Emotions

Backpack Connection Series

About this Series

The *Backpack Connection Series* was created by TACSEI to provide a way for teachers and parents/caregivers to work together to help young children develop social emotional skills and reduce challenging behavior. Teachers may choose to send a handout home in each child's backpack when a new strategy or skill is introduced to the class. Each *Backpack Connection* handout provides information that helps parents stay informed about what their child is learning at school and specific ideas on how to use the strategy or skill at home.

The Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model is a framework that provides programs with guidance on how to promote social emotional competence in all children and design effective interventions that support young children who might have persistent challenging behavior. It also provides practices to ensure that children with social emotional delays receive intentional teaching. Programs that implement the Pyramid Model are eager to work together with families to meet every child's individualized learning and support needs. To learn more about the Pyramid Model, please visit challengingbehavior.org.

More Information

For more information about this topic, visit TACSEI's website at challengingbehavior.org and type "label emotions" in the Search Box in the upper-right corner of the screen.

How to Help Your Child Understand and Label Emotions

Brooke Brogle, Alyson Jiron & Jill Giacomini

You can help your child expand her emotional vocabulary by teaching her words for different feelings. Once she knows and understands these words you can help her to label her own feelings and the feelings of others. For example, do you remember a time when your child had a meltdown at the grocery store or other public place? Perhaps you tried soothing your child by telling her to "calm down" and felt confused and unsure of what to do next when she continued the tantrum. Next time you can better help your child understand and deal with the emotions she is feeling by saying, "You look sad and disappointed. Sometimes I feel that way too. I wonder what we can do to feel better?" Teaching your child about her emotions can be a fun and rewarding experience and prevent challenging behavior from occurring in the first place.

Try This at Home

- Simply state how your child is feeling. "You look really excited! I see your eyes are big and your mouth is open."

- State how others are feeling, "Wow, that little boy is really mad. I see he is crying and making fists with his hands. I wonder why?"

- State how you are feeling. "I am really frustrated that the lawn mower is broken. I think I'm going to take a break and come up with some solutions to this problem."

- Use books as teaching tools. There is a huge selection of children's books that focus on emotional literacy. Visit http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html#list where you will find a book list, book activities and other resources for teaching emotional literacy.

Practice at School

Talk with your child's teacher to see how they are teaching your child about emotions at school. Many emotions are seen and experienced at school. With adult help, children are taught how emotions look and feel on our bodies. Through books and real experiences, teachers show that a child looks sad because he is crying or mad because her fists are tight. As children begin to recognize what emotions look like, they can begin to manage their own emotions and show empathy toward others.

The Bottom Line

Children with a strong emotional vocabulary:

- Tolerate frustration better
- Get into fewer fights
- Engage in less destructive behavior
- Are healthier
- Are less lonely
- Are less impulsive
- Are more focused
- Have greater academic achievement

www.challengingbehavior.org

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