Card Faces (Levels A-B)

GRATITUDE

To support emotional recognition and expression in a playful, accessible way by using simple cards (or picture prompts) to explore basic feelings with modelling, imitation, and choice-making.

Learning Intentions

Recognise Simple Emotions:
Students will explore noticing four basic feelings, Surprised, frustrated, happy, nervous, using visuals and modelling.

Express Emotions:
Students will practise showing feelings using their face, gesture, body movement, or AAC.

Build Understanding of Others:
Students will copy a peer or teacher's emotional expression to develop early empathy and social awareness.

Success Criteria

Students match or choose one feeling when shown a series of emotion/feelings cards.

Students attempt to show a feeling using their face, gesture, or AAC.

Students look toward or respond to a peer's expression with interest or imitation.

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Duration: 10 - 15 minutes

Objective
To support emotional recognition and expression in a playful, accessible way by using simple cards (or picture prompts) to explore basic feelings with modelling, imitation, and choice-making.

What You Need
Emotion picture cards (nervous, happy, frustrated, surprised)
AAC devices with feelings vocabulary (happy, frustrated, nervous, surprised, yes/no)

Setup
1. Print out a set of the emotion/feelings cards, one set per pair (12 cards in total per pair)
2. Display the four emotion visuals in front of the group.
3. Introduce each feeling with a clear model:
4. “This is happy.” (show and act)
5. “This is surprised.”
6. “This is frustrated.”
7. “This is nervous.”
8. Show students the simplified “emotion cards” they will be playing with.
9. Ensure AAC devices are open to emotion vocabulary.

Gameplay
1. Pick and match a card
Have all 12 cards in a grid formation, mixed up so that two emotions or feelings are not next to each other on the grid (think memory grid but with the cards facing up not face down).
A student chooses a card from the grid.

2. Gameplay option 1 - Match the Feeling Partner edition
The partner of the student aims to match the emotion/feeling card that was selected by their partner by selecting the another emotion card off the grid that is the same emotion. They can do this by:
• pointing to the card
• picking the card up
• looking at the correct feeling/emotion card
• selecting on AAC

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GRATITUDE

Teacher narrates:
"You both chose HAPPY!"
If the students both make the correct same choice get them to celebrate by gesturing their chosen emotion using their faces, bodies and making sounds.
If an incorrect match was made that's ok, celebrate the effort and try the process again.

3. Gameplay option 2 - Match the Feeling solo player edition
Another option is for students to play solo, aiming to select an emotion/feeling card from the grid and then trying to select another card that matches the first one they chose. When a correct match is made simply take the cards out of the grid and then start the process again.
Teacher and aid support is welcomed and encouraged here.
Celebrate any effort. If a match is made celebrate by gesturing their chosen emotion using their faces, bodies and making sounds.

4. Gameplay option 3 - Team challenge
Have the emotion/feelings cards in a grid formation on the floor, have the students sit or stand in a semi circle around the card grid. One at a time students take it in turns to select a card, the next student then tries to identify a matching emotion card to the card that was selected by the previous student. Once a match is made all students celebrate together and remove those cards from the grid.
Play the game until all cards have been matched and the grid is empty!

Debrief / Reflection
Use simple visuals:
• "Point to your favourite feeling."
• "Show me happy."
• "Which one was tricky?" (offer two choices)
• "How do YOU feel now?" (students choose happy/sad/excited/cal m visual)
Accept any attempt—eye gaze, gesture, sound, AAC, or movement.

Sensory-Seeking Learners Variation
1. Use Movement-Based Emotions
• Happy → big arm wave or bounce
• Frustrated → shaking head side to side
• Nervous → squeeze a soft pillow or toy
• Surprised → arms up with a gasp sound

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2. Use Tactile Emotion Props
Let students *touch* the feeling first:
• fluffy = happy
• smooth = nervous
• crunchy = frustrated
• shiny = surprised
Students may express their feelings by selecting the tactile match instead of making a face.

3. Rhythm & Sounds
Pair feelings with sounds:
• happy = “yay!”
• frustrated = low hum
• nervous = stomp or drum tap
• surprised = “oh!”
Students copy the rhythm or sound instead of facial expressions.

4. Regulation Breaks
Offer movement or calming as needed between rounds:
• weighted item
• deep pressure
• wall push
• swinging arms
• rocking

AAC-Specific Supports
1. Prepare Vocabulary
Include:
• happy
• sad
• angry
• surprised
• good
• more
• finished
• yes / no

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Card Faces (Levels A–B)

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2. Aided Language Input
Teacher models on AAC every turn:
“Happy.”
“Frustrated.”
“Nervous.”
“Surprised.”
“Good showing!”

3. Choice-Making Support
Use partner-assisted scanning:
“Is it happy?”
“Is it frustrated?”
Pause for eye gaze or movement.

4. AAC Expression
Students can express feelings by pressing:
• “I feel…”
• “happy/frustrated/nervous/surprised”
• “more” to keep playing
• “finished” to stop

5. AAC Reflection
Model:
“I like happy.”
“That was fun.”
“More feelings?”
Celebrate ALL attempts, partial activations, approximations, looks, or gestures.

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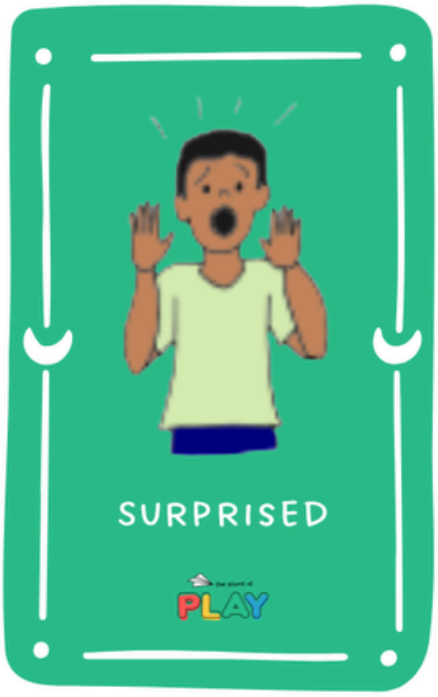
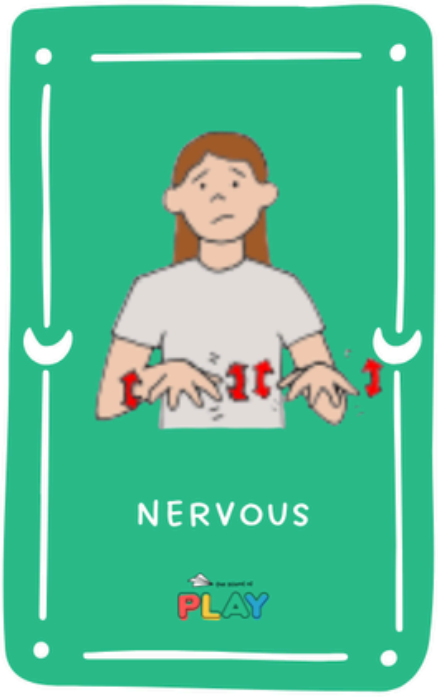
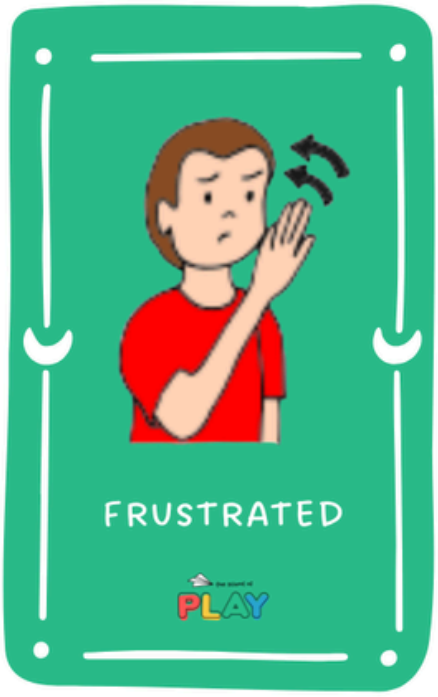
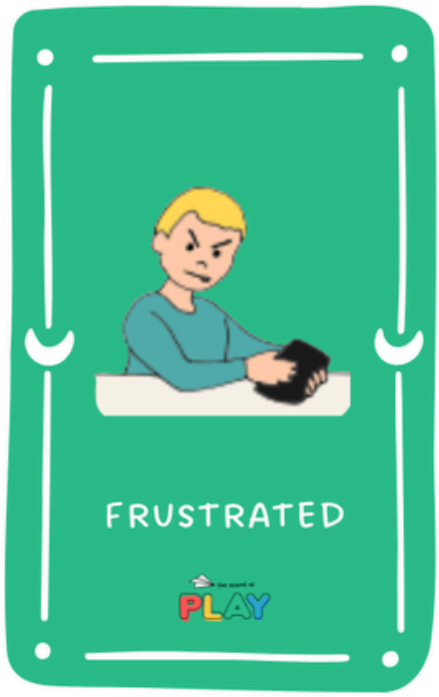
EMOTION PICTURE CARD SET

PRINT AND CUT OUT THE CARDS AND PLACE THEM FACE UP IN A GRID ON THE FLOOR OR TABLE. A STUDENT SELECTS ONE CARD AND SHOWS THE EMOTION USING THEIR FACE, BODY, SOUND, OR AAC. THE STUDENT THEN FINDS ANOTHER CARD WITH THE SAME EMOTION TO MAKE A MATCH.

EMOTION PICTURE CARD SET



EMOTION PICTURE CARD SET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