



FAMILIES

TACKLING TOUGH TIMES

TOGETHER



FAMILY

CHILDREN

We Tell Each Other the Truth! Clear, Consistent Messages

Strong feelings can have an effect on all of us, even young children. When children experience emotions, they can be displayed in many different ways. During stressful times it is especially important for adults and children to be aware of their emotions and to communicate clearly how they are feeling. Understanding feelings and being comfortable talking about them helps to foster resilience in family members, including young children.

Communicating Feelings

Children can better communicate their feelings when you help them recognize or name the emotions they may feel. Oftentimes young children do not fully understand their feelings. They may express anger when their routine is changed or sadness when they can't have a new toy they want. We can provide tools to our children to effectively communicate their feelings and expressions.

Feelings Activities and Resources

- **Make a feelings book.** Consider creating a book of your child's emotions. Take pictures of your child as they experience different emotions throughout the day or week. If you have a printer available, consider printing the pictures to make a feelings book. If you do not have access to a printer you may wish to make a feelings book with construction paper, magazine pictures, and tape or glue. Encourage your child to choose pictures that show different emotions. Once the book is complete, "read" the book together as you act out each emotion. Consider inviting your child to join you in listening to [The Feelings Book](#) by Todd Parr.
- **Play a "feelings" game.** Play a "feelings" version of Simon Says. Substitute feeling phrases for the usual directions as you play. For example, say "Simon says make a happy face!" Between each direction, invite your child to say what makes them feel the emotion stated. For example, "What makes you feel happy?"
- **Play a feelings board game.** Create a simple board game to help your child learn more about feelings. Use a large piece of paper or poster board and markers to create the game board. List feelings-related questions on some game spaces. When your child lands on a "feelings" space, encourage them to create the face that matches the emotion. [View an example of a completed game board and how to play.](#)

Communicating feelings can be more difficult for some children. For example, children with autism may find it difficult to express emotions in a way that helps others to understand how they feel. To learn more about how to help children with autism better understand and share their emotions, the Indiana Resource Center for Autism offers support through resources for [behavior and emotions](#).

Resources from FOCUS Program

- [Focus on Feelings](#)
- [The Feeling Thermometer](#)
- [Family Skills](#)

To learn more about the science behind teaching children about emotions, you may wish to read the below research:

- [The Relationship Between Emotion Knowledge, Emotion Regulation and Adjustment in Preschoolers: A Mediation Model.](#)