

The world of emotions can be difficult to navigate. Acknowledging and sharing how we feel are important steps towards understanding ourselves better, as well as learning how we can help ourselves and enable others to help us. Being able to name the feelings they come across will help children on their journey towards coping with strong emotions. Emotion Stones show the following emotions: happy, sad, angry, frightened, worried, surprised, confused, bored, calm, proud, shy and embarrassed.

Try these simple activities to give children a starting point for understanding how they and others feel.

It's good to talk

The stones make a great conversation starter for discussing feelings, facial expressions and the situations that cause children to feel a certain way. What makes them feel happy? How would they feel if they couldn't play with the toy they wanted? Have they ever felt really surprised? When the children are first introduced to the stones, concentrate on a few emotions, before adding more in when they are more familiar with them.



Sometimes we hide how we really feel... Children could search in a tray full of sand and uncover the Emotion Stones. When they find one, what can they see in the face – a smile, a frown, wide eyes? How do you think the face is feeling? Have they ever felt like that?

Sharing how *you* felt at different times is a great way to guide children through the world of emotions. If you keep the stones in a basket in an accessible place, you could show the children the stone that matches how you are feeling – such as proud at how well they've tidied up! If a child feels worried, for example, they might like to find the stone in the basket and bring it to you.



As you explore stories and books together, pause to talk about how a character is feeling and choose the stone that best matches the emotion. Children might notice that a character is feeling sad – why could this be? You can build their vocabulary and understanding with words such as *lonely*, *disappointed* or *confused*.

To encourage empathy and kindness, show a stone such as the worried face, and describe a situation when another child might be feeling like this. What could the children do that might help their friend feel better?

Get talking – useful words

Pleased, joyful, upset, cross, furious, shocked, lonely, disappointed, confused, relaxed, smile, laugh, cry, shout, stamp, shiver, shake, hide, mouth, lips, eyes, eyebrows.

Let's play

Bring the stones into small world play and they can become characters. Maybe the frightened stone is lost in the woods, or the calm stone is relaxing at the seaside.

Lay the stones face down. Say, 'Show me, Show me!' and turn one of the stones over. Then ask the children to identify the expression on the stone. Can they show you the same expression with their own face? Continue the game until all the stones have been turned over.



You could play a matching game by laying the stones out on a table and finding the one that matches a printed picture of a face showing a particular emotion. You can take this activity onscreen using the Puzzle Pairs game on Yellow Door's *I've Got a Feeling* app.



Take it in turns to pull a stone out of a bag and then act out the emotion – children might like to use their face or their whole body to show how they feel. Can everyone else guess which stone they have?

Children enjoy playing with the stones in sand or with play dough. Can they make impressions of the faces in the sand or dough?

Express yourself

Children can use the stones as inspiration for creating their own pictures of faces showing different emotions. Maybe they would enjoy gluing googly eyes and coloured shapes onto paper plates to make faces, or simply drawing faces in the sand.

Music is a powerful way to express emotions. If you play some music that reflects a strong emotion, can the children find a stone that matches the music? Can they move to the music to express the emotion? You might like to play these pieces of music:

- happy: *The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba*, by Handel
- sad: *Adagio in G Minor*, by Albinoni
- angry: *Auguries of Spring* from *The Rite of Spring*, by Stravinsky
- calm: *Clair de Lune* by Debussy



Make up your own version of *If You're Happy and You Know It Clap Your Hands*. Select a stone showing an emotion such as sad, angry, frightened or calm. What could the children do with their bodies to show this feeling? They might choose, 'If you're angry and you know it, stamp your feet', for example.

Books about emotions

Owl Babies by Martin Waddell

Conker the Cameleon by Hannah Peckham

My Big Shouting Day by Rebecca Patterson

Tough Guys (Have Feelings Too) by Keith Negley

Ruby's Worry by Tom Percival