

## Emotional Literacy Quick Guide

Below, you will find information and activities for the Emotional Literacy Construct Progression. See the [NC Construct Progressions and Situations Book](#) for additional information and full references.

### Why focus on Emotional Literacy?

*Children who can identify and express their emotions are better able to manage strong emotions. Therefore, they often have better relationships with children in their classroom and have better social skills. These are important competencies for success in school. Children who have difficulty managing frustration or maintaining a positive attitude may also have difficulty with tasks that are important for academic learning, such as focusing attention, planning and finishing tasks, and regulating other behaviors that are important for academic learning (Blair, 2002; Raver, et al., 2007).*

#### This construct is about:

- Identifying feelings/emotions by specific names.
- Expanding vocabulary related to naming emotions.
- Identifying, understanding and responding to emotions in oneself and others (peers, characters of a story, etc.).
- Understanding cause of emotions and varied emotional responses to an event.
- Being encouraged to share personal emotions/feelings within safe environment.
- Understanding connection between emotions and behaviors.
- Building empathy for others.
- Building skills that will help children to build healthy relationships with others.

#### This construct is *not* about:

- Categorizing/sorting emotions as being good or bad.
- Learning to repress “bad” emotions.
- Shaming expressions of emotions.
- Responding in only one way to emotions.

**Emotional Literacy:** Children understand that emotions may be experienced in their bodies and expressed in their behaviors. Children understand that emotions may be recognized in themselves and others. Children understand that emotions have causes and effects and that people may feel and respond differently in similar situations.

A. In response to an experience, expresses a range of emotions. This may manifest as an outburst, change in activity level or facial expressions.	B. Exaggerates expression of emotions to get needs and desires met and/or to get help from an adult or peer.	C. Expresses emotions through language, posture, or gestures suitable to the context.	D. With support from an adult, labels emotions in self and others.	E. Independently labels emotions in self and others.
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F. Labels higher-order emotions (confused, worried, surprised) in self and others.	G. Explains that an event can cause certain emotions.	H. Explains that an event can cause more than one emotion.	I. Explains that the same event can cause different people to experience different emotions.
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### Daily Check In

- As children arrive each morning, they can check in as part of their daily routine by selecting an emotion they are feeling (happy, sad, excited, nervous, worried, etc.). You can have children select from face pictures, emoji's, and even popular storybook characters from books that you have shared. This allows for an opportunity for further discussion about children's identification of emotions.

### Take Advantage of Your Read Aloud and Guided Reading!



During your read aloud and guided reading lessons, plan purposeful opportunities to ask students to identify the emotions of characters in the story. Plan for strategically asking questions that include supporting students to identify emotions and questions about higher-order emotions (like confusion, excitement, surprise, and worry) to determine where students are in their emotional literacy development. For sample lessons, see the KEA Integrated Lessons on the [KEA Resources Page](#) of the regional wiki. Here are sample lessons that include emotional literacy: [Pete the Cat](#), [Frog and Toad](#), and [Virgil and Owen](#).

### Show Me with Your Face!

A simple and effective way to gauge student's ability to identify emotions is to ask them to mirror emotions by showing the emotion with their face (smile, grumpy face, pouty face, surprised face). For example, if their friend is sad, you can ask them to show you how their friend is feeling by making this face. You can ask them to show you how a character in the book is feeling by showing the emotion on their face. Are they able to make a face that mirrors the emotions of the book character or their friend? This demonstrates their understanding and their ability to label this emotion.