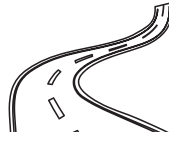
Learn some BIG, FANCY WORDS!

It's a great time to also start using some BIG, FANCY WORDS to help your child understand feelings more deeply! Don't hold back! During our time together, we learned THRILLED, ANXIOUS, and RELAXED.

Learning words to describe feelings helps your child learn to express themselves. The more feeling words your child knows, the more they'll be able to share.



4



IN THE AFTERNOON

5

Try these strategies when your child experiences BIG FEELINGS.

Remember Huffywumpus? It's good to have a few strategies in your toolbox to follow in emotional moments.

1. If possible, take a moment to take YOUR OWN deep breath. When you're calm, it's easier to help your child cope with hard moments and big feelings.
2. Let your child know that all feelings are okay. But let them know that they can't express their feelings in unsafe ways like throwing things or hitting.
3. Offer a choice of how they can express those BIG feelings in safe ways. For example, "It is not okay to throw blocks, because someone might get hurt. But you can stomp or you can wiggle. That might help." Big feelings can be scary and overwhelming for kids. Offering a choice helps them feel more in control, which can help them to calm down.
4. Take 3-5 belly breaths together.
5. And, try offering more ways for them to share about what they are feeling. They can tell you more about it, draw about it, show you their feelings with a dance or a puppet...



Create a Calming Corner.

Put some "calming" items in a cardboard box in the corner of a room for your child to go to when they need to have quiet time. Some things you might try: a ball for rolling, paper for drawing or tearing, a stuffed animal for squeezing, a bag of goop or some tin foil for squishing, a soft blanket, and some favorite books.

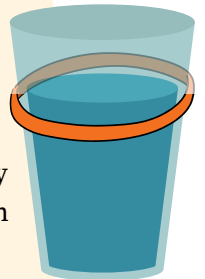
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Use a Fill Up Cup (a tip for grownups!).

Grownups need some quiet time, too. Get a glass or cup and put a rubber band on it so it looks different from all your other cups. Now fill that cup with water. Let your child know that this is your FILL UP CUP. You might say, "When I drink water from my FILL UP CUP it means I'm filling up and getting my energy back with some alone time. Challenge them to draw, look at a book, or play with a favorite all on their own (or off to the side if they are very young). Can they do it until the FILL UP CUP is empty?"

It may take a lot of tries to practice and understand. That's okay!





IN THE EVENING

8

Give your child a helping job.

When kids help out at home, they are building super friendship skills. Great friends are great at helping others. Your child might wipe down a counter, water a plant, dust or set the table. Try giving your child a simple helping job to do each evening this week! Let them know, “This job is helping our whole family!”



Read books with diverse characters.

Reading all about different characters helps kids learn to appreciate similarities and differences. As you do, point out ways that your child is like these characters and ways that they are different. Ask about feelings, too. Try, “How do you think that character is feeling? Have you ever felt like that? What helped you feel better?”

9

10

Try yoga and star-breathing together.

Try winding down before bedtime with a calm activity. You might stretch together, take some belly breaths (try star breathing too). You might invite your child to picture and describe a place that helps them feel safe and cozy. Bedtime can also be a great time to check in about feelings. You might ask, “What’s one thing that was fun about today? What’s one thing that was hard about today.”

And try sending your child off to sleep with a compliment - “Good night, you make me feel so proud.”

