



Guiding Young Children's Behavior

Segment 6: Helping Children Identify and Express Emotions

TRANSCRIPT for Objective 5

Use Group Time and Children's Literature to help Children Learn about Feelings

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Host: Another way teachers can help children understand emotions is through activities at group time. Songs like “If You’re Happy and You Know It” create a fun opening for talking about emotions. You can also use puppet shows or stories like the three bears to open up dialogue about emotions. With the three bears you could ask questions like, “I wonder how the bears felt when they saw that someone had eaten their porridge?” Now we want you to think about using circle time for teaching about emotions. What new activities could you add to teach children about emotions and feelings?

Activity 6B: Using Circle Time to Teach About Emotions

Voiceover: What do you already do in circle time that teach children about emotions? What are three new activities could you add?

Did you consider ...?

Voiceover: Here are some circle time ideas you might try:

- Perform teacher-invented dramatizations or stories that highlight specific emotions and how to express them.
- Play the “guess that feeling game”: Whisper in one child’s ear an emotion word (or show a photo of this emotion). Have the child make a face representing it. Others must guess the emotion.
- Give children each a hand mirror so they can study their own faces. Sing a feelings song (e.g., “If you’re happy and you know it . . . If you’re sad and you know it . . .” etc.) Encourage children to make faces that match the feelings they are singing about and study these in their mirrors.
- Tell or read a story involving feelings but pause before the end. Ask children, “What would you do if you felt like this character?”
- Conduct a regular class meeting in which children can discuss things in the classroom that make them happy, excited, sad, angry, frustrated, etc.

Host: Another way to teach children about emotions is by using books.

Dr. Theresa Bouley, Eastern Connecticut State University: Children's literature is a powerful tool because it allows children to talk about feelings and emotions when they're not necessarily feeling them. When teachers can identify a children's book that deals with a sticky situation or a problem in the classroom, something that would typically happen that these children could have experienced, like sharing a toy or having to wait their turn. It's not a charged issue for the children at that moment so they can engage in conversation that depersonalizes the issue and it doesn't make it about them about who's having an issue, or whose turn it is, or who's at fault, but it's just about the emotion or feeling.

Teacher: When I want to say something mean or yell or hit, there are other things that I can do.

Dr. Bouley: Another very important characteristic of children's literature that is the most effective to use with children when talking about labeling or understanding emotions are books that identify themes that children in that age group may experience. A good example is a book called "When Sophie Gets Angry, Really, Really Angry." When Sophie gets angry, she has to share a toy with a little sibling. To make matters worse, her mother says she needs to share the toy, she turns around and trips on the truck that's there. So, we start out before reading a story, we do this pre-reading, "What do you think the story is going to be about? Sophie gets angry, really, really angry. What do you think are some things that could make Sophie angry?" So, this allows children to talk about things that happen in their lives that make them angry.

Girl: Ballet makes me angry.

Teacher: Ballet makes you angry? Why does it make you angry? Sometimes maybe you can't do everything the other kids can do?

Girl: Yeah, I can't rock, it's too hard.

Teacher: Oh it's too hard to walk? Is it on the balance beam? Oh, to rock.

Dr. Bouley: Then post-reading it becomes very important for children to have opportunities to talk about the text, to talk about how they connected to the text, what their experiences are in relation to the characters' experiences. It's really important during that time to ask children a lot of open-ended questions about how they connected to the character or the theme or problem or the resolution to the problem of the particular story. We can ask them things like if you were the character what would you do differently?

Teacher: What do you think would make you feel better when you're angry?

Boy: Well, well, if I was angry I would run a lot so much that would I get tired

Teacher: You would run a lot so you would get tired? That's a good idea.

Dr. Bouley: During that time, we can do things like use chart paper to write down all the ways they would handle the situation and we could post it around the room and we could refer to that at later times when things come up in the classroom.

Host: Now we want you to think about how you could use books to teach about feelings. What are some good children's books that address different emotions?

Insert Activity 6C: Books on Feelings

Voiceover: What are three high quality children's books that help children learn about feelings? What specific emotions do they address? What is a follow-up activity you could plan after each book is read?

Did you consider ...?

Voiceover: Here is one suggestion for a book activity. Read [When Sophie Gets Angry-Really, Really Angry](#) by Molly Bang.

- Invite the children to discuss what they do when they get angry. Generate a list titled "Things we can do when we get angry". Place the list on the wall when children are watching so it can be referred to in times of need.

Voiceover: You might also try reading [The Little Red Hen](#) by Lucinda McQueen.

- After reading the book, ask for volunteers to use puppets to play the little red hen and one of the minor characters such as the dog or cat. Ask the rest of the children to help resolve the conflict by posing the question "what could the little red hen say to the dog if he refuses to help her?" Ask the little red hen how she felt when no one would help her. Ask the other characters how it felt when they refused to help. Discuss these feelings. Put the puppets and the book in a center in order to promote further dramatic retellings.

Host: This concludes the information in segment six. Now let's take a moment to review our objectives. First, we discussed how feelings can influence children's classroom behavior. Next, we described ways to acknowledge and help children identify their feelings. We explained how to guide children in expressing emotions in positive ways. We described strategies for helping children understand others' feelings and how their behavior affects those feelings. And finally, we discussed how to use group time activities and children's literature to help children learn about feelings. You can apply these ideas to your own classroom by completing the ideas into practice for this segment. Or you can return to the main menu and move to another segment.