

Feelings Puppet Show – Levels A & B

PLAY

To support students to understand and practise vulnerability by using puppets to safely explore emotions. Through imaginative play, students learn to name feelings, explain causes, and respond with empathy, linked to Venus in the Playful Astronauts journey, where being open and brave helps people connect and grow.



Learning Intentions

Students aim to experience different feelings through puppet play.



Students aim to respond to emotions using movement, facial expression, gestures, visuals, or AAC.

Students aim to participate in a shared routine that supports emotional safety and connection.



Success Criteria

I can choose or explore a puppet with support.

I can show or respond to a feeling using actions, sounds, pictures, or AAC.

I can attend to others by watching, listening, or showing interest.

I can stay with the activity for part or all of the time.



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Duration: 8 - 12 minutes

Objective

To support students to understand and practise vulnerability by using puppets to safely explore emotions. Through imaginative play, students learn to name feelings, explain causes, and respond with empathy, linked to Venus in the Playful Astronauts journey, where being open and brave helps people connect and grow.

Players

Whole class or small groups

Suitable for 3 - 16 students

Students participate individually with adult support, or in pairs

What You Need

Puppets (soft puppets, sock puppets, stick puppets, paper bag puppets, or small toys). This can be another whole activity by making them in class first.

Optional: emotion cards (happy, sad, nervous, excited, angry, worried, proud)(found in PDF resource)

Optional: a surface or mat to act as a small “stage”

AAC devices, switches, or communication boards as required

Setup

Create a small, calm space using a mat or open floor area.

Seat students comfortably on the floor, chairs, or in wheelchairs.

Introduce the activity using simple, reassuring language:

“This is a puppet.”

“The puppet can show feelings.”

“You can use the puppet to help you show your feelings.”

Briefly connect to the Venus theme in accessible terms:

“Sharing feelings can feel tricky.”

“The puppet helps us share safely.”

Show the puppets and the emotion visual cards together.

Confirm AAC devices are switched on and open to basic feeling words.



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Gameplay

Step 1: Adult Modelling

The teacher begins by modelling a very short puppet moment.

Hold a puppet and say:

“My puppet feels happy.”

or

“My puppet feels sad.”

Show the feeling using the puppet’s body and face.

Model a kind response:

“It’s okay to feel sad.”

Activate or point to the matching AAC symbol while speaking.

Step 2: Choosing a Puppet and Feeling

Offer each student a puppet, or allow them to choose one.

Support students to explore the puppet by holding, touching, or moving it.

Invite students to choose or respond to a feeling by:

- Pointing to an emotion picture
- Looking toward a choice
- Activating AAC
- Showing a facial expression or movement with their puppet on themselves

Adults may offer two choices only, for example:

“Happy or sad?”

Narrate the choice clearly:

“Your puppet feels happy.”

Step 3: Showing the Feeling

Students are supported to show the feeling through the puppet in any way, including:

- Moving the puppets face and body
- Making a sound
- Copying an adult’s action
- Activating an AAC symbol

The adult narrates and validates:

“The puppet is sad.”

“Thank you for showing how it is feeling.”



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Students may show their puppet to:

- An adult
- A partner
- A small group

Watching only is always an acceptable option.

Debrief / Reflection

Keep reflection brief and concrete.

Ask one question at a time with wait time:

“Did your puppet feel happy or sad?”

“How does the puppet feel now?”

Accept responses through eye gaze, gesture, AAC, facial expression, or movement.

Reinforce the message:

“All feelings you have are okay.”

Winning the Game

There are no winners or losers.

Success is shown through participation, shared attention, and emotional expression in any form.

Sensory-Specific Learner Variation

Purpose: To support regulation, comfort, and emotional safety.

Adjustments may include:

Using soft, weighted, or textured puppets for calming input.

Allowing students to stay behind a screen, table, or beside an adult.

Keeping puppet interactions very short and predictable.

Allowing movement-only participation without speaking.

Providing calming tools or breaks if emotions become overwhelming.

AAC-Specific Supports

Prepare AAC in Advance

Ensure access to symbols such as: happy, sad, angry, excited, okay, finished.

Use single-message switches if appropriate.

Model AAC Consistently

Adults activate AAC symbols every time they name or model a feeling.

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Accessibility and Inclusion Notes

Ensure puppet spaces are reachable and visible for all students.

Use table-top stages for students using wheelchairs.

Offer lightweight or stick puppets for easier handling.

Allow directing, pointing, or sound-making instead of acting.

Celebrate all forms of expression equally.

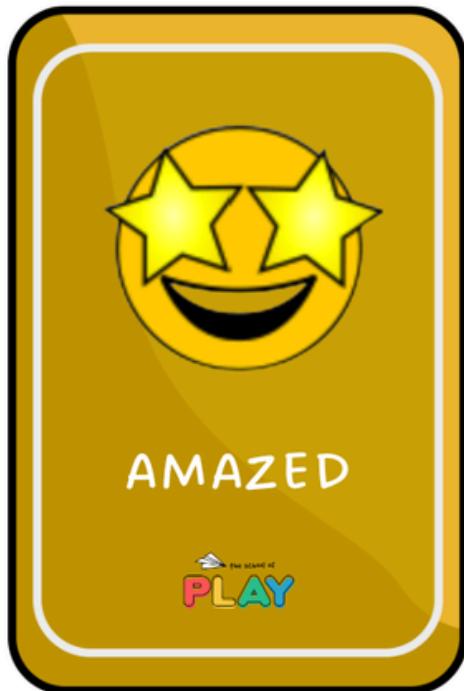
Teacher Notes

“Feelings Puppet Show – Levels A & B” supports early emotional awareness, joint attention, trust, and safe expression of feelings. The activity is not about explaining emotions or reasons, but about experiencing and recognising feelings through play. Puppets provide emotional distance, helping students explore vulnerability in a gentle way that aligns strongly with Levels A–B development and the Venus theme of connection through openness.

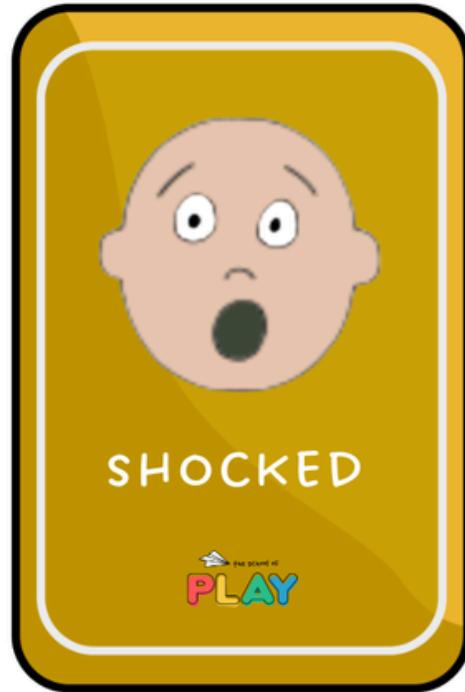
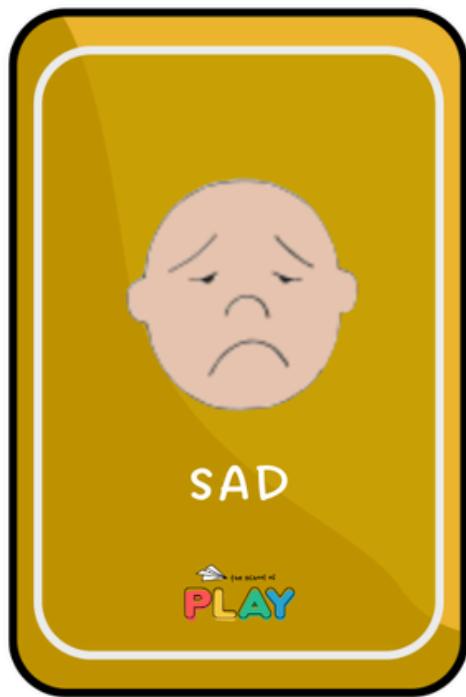


EMOTION CARDS

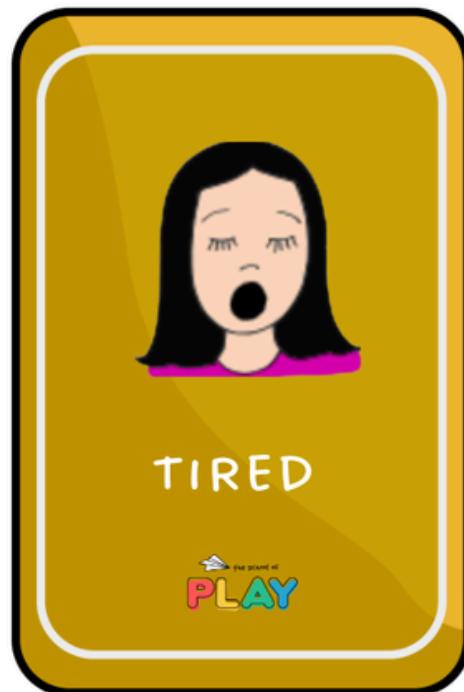
PRINT AND CUT OUT THE CARDS AND PREPARE THE PUPPETS. AN ADULT MODELS A SHORT PUPPET MOMENT BY CHOOSING AN EMOTION CARD. STUDENTS CHOOSE A PUPPET AND AN EMOTION, THEN SHOW THE FEELING. CELEBRATE EACH RESPONSE BY NAMING THE FEELING BEFORE INVITING THE NEXT TURN.



EMOTION CARDS



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