

Elementary School Lesson

All Kinds of Feelings

Rationale

How can educators and care providers help young children learn to identify their own and others' feelings and emotions? This activity provides an opportunity to assist children to creatively explore feelings through reflection, discussion, art and dance. The activities help children to understand how they can promote positive feelings in one another by practicing kindness in their daily lives. Children work together to create visual representations of feelings to use as catalysts for discussions throughout the year.

Objectives

- Children will reflect on, explore, and share their feelings about starting a new school year, meeting new children and teachers and experiencing new environments.
- Children will learn about the connection between words, actions and feelings.
- Children will create visual representations to depict a variety of feelings, which can be used as a catalyst for future discussions.
- Children will develop empathy for other children through sharing personal experiences and exploring commonly-shared emotions and feelings.

Age Range

Grades PreK–2

Time

1–3 class meetings (approximately 20 minutes each)

Key Words

Body language
Facial expression
Feelings
Pantomime
Posture

Requirements

- Chart paper, markers or crayons, magazines containing pictures of diverse people showing a wide range of emotions, glue, instruments or music and CD player. [NOTE: If magazines are not available, teachers will need drawing supplies, such as paper, crayons, pencils or markers so children can draw their own pictures of people with different emotions.]

Advanced Preparation

Ask children to bring in magazines that they can use to create the “Class Collage” part of this lesson (see Part II). Encourage children who can to bring more than one magazine so they can share with children who may not be able to bring in magazines. If magazines are not available, have children draw pictures to use in the “Class Collage” part of this lesson.

Have available any musical CDs or instruments to play during the “Feelings Dance” part of this lesson (see Part III #4).

Procedures

Part I: Group Discussion

1. Discuss the concept of “feelings” by leading a discussion that invites children to reflect on their own feelings about starting a new school year, meeting new children and teachers and experiencing new environments. Use some of the questions below to prompt discussion.

NOTE: Modify questions when necessary; some children may be attending a brand new school or program while others may be continuing in a school or program they previously attended. Avoid equating feelings of sadness and/or anger as

wrong or bad with children; reassure children that all people experience anger and sadness sometimes.

- What are feelings?
 - Does everyone have feelings?
 - Does everyone have the same feelings? Does everyone express them the same way?
 - How did you feel about meeting new children in your class this year?
 - How did you feel about already knowing some of the children in your class?
 - How did you feel about having a new teacher?
 - How did you feel about already knowing some of the teachers you have this year?
 - How did you feel coming to a new place for school?
 - How did you feel coming to a familiar place?
2. List all the feelings discussed on a large sheet of poster board or chart paper, leaving adequate space between the words for the “Class Collage” component of this activity.
 3. Lead a discussion to help children gain an understanding of how their words and actions can promote certain feelings and/or actions. While all feelings are acceptable, help children understand that some actions are not acceptable. For example, name-calling, hitting, biting may be a result of feeling angry or hurt, but these actions do not help lead to a resolution of the original problem. Use some of the below questions to prompt discussion.
 - How do you feel when someone shares his or her toy with you? What might you do?
 - How do you feel when someone will not share his or her toy with you? What might you do?
 - How do you feel when someone says that he or she likes the block tower you just built? What might you do?
 - How do you feel if someone knocks down the block tower you just built? What might you do?
 - How do you feel if someone calls you a name? What might you do?
 4. Ask children to identify the feelings on the list that result from different behaviors and actions (such as being kind to one another, inviting or excluding someone from play, etc.). Circle those particular words using a brightly colored marker or crayon.
 5. Ask children to think about or demonstrate the facial and body expressions they might have while experiencing each of the circled feelings.

Part II: “Class Collage”

1. Explain to the children that they will work together to create a “Class Collage” that depicts the various feelings on the list they created during the group discussion component of this lesson. Explain that they will hang the collage in a prominent place in the room so it can be used as a visual catalyst throughout the year to continue reflection about how their behaviors towards one another can trigger various feelings. Explain that it will also be used to help them create a “Feelings Dance.”
2. To create the collage, separate the children into several small groups and distribute magazines containing pictures of diverse people showing a wide range of emotions.

NOTE: If magazines are not available, use drawing supplies.

3. One word at a time, point to each feeling on the list; as you read the word, have children search through their magazines and cut out (or tear) pictures of people showing that emotion.

NOTE: If magazines are not available, have children draw pictures that express that emotion.

4. One by one, have the children paste their pictures next to the word of the corresponding feeling on the group list.

Part III: “Feelings Dance”

1. Lead the children in a discussion of the different expressions and body language illustrated in each picture on the “Class Collage.” Use some of the below questions to prompt discussion.
 - Which feelings do you see in people's faces? Tell us more about that.
 - What other parts of the body were used to express feelings? Describe and have children pantomime.
 - How is posture used in expressing feelings?
 - What feelings are easy to express through pantomime?
 - What feelings are easy to express in real life?
2. Explain that by working together, they will create a “Feelings Dance” of the words listed on the “Class Collage.”
3. Read each word on the “Class Collage” and have children pantomime each emotion using facial expressions and body language. Repeat the list of words and again have children move their bodies and faces to express the feeling; this series of words and movements becomes their “Feelings Dance.”
4. Help children play musical CD's or use instruments to accompany the movements for their “Feelings Dance.”

Assessment Recommendations

The success of this activity rests on the children's ability to understand, discuss and depict various feelings. Assess their ability and effort by observing their: (1) participation in group discussions, (2) contribution to the class collage, and (3) use of facial and body movements to express emotions.

Extension Activities

- Have children make a “Feelings” book by having them draw or cut out pictures of places, things or people that make them feel different emotions. Assemble all the pictures into one “Class Feelings Book” which can be shared during group time. For a home/school connection, display the completed book where adults who pick up children at the end of the day can see it.
- Have children use art supplies to create “Feelings Masks” that depict the emotions listed on the “Class Collage” from the previous lesson. Provide an opportunity for children to share their masks with a partner or in small groups. After the students have shared their masks, display them on a bulletin board somewhere else in the room.
- Invite children to paint or color pictures of people showing different feelings and emotions. Have them discuss how colors can be used to express emotion. Ask them how each color makes them feel.
- Play music with different tempos and moods and ask the children to describe how the music makes them feel. Have them move to the different music while expressing the mood the music evokes.