

# PRISM Training Series: Teaching About Feelings

Pyramid Resources for Infant-Toddler Social Emotional Development  
University of Kansas

Adapted from:  
The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning  
Vanderbilt University

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## Learner Objectives

- **Learn about emotional literacy and why it is important**
- **Identify strategies teachers can use to help identify and name emotions**
- **Learn how you can use real-life situations to teach about feelings**

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## Agenda

- **Setting the Stage**
- **What is Emotional Literacy?**
- **How does Emotional Literacy develop?**
- **Strategies to Develop Emotional Literacy in Infants and Toddlers**
- **Establishing developmentally appropriate expectations**
- **Wrap-up and Reflection**

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## Our Learning Environment

What can the trainer do to facilitate a safe learning environment?

How can other training participants help make the training environment conducive to your learning?

What are some agreements we can make?

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## Possible Shared Agreements

- **Confidentiality**
- **Take Care of Yourself and Others**
- **Demonstrate Respect**
- **Right to Pass and Take Risks**
- **Assume Positive Intent**
- **Recognize We Are All Learning**

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## How Caregivers Promote Healthy Social Emotional Development

**Support social-emotional learning for all infants and toddlers**

**Help infants and toddlers learn to identify and name feelings and emotions**

**Use real-life situations to teach about emotions and problem-solve**

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## CSEFEL Definition of Social Emotional Development

**The developing capacity of the child from birth through five...**

- **to form close and secure relationships;**
- **experience, regulate, and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways; and**
- **explore the environment and learn;**
- **all in the context of family, community, and culture.**

Adapted from ZERO TO THREE, 2001

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## The Pyramid Model: Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children



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## What is Emotional Literacy?

**Emotional Literacy is the capacity to:**

- **Identify and name our emotions**
- **Understand and express emotions in a healthy way**
- **Recognize, name, and understand emotions in others**

*Adapted with permission, Cradling Literacy, 2007*

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## Emotional Literacy

**How does emotional literacy develop?**



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## Emotional Literacy

**Talking About Emotions**



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Confused  
Generous  
Worried Important  
Ignored Calm  
Feeling  
Hurt Safe  
Words  
Jealous Interested  
Relieved Angry  
Shy Loving Satisfied  
Impatient Friendly  
Stubborn Uncomfortable

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## Strategies to Develop Emotional Literacy

Verbally acknowledge and label emotions expressed by children in care	Assist infants & toddlers with regulating their emotions	Talk about the fact that feelings can change	Use questions about feelings to see if & how a child responds
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## Strategies to Develop Emotional Literacy in Infants and Toddlers

### Find opportunities in group settings to talk about feelings:

- Stay close & support children when they experience difficulties with peers & need adult support Show positive feelings for both children in conflict
- Let children know through your calm approach that conflict is to be expected and that it can be resolved with help

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### Video: Staying Close to Provide Support to Peer Interactions

What did the caregiver do to help these children deal with this challenging interaction?

How can this teacher follow-up and teach about feelings and emotions in this scenario, or other similar types of scenarios?



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## Strategies to Develop Emotional Literacy

Choose books, music, finger plays with a rich vocabulary of feeling words

Use puppetry or felt board stories that retell common social experiences & emphasize feeling vocabulary and conflict resolution

Read stories about characters that children can identify with who express a range of feelings

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Video 1.22 Teaching with Puppets

## Strategies to Develop Emotional Literacy

### Model Positive Relationships:

- Between other caregivers in the care setting
- With other children
- With parents



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## Using Books to Support Emotional Literacy: Activity

Select a book to share with your group

Talk about how you would use the book in your classroom

As a group, list feeling words in the book or feeling words you would use to enhance the book



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## Using Books to Support Emotional Literacy

What stands out to you as you watch the video?



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## Practice Implementation Checklist

### Handout 5

Reflect on strategies you use to teach about emotions

Think about what you do now, how you might like to change or improve those practices, or use those practices in new or different ways.

expressions of emotions & teaches about feelings	about me	often	sometimes or differently	never
Understand and provide labels for children's feelings				
Ask questions or expand on children's emotions				
Teach children to recognize others' emotions by pointing out peers' feeling to them				
Use activities to teach about feelings and feeling words				
Label my own emotions in response to real-life classroom situations				
Use real-life classroom situations to identify toddlers' feelings when they have conflicts or are frustrated				
Use real-life classroom situations to help toddlers problem-solve				
My Notes:				

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## Reflection



What questions do you have about the material we discussed?

What insights, if any, do you have about your own practices, the children, and/or their families?

What strategies did you see or hear that might be useful in your role and work?

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## Messages to Take Home

### Emotional literacy involves:

- Identifying and naming emotions in ourselves and others
- Understanding and expressing emotions in a healthy way

Emotional literacy in very young children is a result of having supportive relationships with adults

The language we use is an important element of emotional literacy

### Specific strategies to develop emotional literacy include:

- Using Adult/child relationships to expand child's awareness
- Finding opportunities in group settings
- Using enriching language tools
- Modeling positive relationships

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