

EYFS: Emotional Literacy Activities

What Is Emotional Literacy?

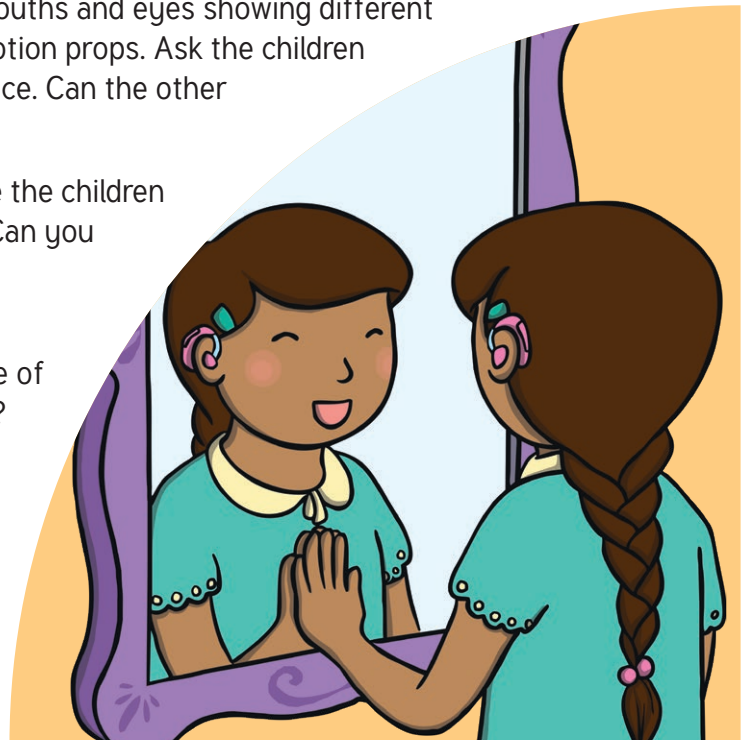
Emotional Literacy is a term used to describe your ability to recognise, name and express your feelings. Initially, children will need adults to help them recognise and name their feelings. Then, over time, they will begin to be able to recognise and name their many emotions independently. In addition to this, with some adult guidance and support, children will begin to recognise that all of these feelings are normal and can change many times throughout the day.

Once children are able to recognise and name their feelings, they can then begin to learn how to manage them. This could mean that they can stay calm when something makes them angry or they can comfort themselves when they are worried.

As a child's emotional literacy develops, they can begin to recognise different emotions with others and begin to empathise.

Here are a few ideas that you may like to try within your EYFS setting to encourage emotional literacy.

- Provide the children with these [Face Playdough Mats](#) and some playdough. Can the children make a playdough face to show different feelings? What does the mouth look like? Why do you think they feel this way? What makes you happy/sad/angry?
- Sing the song [If You're Happy and You Know It](#) and encourage the children to think about what makes them happy and how they show it. You can change the words of this song to represent other feelings, such as 'If you're sad and you know it,' or 'If you're angry and you know it.' What actions could you use for these emotions?
- Provide the children with mirrors. Can they make faces to show different emotions in the mirror? What happens to their faces? What does your face look like when you are sad?
- Print, cut and laminate photo images of people's mouths and eyes showing different emotions. Attach these to lolly sticks to create emotion props. Ask the children to hold up one of the facial features to their own face. Can the other children guess their emotion?
- Icing biscuits - using edible decorations, encourage the children to make different emotion faces on plain biscuits. Can you make a happy/sad/angry face?
- Provide the children with digital cameras and these [Emotions Photo Cards](#). Can the children name one of the emotions and make a face to show this feeling? Their friend can take a picture of them.
- Listen to pieces of music which evoke different emotions. For example, an upbeat piece of music to encourage a happy feeling. Can they describe how it makes them feel? Can they move their body to show this feeling?



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Ideas Continued

- During snack time, encourage the children to draw emotion faces on their peelable fruit (bananas and oranges). How is their fruit feeling? What's happened to them? The children can then peel the fruit and eat it.
- Create a 'quiet space' in your setting where children can reflect or have time to manage their feelings. This could be as simple as a rug and cushion or it could be a pop-up tent or den.
- Which colour would you choose for a feeling? Encourage the children to express emotions through colour. They can create a painting using a colour they feel represents that feeling. Can they make marks and lines that also represent that feeling?
- Blow up a balloon and tell the children that the balloon is full of all the things that make us angry. Encourage children to discuss the feeling of anger and share the things that make them feel angry. Pop the angry balloon and allow all of those angry feelings to float away.
- Play a 'How Am I Feeling?' game. Describe a simple scenario to the children, such as, 'I tripped over my chair and hurt my foot' or 'I wanted a biscuit, but Mrs X ate the last one.' Can the children suggest how this might make you feel by naming the feeling?