PARENT WORKSHOP: BUILDING LIFE SKILLS  
(SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT)

Goal: Support parents and caregivers in helping their children to identify, manage and express their feelings at home and in school.

Use these Parenting Minutes videos, discussion questions and suggested activities to guide parents and caregivers through a workshop that will support families in promoting social emotional skills. This workshop is intended for parents and caregivers of children in grades K-5 but can be used with parents of other grades as well. Have fun!

SUGGESTED TIME
30 minutes

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

- Chart paper and markers
- Screen for projecting Parenting Minutes videos (*you will need internet access to stream these videos)
- Slips of paper and pens
- Small bag, cup or container
- Sesame Street Feelings Faces (optional)
- Copies of PBS KIDS Resources for Parents and Caregivers (optional)
- Paper, crayons/markers (optional)

VIDEOS

EXPRESSING EMOTIONS

SHARING FEELINGS

Note: The videos are available in English and Spanish.
INTRODUCTION

Begin the workshop by inviting parents and caregivers to introduce themselves and share how old their children are. If you’d like, include the icebreaker question: “What are some activities you and your child/children enjoy doing together?” You can help families feel comfortable by role-modeling and sharing first.

DISCUSSION

Explain that the goal of the workshop is to provide parents and caregivers with tools to help their children identify, manage, and express their feelings. Discuss the importance of developing these skills:

- By helping children to express and work through their feelings, you are helping them to be better equipped to overcome both big and small challenges both in and out of school.
- Children learn through interactions with parents and teachers and each time you name a feeling and connect it to a body sensation, you help a child learn more about themselves.
- Being able to identify feelings helps a child feel a sense of security and helps them learn healthy ways to manage even their biggest feelings.
- By validating children’s emotions and modeling positive ways to handle big feelings and situations, you are sending a message to your children that the way they feel is important.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

Play the two Parenting Minutes videos EXPRESSING EMOTIONS and SHARING FEELINGS one at a time, allowing for a brief discussion after each. Prompting questions may include the following:

EXPRESSING EMOTIONS:

- What were some of the strategies or activities you observed in the Talking About Feelings video (e.g., using picture books to talk about emotions)? Have you ever tried some of these strategies with your children? If so, describe your experience with those strategies.
- Which life skills were supported through the strategies in the video (e.g. asking specific questions to help children identify feelings) or those you practice at home? Why are they important and what other life skills matter to you and your family?
• What other strategies or activities have you tried at home or school to support your child’s development of these skills?

SHARING FEELINGS:
• What were some of the strategies or activities you observed in the Reflection Time video? Have you ever tried some of these strategies (e.g., establishing a safe space to share feelings)? What do you think of the strategies shared in the video?
• Why do you think helping children manage feelings at home might be important for school and/or academics? What benefits might it have?

BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY
Using chart paper and markers, ask attendees to brainstorm the following questions. This can be done with the whole group or in small groups:

• Is there a part of your day when you could incorporate a time for open discussion with your children and allow them to share their thoughts and feelings? Where could this conversation take place (a “safe space” as mentioned in the “Talking about Feelings” video)? Be specific.

• What are some prompting questions you may ask your child? How can you extend the conversation with your child beyond one-word answers (like “yes” or “no,” “good” or “bad”)?

• What are some ways you can help your children to identify and express their emotions? What are some tools you could use to help? (examples may include drawing pictures, writing in a journal, movement, music, etc.)

“FEELINGS CHARADES” GAME
Play the “Feelings Charades” game with parents and caregivers to help them understand how we can connect our body language to our emotions! Remind parents this is a simple game to play with their children to help them build empathy skills (the ability to relate to or understand someone’s feelings) and gain control of their feelings.

• Using strips of paper, have parents and caregivers describe or draw a picture of situations that would make them feel a specific emotion. For example, they could write “spending time with your best friend” or “being outside without an umbrella when it starts to pour.”
  *This portion can also be prepped ahead of time if necessary*
• Put the strips of paper into a bag, cup or small container.
As a whole group or in small groups, each parent or caregiver picks a slip of paper and acts it out, without using their voice. For example, they may show a frown on their face for “when you’re stuck on a problem.”

Allow the other parents to guess what the emotion is. For example, they may say “happy,” “sad,” “frustrated,” “angry,” “proud,” “surprised.”

Check out the Explore Body Language with Feelings Charade (https://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-and-experiments/explore-body-language-with-feelings-charades) for more details about this game.

**EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (OPTIONAL)**

If time allows, consider the following activities:

1. **Feeling Faces Game:** Using the Sesame Street “Feelings Faces” worksheet (attached), have parents/caregivers take turns picking one of the faces. Once they have picked a face, they can act out a situation that makes them feel that emotion while the other parents/caregivers guess what the emotion is.

2. **Make Feelings Charts:** parents and caregivers use pieces of paper and crayons/markers to draw pictures of what their faces look like when they feel a certain emotion (e.g., happy, sad, frustrated, tired, surprised). Under each face, have them label the emotion. Remind them that this is an activity that they can do with their children at home. See an example here (https://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-and-experiments/understanding-emotions-with-a-feelings-faces-chart).

3. **Play “I Ask, You Ask”**: parents and caregivers take turns asking different questions to each other. For example, “what was the best part of your day today?” or “what’s something you love to do?” or “Can you think of something you worked hard on today?” Remind them that this is a simple game to play with their children that helps to build empathy and understanding as well as communication skills.

**CLOSE:**

By supporting your child to develop important life skills like communication, identifying and managing emotions, empathy among others, you are setting your child up for success in and out of school.
PBS KIDS RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

SESAME STREET IN COMMUNITIES
- EXPLORING EMOTIONS: https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/emotions/
- OFFERING COMFORT: https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/comfort/

PBS KIDS FOR PARENTS
- EMOTIONS & SELF-AWARENESS: https://www.pbs.org/parents/learn-grow/all-ages/emotions-self-awareness
- SOCIAL SKILLS: https://www.pbs.org/parents/learn-grow/all-ages/social-skills
- CHARACTER: https://www.pbs.org/parents/learn-grow/all-ages/character

PBS KIDS SOCIAL EMOTIONAL GAMES AND APPS

ARTHUR
- So Funny I forgot to Laugh (https://pbskids.org/arthur/friends/so-funny)
- Buster's Growing Grudge (https://pbskids.org/arthur/friends/busters-grudge)
- Dear Adil (https://pbskids.org/arthur/friends/dear-adil)
- Francine's Tough Day (https://pbskids.org/arthur/friends/francines-tough-day)
- Arthur's Big App (https://pbskids.org/apps/arthurs-big-app.html)

DANIEL TIGER'S NEIGHBORHOOD
- Guess the Feeling (https://pbskids.org/daniel/games/guess-the-feeling)
- Barnyard Match (https://pbskids.org/daniel/games/barnyard-match)
- Classroom Helpers (https://pbskids.org/daniel/games/classroom helpers)
- Neighbor Day (https://pbskids.org/daniel/games/neighbor-day)

SESAME STREET
- Elmo's School Friends (https://pbskids.org/sesame/games/elmos-school-friends/)
- Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame (https://www.commonsense.org/education/app/breathe-think-do-with-sesame)

LEARNING HEROES

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC TOOLS AND RESOURCES: LEARNING HERO ROADMAP
https://bealearninghero.org/readiness-roadmap/
Feeling Faces

Use the Feeling Faces as a tool to help children label and express their feelings. You may encourage children to color in each feeling face as well!