



Helping teachers work with children when they first return to education following major traumatic or life-changing events

Dictionary of Emotions

Designed for Ages	3 - 5 years old
Adaptable for Ages	2 - 10 years old
Learning Experience Description:	This activity supports children through a variety of mediums to connect and explore as they build their emotional literacy in the creation of a dictionary of emotions.
Te Whāriki (Aotearoa New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum) Link:	Mana atua (Well-being) Mana reo (Communication)
Te Whare Tapa Whā (Māori model for well-being):	Taha hinegaro (Emotional Well-being)
Te Whare o Oro (Māori framework for understanding the brain):	Central Nervous System: integration of mind, body and senses.
Tapasā (Cultural competency resource for teachers working with Pacific learners):	Turu 1: Identities, languages and cultures
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A picture book that explores emotions. Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In My Heart by Jo Witek. A video reading of the book is available on YouTube. - The Rainbow in My Heart: A Book about Emotions by Jessica Urlichs & Rebekah Ballagh. A video reading of the book is available on YouTube. <input type="checkbox"/> Printed copies of the dictionary page template (attached). Make sure there are enough template pages for however many emotions your children want to explore, as well as whether you will make one or many dictionaries. <input type="checkbox"/> Different colour ribbons/feathers/small pieces of fabric to represent the emotions. Enough for each child to have the same colour ribbon for every emotion being explored. 	
Things to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This learning experience is best facilitated over many sessions and can be built up over days and/ or weeks. Be sure to take time exploring each emotion. If you have limited time, you can break your group of children into smaller groups that each work on a different emotion. • The activity can be facilitated where children create one dictionary as a group or each child creates their own personal dictionary. The instructions are written for creating a group dictionary, but please feel free to adapt instructions where needed to create individual dictionaries. 	



Prepare ahead:

Depending on how old your children are, you may want to prepare a list of emotions for each dictionary entry ahead of time. As this is a great activity to expand your children's emotional literacy range, try to pick an array of emotions beyond the most core emotions (i.e. sad, happy, scared, angry, surprised, disgusted).

Instructions:

1. **Read a picture book that discusses emotions** with the children. Picture book suggestions:
 - The Rainbow in My Heart: A Book about Emotions by Jessica Urlichs & Rebekah Ballagh.
 - In My Heart by Jo Witek.
2. Share with the children how **as a group we are going to create a Dictionary of Emotions**. Explain to the children: "A dictionary is a book that explains what different words mean. We are going to create a book that is all about describing our different emotions."
3. Ask the children some questions about emotions:
 - a. What are emotions?
 - b. Can you describe emotions?
 - c. Where do emotions come from?
4. **Share with the children how we all have different feelings**. We might feel something different than someone else and that is okay. Share that feelings are not good or bad, they are just part of being human. What is important is that we learn to express our feelings in a way that does not hurt ourselves or others.
5. **Ask the children to list what emotions they want to include in the dictionary**. You may want to have a list of emotions on hand to add to their suggestions.
6. Share with the children how we will create **a dictionary page** for each of the emotions. The page shows what each emotion looks, feels, smells, tastes, and sounds like. We will also get to share music, dance, and a picture to describe each emotion.
7. Ask the children to indicate **which emotion they want to work on first**. You could do this by vote. Or you can choose to list emotions alphabetically.
8. **Show the children the dictionary page template**. It might be helpful to write the template on a whiteboard or chalkboard so it is easier for the children to see. Once you've filled in all the information for each emotion then you can transfer that information to the physical dictionary page.
9. For the purposes of these instructions, happy will be used as the emotion example. The following sequence can be facilitated over a longer time period, so feel free to take your time with it. **Ask the children prompting questions about**

each element on the template to fill in the dictionary page. You can write down the answers children give or they can complete their own pages.

- a. “What does happy **look like**?” Ask the children to ‘show with their faces and bodies what happy looks like’ or “what might someone who is happy look like?” and get one or two children to act this out.
- For some emotions you may need to provide some examples of the emotions. For example, someone might be sad if someone else ate the last cookie.
- b. “What does happy **feel like** in your body?” Example: butterflies in your tummy. Or “What does happy feel like to touch?” Examples: squeezing a plush toy, running hands through water, picking flowers.
- c. “What does happy **smell like**?” Examples: freshly baked cookies, flowers, saltwater.
- d. “What does happy **taste like**?” Example: an ice cream on a warm day.
- e. “What does happy **sound like**?” Examples: shaking a jar filled with beans or shaking maracas (angry), humming (sad).
- f. “What **song** reminds you of being happy?” Example: Happy by Pharell.
Suggestion: you can play a variety of music or tones and change the pitch, tempo etc. and ask the children which sounds most like the emotion.
- g. “What sort of **dance or movement** might show someone you are happy?”
- Examples for emotions: making your body really small (sad), making your body take up the most amount of space (confident).
Suggestion: If you have any ribbons/feathers/pieces of fabric that represent the colour of the emotion, the children could dance with the ribbons to embody the feeling more.
- h. “**What do we want to draw that represents happy?**”
Suggestions: the children can paint or colour a drawing that represents each emotion. Each drawing can be included in the dictionary or if working in small groups the group can create a drawing together on a single piece of paper.

10. **Repeat steps 1 - 9 for each emotion** until you have created your classes dictionary.
11. After your group has completed the Dictionary of Emotions, you can encourage ongoing use of it. For example, you can add pages when a child shares an emotion that is not in the dictionary. You can encourage the children to grab the dictionary when they are trying to identify what emotion they are feeling. The dictionary can also be shared with family, and copies made to send home with each child.



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