

Feelings Faces (Levels A-B)

GRATITUDE

To develop emerging emotional recognition and expression through simple, supported role-play using highly visual prompts and clear modelling.



Learning Intentions

Emotional Literacy:

Students will explore recognising and expressing a basic feeling using their face, gesture, or body.

Social Awareness:

Students will learn to notice a peer's emotion with adult guidance.

Communication:

Students will practise showing or choosing a feeling using facial expression, gesture, or supported communication (AAC, pointing, visuals).



Success Criteria

Students participate by showing or choosing one emotion (happy, sad, angry, surprised).

Students look towards a peer or a teacher's face when an emotion is shown.

Students respond in any way when asked to identify a feeling (pointing, vocalising, gesture, looking, smiling).



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Duration: 5 minutes

Objective

To develop emerging emotional recognition and expression through simple, supported role-play using highly visual prompts and clear modelling.

What You Need

Emotion visuals (happy, sad, angry, surprised) (found in PDF resource)

Optional: a small hand mirror for students to look at their own expressions.

Optional: sensory tools (squeezy ball, scarf, textured object) for students who regulate through touch or movement.

Optional: students' AAC systems (communication book, PODD, device, single-switch button).

Setup

1. Seat students in a circle or semicircle where everyone can clearly see the teacher's face.
2. Place emotion cards where students can view them.
3. Model each expression clearly and slowly, pairing it with a simple verbal label:
 - "This is my happy face."
 - "This is my sad face."
4. For students needing imitation support, use a mirror or stand beside them and model side-by-side.
5. Confirm AAC systems are on and open to the "Feelings" page or relevant tiles.

Gameplay

1. Choose a Feeling

Hold up one emotion card and say the word clearly:

Eg, "Happy."

2. Show the Feeling

The teacher models the emotion using their face and body.

Students copy in any way they can.

Support may include hand-over-hand, mirror work, or guiding attention to the card.



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3. Look and Notice

Point to a student modelling the expression and ask:
"Look at [name]. What feeling/emotion are they showing?"

Students respond by:

- pointing to an emotion card
- looking at the correct card
- using AAC
- making the same expression
- vocalising or making a sound

4. Repeat

Rotate through 2 - 3 feelings. Keep pace slow and predictable.
Repetition builds confidence and emotional understanding at Levels A - B.

Debrief / Reflection

Ask one reflective question at a time with strong visual support:

- "Show me the feeling you liked best."
- "Point to the feeling you feel now."
- "Which one was easy?"

Any response is celebrated and labelled:

"Great showing!"

"You looked at the picture, well done noticing!"

Sensory-Seeking Learners Variation

Purpose: Supports students who benefit from movement, deep pressure, rhythm, or tactile exploration while learning about feelings.

Adjustments to Include:

1. Add Movement Actions for Each Emotion

Pair each feeling with a simple movement:

- **Happy:** wiggle shoulders, bounce gently
- **Sad:** slow sweeping arms across the body
- **Angry:** squeeze hands tight into fists and shake in front of face/body (safe squeezes)
- **Surprised:** open arms wide

Students can show the emotion through movement if facial imitation is difficult.



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2. Use Tactile Tools

Give each emotion a matching sensory item:

- Happy – soft scarf
- Sad – smooth stone
- Angry – squeeze ball
- Surprised – feather or ribbon

Teacher: "This squishy ball matches angry. Let's squeeze like we're angry!"

3. Rhythm-Based Expression

Use a drum, tap on knees, or clap patterns:

- Happy – fast taps
- Sad – slow taps
- Angry – strong taps
- Surprised – one loud clap

Students express the emotion using rhythm if they avoid eye contact or face-watching.

4. Sensory Calm-Down Reset

If students become dysregulated, pause and offer:

- deep pressure squeeze
- weighted toy
- slow breathing with a visual prompt

Then rejoin the next emotion.

AAC-Specific Supports

1. Prepare AAC Ahead of Time

Ensure systems are open to:

- "Feelings" page
- or a custom group: happy, sad, angry, surprised
- or a single-switch button pre-programmed with a target feeling

2. Model AAC

For every feeling shown:

Teacher taps or selects the AAC symbol while saying it aloud:

"Happy." *tap happy symbol*

"Sad." *tap sad symbol*

Students learn symbolic representation by watching consistent modelling.



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3. Supported Responses

Students may:

- point to the feeling symbol
- activate a switch/button
- touch a printed symbol
- choose between two options (errorless choice)

4. Emotion ID Using AAC

When another student acts out a feeling, prompt:

“Tell me with your AAC, what is the feeling?”

Model the correct option if needed.

5. AAC Reflection

At the end, present the feeling symbols and say:

“Which feeling did you like?”

Students respond with:

- tapping a symbol
- eye gaze towards symbol
- activating a button
- touching the card

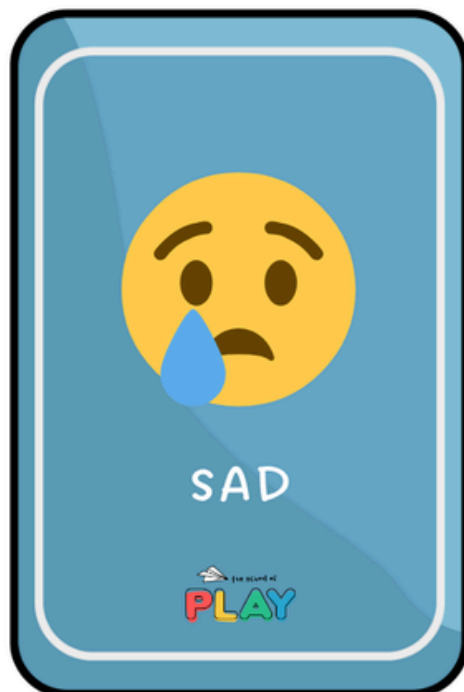


EMOJI FACES CARDS

PRINT AND CUT OUT THE EMOJI CARDS, THEN USE THEM AS VISUAL PROMPTS DURING THE ROLE-PLAY ACTIVITY TO HELP STUDENTS PRACTISE RECOGNISING AND EXPRESSING DIFFERENT FEELINGS.



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