



# Norwood

Child and Family Resource Centre

## ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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## Paper Plate Emotion Faces

**Outcome:** Parents and caregivers play an important role in building children's ability to identify, understand, and express emotions in a healthy way. This activity helps children learn about feelings and label them, which leads to developing the ability to clearly communicate their own emotional status. Children build their confidence and self-esteem while experimenting with a variety of emotions.

**Materials Needed:**

Paper plates or cut-out paper circles; markers, crayons.

Optional: playdough, pre-cut parts of the face for different emotions (mouths, noses, eyes, eyebrows).

For younger children: bigger foam plates or a laminated/taped cut out circle from paper (a little bigger), bigger pre-cut parts of the face (eyes, lips, nose, eyebrows...).

### How:

- Use foam plates and washable markers and playdough if you have it **or** cut out paper circles and use markers, crayons, pencils, etc.
- Put the materials on the table or floor depending on your child's preference. Start drawing the eyes on a plate or paper circle and invite your child to do the same on theirs. (Or use playdough to create the faces).
- Describe the face you are creating using emotions—for example, "my face is going to look happy." Then ask your child, "can you tell me about the face you are making?"
- Keep changing the emotions on your plate or paper circles, and continue to label them ("now my face looks sad," "my face looks surprised," and so on).
- Ask your child again about the face they are drawing. It might happen that your child describes the emotions that they are creating and even makes a comparison between emotions on two or more faces.
- For younger children, pre-cut parts of the face (eyes, lips, nose, eyebrows...) and create a face with the emotions that you want them to learn. Label them so that they can repeat. Recreate the same emotions again with them and say, for example, "this face is feeling ...," so they can finish the sentence. If they pick up even one or two emotions, it is good progress. They might keep repeating some of the emotions that they have learned, create their own faces on the plates or paper or even be silly with their own faces.

## Read “The Feeling Book” by Todd Parr

### Outcome:

This story will take children through a rainbow of many different feelings and emotions that they have in their little bodies (silly, cranky, sad). It helps children understand that it's ok to have and embrace those feelings and it's important to share their feelings with their parents, teachers and caregivers.

### Materials Needed:

- You may find this book at your community library—or, you could make your own book of feelings and emotions!
- Markers, scissors, construction paper, yarn, hole puncher

### How:

- Find a nice spot to read with your child: outside under a tree, in your favourite chair, or in bed at bedtime.
  - Read “*The Feeling Book*” by Todd Parr
- or make your own ‘Book of Feelings’
- Stack two or three sheets of construction paper; fold them in half.
  - Punch several holes through the folded edge and weave the yarn through them to hold your book together.
  - On each page, draw faces showing different emotions and label them. You can even try writing your own story!
  - Read your book together with your child and talk about the emotions you drew.



## Puppet Play

**Outcome:** When children are encouraged to take role of others, they learn to empathize. This is an important way to help children experience compassion and respect for the feelings of other people. And your child can engage to interact, explore their knowledge, and understand the world.

**Materials Needed:** Paper lunch bag, googly eyes (craft eyes), glue stick, scissors, markers, yarn, pompoms

### How:

- You and your child use the materials and create your own puppets.
- When puppets are ready, put them onto your hands and start to role play: your puppets can be family members, animals, pets, doctor, patient, etc.
- After that, you and your child can start a conversation, sing a song, make a story with your child. Children can talk and share their ideas through the puppet.

## Mindful Body Scan

**Outcome:** Mindful body scans help children wind down, ground themselves, and regroup.

**Materials Needed:** A yoga mat or just space on the floor, soft music playing in the background.

### How:

- Have your child lay on their back on the floor or a mat with feet apart, arms by their side, and palms face up.
- Tell them to
  - close their eyes and begin their scan at their toes
  - inhale through their nose, squeeze their toes tightly
  - exhale and release their toes.
- Next, move to their feet and do the same: inhale through their nose and squeeze their feet tightly ... then exhale and release them.
- Continue up the body, piece by piece (legs, hands, arms, shoulders, face), tensing and releasing major muscle groups with each inhale and exhale.

## Blowing Bubbles

**Outcome:** The deep breathing required to blow bubbles is great for relaxation and stress relief. Deep breathing helps decrease stress, reduces anxiety, and helps children stay calm and focused. Make the bubbles available as a tool to help your child manage their big feelings and emotions.

**Materials Needed:** A bottle of bubbles for you and your child that you can buy in a store OR you can make your own bubbles at home (recipe below).

### How:

- Offer a bottle of bubbles with a bubble wand to your child when they are feeling a big emotion. You may go outside with your child and blow bubbles together.
- Blowing bubbles with your child not only helps them to regulate their emotions, but it also helps you as a caregiver to manage your own feelings, too.

### Make your own bubble solution:

- 4 tbsp tap water
- 1 tbsp concentrated dish soap (dishwashing liquid)
- 2 tbsp sugar
- bubble wand (you can make your own out of pipe cleaners)

## Play “Freeze Dance”

**Outcome:** This fun game helps children improve their self-regulation skills by through practice in following directions and managing emotions (e.g., excitement or calmness) when moving or staying still. This will help your child’s performance in school by building their ability to focus on tasks, manage their behaviours, refocus, and control their impulses.

**Materials Needed:** None.

### How:

- Put on music and let your child dance.
- Tell your child to freeze when you pause the music.
- Once they’ve stopped completely, put the music back on and let them dance again.
- Repeat as many times as you like.
- You may add more directions, such as hopping, swinging, or swirling.

## Breathing Practice Together

**Outcome:** Breathing techniques are good ways for children to regulate their emotions through learning relaxation skills at a young age. Taking some deep breaths as an exercise with their parent or caregiver encourages healthy attachment, and helps children work through emotions (angry, sad, scared...), building emotional competence.

**Materials Needed:** None.

### How:

Practice breathing with your child. Here are some examples of fun breathing:

#### Rainbow breathing

- Imagine a rainbow in the air in front of you.
- Move your finger from left to right to trace the rainbow as you inhale slowly through your nose.
- Move your finger from right to left to trace the rainbow as you exhale slowly through your mouth.
- Repeat as many times as necessary.

#### Soup breathing

- Imagine holding a bowl of hot soup in your hands.
- Slowly breathe in through your nose to smell the delicious soup.
- Slowly breathe out through your mouth to cool the hot soup.
- Repeat as many times as necessary.

#### Dragon breaths

- Sit cross legged or kneeling with your spine long.
- Breathe in through your nose.
- Breathe out through your mouth whispering a roar while opening your eyes and mouth wide.
- Repeat as many times as necessary.

#### Balloon breathing

- You can sit or stand up.
- Place both hands on top of your head.
- Begin to breathe in and out slowly. ... As you inhale, raise your arms above your head, like you are blowing up a balloon. When your lungs are full of air, your arms should look like a big, round balloon on top of your head.
- As you exhale, slowly bring your hands back down toward your head.
- Repeat as many times as necessary.

#### Bubble breath

- Imagine you have a wand to blow bubbles.
- Take a deep breath in through your nose.
- Slowly breathe out through your mouth as if you are blowing a bubble through a wand.
- Repeat as many times as necessary.
- Remind your child not to blow too hard, or they will pop the bubble!

## Red Light, Green Light

**Outcome:** During this game children practice listening skills, observation, agility and control of their bodies. When they hear the command “Green Light,” children allow their bodies to move freely and express their emotion by movement (going faster or slower). When they hear “Red Light,” they learn how to slow down, stop and keep their bodies still. It allows children to regulate and control their bodies even when excited. It’s also a great way of learning how to follow directions and develop emotional competence.

**Materials Needed:** Choose a playing area which is open and allows children to move freely, indoors or outdoors.

**Optional:** Have two big pieces of red and green paper to use as “lights.”

### How:

- Designate a starting line and the finish line.
- Start with everyone along the starting line.
- When you say “Green Light” everyone will move towards the finish line.
- When you say “Red Light” everyone must stop immediately.
- Continue till one of the players reaches the finish line and start again.