

Emotional Skills Lesson Plan: “Feelings and Calming Choices” (All Ages)

Classroom:

Teacher:

Learning Objective(s)

- Children will learn to identify basic emotions in themselves and others.
 - Children will practice simple strategies for calming down when they feel upset or overwhelmed.
 - Children will develop self-regulation skills through guided play, reflection, and positive reinforcement.
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Materials

- Emotion cards or posters (happy, sad, angry, scared, calm, etc.)
 - A mirror (for infants/toddlers to explore facial expressions)
 - Puppets or stuffed animals for role-playing feelings
 - Soft music or a chime for calming practice
 - “Calm-down tools” (stress balls, sensory bottles, scarves, or stuffed animals)
 - Chart paper or a “Feelings Board” for group reflection
 - Optional: storybooks about emotions (e.g., *The Color Monster*, *When Sophie Gets Angry*)
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Procedures

1. **Set the Stage**
 - Gather children in a circle and introduce the theme:
 - “Today we’re going to talk about feelings. Everyone has feelings, and we can learn how to calm down when our feelings get really big.”
 - Show an emotion card (happy, sad, mad) and ask:
 - “What do you think this face is feeling?”
 - “Can you make a face like this?”
2. **Explain the Activity**

- “We’ll practice showing feelings with our faces and bodies, and then we’ll learn calming choices we can use when we feel upset.”
 - Model with a puppet: “This puppet feels mad because he can’t have a toy. What could the puppet do to calm down?”
 - 3. **Set Up the Space**
 - Place emotion cards in a circle area.
 - Set up a “Calm-Down Corner” with calming tools (stress balls, sensory bottles, soft toys).
 - 4. **Play the Game**
 - Invite children to pick an emotion card and copy the face.
 - Ask: “When you feel [sad/mad], what can you do?”
 - Teach calming strategies:
 - Take three deep breaths.
 - Hug a stuffed animal.
 - Squeeze a ball.
 - Listen to soft music.
 - Practice as a group: “Let’s all take a big deep breath together!”
 - 5. **Wrap-Up**
 - Reflect with children:
 - “What feeling did you practice today?”
 - “Which calming choice worked best for you?”
 - Praise efforts: “You used your calm breathing—that’s a great way to help yourself feel better.”
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Individualized Support

- For infants: Focus on mirroring emotions (“You look happy! Big smiles!”). Use gentle tones and co-regulation (soothing touch, rocking).
 - For toddlers: Offer simple emotion labels (“mad,” “happy”) and pair with calming strategies.
 - For preschoolers: Encourage verbal expression of feelings and role-play calming strategies with peers.
 - For children needing extra support: Use visual cue cards or create a personal “Feelings Book.”
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Modifications & Extensions

Infants & Toddlers

- Use mirrors for making happy/silly faces.
- Sing simple “feelings songs” (e.g., “If You’re Happy and You Know It”).

- Encourage toddlers to hug a toy or take a deep breath with you.

Preschool & Mixed-Age Groups

- Introduce storybooks about emotions and talk about characters' feelings.
- Role-play scenarios (e.g., losing a toy, waiting for a turn) and practice calming responses.
- Create a class "Feelings Chart" for children to check in daily.

All Age Groups

- Add music and movement breaks for emotional regulation.
- Extend outdoors—practice calming under a tree or with nature sounds.
- Celebrate progress by creating a "Calm-Down Champions" board recognizing children who used strategies.

👉 This lesson provides children with **practical tools for identifying emotions and practicing self-regulation**, helping them build the foundation for lifelong emotional well-being.