

Social Emotional Learning: Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy is like ordinary literacy - it starts with an emotional vocabulary. Adults promote emotional literacy when they help children talk about their feelings. The capacity to identify emotions is an important part of self-awareness and is the first step in learning self-regulation and management. As children learn how to express their own emotions they begin to understand that parents, siblings, peers and others experience similar emotions. They learn that emotions determine how they respond to a situation and they discover that different people can have different emotional responses to the same situation.

Children and young people acquire emotional literacy when the adults around them use age appropriate language, reflect feelings and model emotional regulation. The abilities of children and youth with special needs, especially those with brain-based disabilities, may fluctuate from day-to-day. They may have difficulty applying what they learned one day, but may be able to demonstrate the skill at another time. Children and youth with special needs require plenty of repetition and many opportunities to practice in supportive environments in all areas of life - at home, at school and in the community. This helps to integrate learning.

The following activities help to promote emotional literacy and self-awareness:

Books

Visit your local library or bookstore and ask for age appropriate books on emotions like:



- ✓ When Sophie Gets Angry - Really, Really Angry by Molly Banh
- ✓ On Monday When It Rained by Cheryl Kachenmeister and Tom Berthiaume
- ✓ I have feelings by Bobbie Kalman

- ✓ Understanding Myself: A Kid's Guide to Intense Emotions and Strong Feelings by Mary C. Lamia
- ✓ Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids by Carol McCloud and David Messing
- ✓ F is for Feelings by Goldie Millar and Lisa Berger
- ✓ Scardey Squirrel by Melanie Watt

Games

Use card and board games that promote emotional literacy like:



Feelings card game



Kimochis



Eggspressions

Performance and Arts

Making music, moving, acting, writing, drawing, creating crafts, making videos and taking photographs can all be used to support the development of emotional literacy, and self-awareness.



For further information:

- ✓ Visit www.bc-cfa.org, SEED Program, Resources & Info
- ✓ Visit your local library – the children's librarians are great resources
- ✓ For younger children (under age 5 years) visit The Centre for Social Emotional Foundations in Early Learning at <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>

- ✓ If your child accesses therapy services ask how emotional literacy can be incorporated into Speech and Language therapy, Occupational therapy, and Physiotherapy
- ✓ As your child's school, out of school care program and community programs how they incorporate emotional literacy into children's daily routines