

Refrigerator Notes

Facilitating Children's Emotion Learning: Parents as "Emotion Coaches"



Describing children's feelings is a powerful way to strengthen your child's emotional literacy. Once children have emotion language, they will be able to better regulate their own emotions because they can tell you how they feel. The following is a list of emotions that can be commented upon when playing with a child. Use this checklist to practice describing your child's emotions.

Feelings/Emotional Literacy	Examples
_____ happy	"That is frustrating, and you are staying calm and trying to do that again."
_____ frustrated	
_____ calm	"You look proud of that drawing."
_____ proud	"You seem confident when reading that story."
_____ excited	
_____ pleased	"You are so patient. Even though it fell down twice, you just keep trying to see how you can make it taller. You must feel pleased with yourself for being so patient."
_____ sad	
_____ helpful	
_____ worried	
_____ confident	"You look like you are having fun playing with your friend, and he looks like he enjoys doing this with you."
_____ patient	
_____ having fun	"You are so curious. You are trying out every way you think that can go together."
_____ jealous	
_____ forgiving	"You are forgiving of your friend because you know it was a mistake."
_____ caring	
_____ curious	
_____ angry	
_____ mad	
_____ interested	
_____ embarrassed	

Modeling Feeling Talk and Sharing Feelings

"I am proud of you for solving that problem."

"I am really having fun playing with you."

"I was nervous it would fall down, but you were careful and patient, and your plan worked."

Refrigerator Notes

Facilitating Children’s Social Learning: Parents as “Social Skills Coaches”



Describing and prompting children’s friendly behaviors is a powerful way to strengthen children’s social skills. Social skills are the first steps to making lasting friendships. The following is a list of social skills that you can comment on when playing with a child or when a child is playing with a friend. Use this checklist to practice your social skills coaching.

Social/Friendship Skills	Examples
<input type="checkbox"/> helping <input type="checkbox"/> sharing <input type="checkbox"/> teamwork <input type="checkbox"/> using a friendly voice (quiet, polite)	<p>“That’s so friendly. You are sharing your blocks with your friend and waiting your turn.”</p> <p>“You are both working together and helping each other like a team.”</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> listening to what a friend says <input type="checkbox"/> taking turns <input type="checkbox"/> asking <input type="checkbox"/> trading <input type="checkbox"/> waiting	<p>“You listened to your friend’s request and followed his suggestion. That is very friendly.”</p> <p>“You waited and asked first if you could use that. Your friend listened to you and shared.</p> <p>“You are taking turns. That’s what good friends do for each other.”</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> agreeing with a friend’s suggestion <input type="checkbox"/> making a suggestion <input type="checkbox"/> giving a compliment <input type="checkbox"/> using soft, gentle touch <input type="checkbox"/> asking permission to use something a friend has <input type="checkbox"/> problem solving <input type="checkbox"/> cooperating <input type="checkbox"/> being generous <input type="checkbox"/> including others <input type="checkbox"/> apologizing	<p>“You made a friendly suggestion and your friend is doing what you suggested. That is so friendly.”</p> <p>“You are helping your friend build his tower.</p> <p>“You are being cooperative by sharing.”</p> <p>“You both solved the problem of how to put those blocks together. That was a great solution.”</p>

Prompting

- “Look at what your friend has made. Do you think you can give him a compliment?” (praise child if s/he tries to give a compliment)
- “You did that by accident. Do you think you can say you are sorry to your friend?”

Modeling Friendly Behavior

- Parents can model waiting, taking turns, helping, and complimenting, which also teach children these social skills.



REFRIGERATOR NOTES

Promoting Your Toddler's Self-regulation Skills

- Try to understand what your toddler is feeling and wanting
- Describe your toddler's feelings (don't ask him what he is feeling because he is unlikely to have the words to tell you)
- Label your toddler's positive feelings more often than his negative feelings
- Praise your child's self-regulation skills such as staying calm, trying again when frustrated, waiting a turn, and using their words
- Support your toddler when he is frustrated
- Model and give your toddler the words to use to express his needs (e.g., "you can ask her for the truck")
- Help your toddler learn ways to self-soothe such as using a pacifier or blanket
- Praise and encourage your toddler when he stays calm in a frustrating situation
- Cuddle and soothe your toddler when she is hurt or frightened. Stay calm yourself to provide extra reassurance.

**I label
positive
feelings**





REFRIGERATOR NOTES

Promoting Your Toddler's Social Competence

- During play model social skills for your toddler such as offering to share, wait, give a compliment and take turns, ask for help and agree to wait.
- Prompt your toddler to ask for help, or take a turn, or share something, or give a compliment and then praise if it occurs. Don't make an issue out of it if your toddler does not respond to your prompt.
- Praise your toddler any time s/he offers to share with you or help you.
- Participate in pretend play by taking your doll or action figure and using them to model skills such as asking to play, offering to help, taking a turn, giving a compliment, calming down with a deep breath and waiting.
- Model and prompt your child with a suggestion of the appropriate words to use.
- Help your child occasionally notice what another child is doing and to help them in some way.
- Help your toddler understand that when s/he shared, the other person felt happy.



I model
social skills





REFRIGERATOR NOTES

Picky Eating

Eating solids is a new learning experience for your toddler. Your child will need time to explore the tastes, textures and smell of each new food. Remember repeated learning trials will be needed before your toddler will come to like a new food.

- Try to make mealtimes a relaxed and a fun time for your toddler
- Minimize distractions during mealtimes by turning off TV or taking the phone off the hook
- Provide your toddler with a choice of foods to allow for independent decision making
- Introduce one new food at a time in a small amount; for example, offer the new food along with your toddler's favorites
- Try to offer a meal with at least one food choice you know your toddler likes
- Offer toddler-size portions—which are much smaller than adult portions
- Resist the urge to offer sugary foods, or your toddler will learn to prefer these foods over others
- Don't expect your toddler to like a whole lot of foods—let your toddler make his own decisions on the food he chooses to eat. Forcing your child to eat will only make your toddler more stubborn and less open to new foods in the future.
- You don't need to become a short-order cook. If you provide some choices of foods your toddler often likes, you don't need to cook an entire new dinner to meet his demands.

**I provide some
food choices and
independent
decision-making**





REFRIGERATOR NOTES

CHILD-DIRECTED PEER PLAY

- Encourage play dates with friends.
- Describe children's play activities (e.g., colors, shapes, numbers, position of objects).
- Praise and encourage children's ideas and creativity; avoid criticism.
- Engage in role play and make-believe with children (e.g., puppets, pretend phone calls).
- Prompt children to notice each other's activities.
- Use descriptive comments instead of asking questions.
- Try to give enough help; so children are successful but not so much help that you take over
- Prompt, coach, and praise children's friendly behaviors (e.g., sharing, helping, taking turns, being polite).
- Provide positive support for children's emotional regulation skills (e.g., being patient or calm, waiting, using words).
- Encourage and describe children's expressions of emotion (e.g., being excited, frustrated, curious, calm).
- Laugh and have fun.

Remember to be realistic about what is developmentally appropriate to expect for toddlers!

**I help my toddler
see the connections
between behavior and
another's feelings**





REFRIGERATOR NOTES

Social & Emotional Developmental Landmarks 25–30 months

- Talks about self (“me”) (25 months)
- Uses pronouns (e.g., I, me, you) (26 months)
- Uses 3-word sentences (25 months)
- Speaks clearly (27 months)
- Can answer some questions (26 months)
- Vocabulary increases to 300 words (30 months)
- Understands descriptions (28 months)
- Starts to recognize ABCs
- Brushes teeth with help (29-30 months)
- Aware of need to pee or poop (25-30 months)
- Names a color (30 months)



REFRIGERATOR NOTES

Physical Developmental Landmarks 25–30 months

- Can walk downstairs (25 months)
- Learns to jump (25 months)
- Washes and dries own hands (26 months)
- Draws a circle (30 months)
- Puts on shirt (30-32 months)

**I monitor
milestones**

