

Feelings on Plates

Primary Objectives

2b. Responds to emotional cues

Why It's Important

As your child becomes increasingly aware of the feelings of people around him, he may be overwhelmed or intimidated by some emotional displays. When you give your child numerous opportunities to identify feelings and teach him ways to respond to those feelings, you are helping him to expand his capacity for compassion and empathy.

Materials

Photos or drawings of faces depicting emotions; markers or crayons; glue; paper plates; craft sticks

What You Do

1. On paper plates, draw faces or glue cutouts of faces depicting a variety of emotions, one per plate. Glue a craft stick to each plate to use as a handle.
2. Use the face plates when your child appears distressed or disinterested by the emotions of others or when he has difficulty labeling emotions.
3. As you are reading a book or telling a story to your child, spread the faces in front of him and ask him to hold up the face that matches the emotion of the character in the story. Encourage him to explain each choice. *You're holding an excited face. Is the character in the book excited?*
4. Use the face plates at other times to point out the feelings of a playmate, characters in a song, or the people in a picture that he draws. Encourage him to use the plates to recognize feelings.
5. You can extend this activity by using various words, facial expressions, and tones of voice and asking your child to identify each feeling by holding up a face plate. *I'm so glad to see you!* (light, cheerful voice), or *It's my turn with the truck!* (firm, loud voice), or *Good-bye, Grandpa, we'll see you next month* (quiet, sad voice).