

iFeel...



Social-Emotional Learning Toolkit for Educators and Community Partners



What is “I Feel”?

“I Feel” is an original education series from WKAR Public Media at Michigan State University designed to help young children ages 3-8 understand and express their emotions in healthy ways. In each of the 13 segments, children name an emotion, followed by an expert who defines the emotion using simple, age-appropriate language. The expert also suggests strategies for managing big feelings. Kids learn to identify, describe, and understand their feelings, while developing skills for healthy social - emotional growth.

Why “I Feel”?

According to a National Institute of Health Journal article, *Developmental Stages of Social Emotional Development in Children*, “Even before acquiring language, babies learn to communicate through emotions. One may argue that knowing emotional regulation and impulse control may determine later success in life more than IQ.” The article goes on to say that there are three distinct emotions that are present from birth. These are anger, joy, and fear. Children reveal these feelings through their facial expressions even before they can speak.

An important first step to managing emotions is being able to name them. When children learn to articulate their feelings and emotions, they gain skills to empathize, trust, and connect with others. Most four-year-olds understand that other people have thoughts, feelings, likes, and dislikes that are different than their own. They also begin to understand their actions affect the emotions of others. For example, “If I scribble on my friend’s paper, she will feel mad or sad.” However, they need lots of practice self-regulating, communicating, and being comfortable in developing social language skills.

The 2024 Kids Count Data Book emphasizes that children in Michigan and across the country are in the midst of a mental health crisis, struggling with anxiety and depression at unprecedented levels. According to the report, 13.5% of Michigan children ages 3-17 struggled with anxiety or depression in 2020. This rate was higher than the national average. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth and young adults aged 10–24 years in Michigan.

The Sesame Workshop State of Wellbeing Report shows that parents believe that “media can help teach children about how to understand and manage their emotions” (82% of parents surveyed vs. 74% of total Americans surveyed). By collaborating with educators, parents, and early childhood experts, the “I Feel” interstitials can expand a child’s understanding of emotions, promoting emotional intelligence and resilience in a holistic and supportive way.

Watch “I Feel”



Scan here

Meet the Experts

DR. PRECIOS ARMSTRONG is the Director of Special Education for East Lansing Public Schools and a university professor with over 20 years of experience in education. Her work centers on culturally responsive practices, family engagement, and inclusive instruction to improve student outcomes through strong home-school partnerships.



DR. JASON MOSER has been studying how anxiety, and other emotions, affect our ability to stay focused and respond to setbacks in children and adults for over two decades. He is also a clinical psychologist who works one-on-one with children and adults to overcome their anxiety and live healthier, happier, and more productive lives.



MELISSA THREADGOULD has worked for Community Mental Health Authority of Clinton, Eaton and Ingham counties (CMHA-CEI) for 26 years and serves as the Supervisor of Early Intervention Services including the Infant Mental Health program. Melissa is endorsed by the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, rostered in Child Parent Psychotherapy, and certified in PMTO and as a Trauma and Loss Consultant.



CHARLES WEBER has a background in special education with a certification in applied behavior analysis. He currently runs Eaton RESA's Stepping Up Together program providing case management to teen parents.



ROBIN PIZZO is the Director of Education at WKAR and Regional Director of the Michigan Learning Channel. She leads the education team's efforts to help children and families become healthy, strong, and resilient lifelong learners. She is proud to be a PBS kid for life.



Meet the Kids



Charlotte



Journey



Xavier



Reece



Jaedyn



Nicholas



Miriam

Emotion Definitions

lönely

Feeling alone and disconnected.

lövèd

Feeling cared for and cherished.

wörrièd

Feeling anxious about the unknown.

sad

A deep feeling of unhappiness.

pröüð

Feeling great about your achievements.

scâred

Feeling afraid or worried about danger.

ëxcited

A burst of energy about something fun.

calm

Feeling peaceful and relaxed.

ëmbârrâssèd

Feeling awkward after making a mistake.

disâppöintèd

Feeling let down when things don't go as hoped.

angry

Intense feelings of frustration or irritation.

jëâlôüß

Feeling upset when others have what you want.

hâppy

Feeling joy and contentment.

How to use “I Feel” in an educational setting

Show one emotion at a time

Depending on the age of the children involved, you can spend as much time as you need for each emotion. Older students may only need one day, while younger students may benefit from a week or longer, depending on how much time you have each day. Emphasizing one emotion at a time will help children focus on that emotion.

Go over how each emotion feels in your body

After you have watched the video, talk about how the children in the video described how the emotion felt. Show the students where on your body you might feel each emotion. For example, when you are scared, you might feel it in your heart. Hold your hand over your heart to show students. Have students act out and use their bodies to show the emotion.

Provide a definition

After watching the video and discussing how that emotion can be felt in your body, use the definition provided to explain each emotion. Talk through the definition with students to make sure they understand all the words and break down any parts that are confusing. Consider writing or drawing parts of the definition for more explanation.

Discuss what makes you feel each emotion

Have children talk about what makes them feel the emotion. For instance, when was the last time they felt angry? Sad? Have them share what causes these emotions. They can also act out different situations, and talk about how it would make them feel if they were in that situation. For example, what if you were playing with a friend and they grabbed a toy out of your hand? Or, a friend gave you a hug? The acting will help them put themselves in the situation and imagine how they might feel.

Strategies to manage emotions

Each video gives ideas of what you can do when you feel a certain emotion. Have children practice these techniques, such as taking a deep breath or getting their energy out in a safe way. This is another great time to have students practice acting out situations to show how they would feel and what they could do about it. For example, if a friend took their toy, they may feel angry. What are some ways they could manage these feelings? How could they solve the problem they are having while also thinking about the other students feelings. Providing space for students to discuss and role play offers practice in self regulation.

Additional Activities

Included in this toolkit is a list of additional fun activities you can do (Page 7), along with a parent letter, (Page 8) and a list of resources (Page 9 and 10).

Fun Activity Ideas

Follow these links or use the QR codes to find great social emotional activities to do together from PBS KIDS.

Make a Glitter Jar

Glitter jars can be used to help children manage their emotions when they feel overwhelmed.



Scan here

Create a “thinking of you” bracelet

“Thinking of you” bracelets can be used to remind children that you care about them when they are feeling lonely.



Scan here

Practice Guessing Emotions

Use this game to practice understanding the emotions of others.



Scan here

Sing a Waiting Song

Sing this song together when a child is feeling frustrated or angry about having to wait.



Scan here

Create a Positivity Jar

Fill a jar with some ideas of what your child can do when they are feeling overwhelmed or sad.



Scan here

Do a Mistake Craft Together

Follow this guide to work together to make a craft and create art with mistakes.



Scan here

Hello Parent!

In class this year, we are watching video shorts called “I Feel” produced by WKAR Public Media. “I Feel” will help us learn all about our feelings and how to manage them!



Sad

Talk to your student at home to learn more about what feeling we are working on in class and what they learned about it.

loved



You can also scan the QR code below to watch “I Feel” on WKAR to learn along with your student!



calm

ifēel..

Want More Resources?

Sesame Workshop is a global nonprofit at the intersection of education, media, and research with research-based media and resources for families.



Scan here



PBS KIDS content helps preschool and school aged children in each of the four key areas of childhood development – cognitive, social, emotional and physical.



Scan here



The Michigan Learning Channel provides educators and families with free PBS videos and printable resources designed to ensure all kids succeed.



Scan here



PBS Learning Media has curated FREE, curriculum-aligned videos, interactive activities, lesson plans, and more for educators.



Scan here



Great Start Collaborative is a coalition of human service agencies, families and other partners working together to ensure every child from birth to eight in Ingham County has access to a universal, comprehensive and collaborative system of community-based early childhood programs, services and supports.



Scan here



Community Mental Health is a public agency serving people in Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties. It provides a comprehensive set of services used to increase access to care, support people in crisis, and provide treatment for those with the most serious and complex behavioral health needs regardless of their insurance coverage.



Scan here



Want More Resources?

Early On is Michigan's system for helping infants and toddlers, birth to age 3 and their families who have developmental delay(s) and/or disabilities. It's designed to help families find social, health, and educational services.



Scan here



Build Up Michigan helps parents and their children, ages 3 through 5, get additional educational support as they begin and continue to learn the skills needed to enter kindergarten.



Scan here



Hope Network provides life-changing services that bridge care gaps—offering health care like neuro rehabilitation, autism therapy, and mental health support, alongside essential social services like transportation, work skills training, affordable housing, and more.



Scan here



Capitol Area Community Services, Inc. Head Start and Early Childhood Programs in Michigan is a comprehensive preschool program serving low income children ages birth to 5 years old.



Scan here



PreK for All is open to all families, no matter their income, while prioritizing those who need it most.



Scan here



“Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” is a public awareness and action campaign that has created fun tips and resources to help you talk, read, and sing with your child every day.



Scan here

TALKINGISTEACHING



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