

LET'S TALK ABOUT FEELINGS

TODAY I FELT...



I GET AFRAID WHEN...

WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY?



WHEN I'M MAD I SHOULD...



HOW DO OTHER PEOPLE FEEL?



WHAT MAKES YOU SAD?



KALAMAZOO RESA
INSPIRING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



DEAR FAMILIES,

We are excited to bring you a new resource to help your children on the path to literacy! Kalamazoo County Talking is Teaching offers materials and activities that are easy, everyday ways to boost your children's brain power. Kalamazoo County Talking is Teaching is an initiative of the Great Start Collaborative, a program of Kalamazoo RESA.

The research is clear: the brain develops more rapidly in the first few years of life than at any other time in life.

Understanding lots of words makes all learning easier in their future. Talking is Teaching focuses on "making small moments BIG." Whether you are at home folding laundry, changing diapers, watching TV, or going for a walk, there are so many little things we can all do to help children become successful readers and learners!

THE MORE WORDS YOUR LITTLE ONE HEARS
IN CONVERSATIONS WITH YOU, THE MORE
CONNECTIONS THEIR BRAIN MAKES
ABOUT WORDS AND WHAT THEY MEAN.



We look forward to providing lots of fun lessons, materials and ideas for you and your child. Kalamazoo County Talking is Teaching offers virtual playgroups and parent skill-building sessions.

Reach out to Jen Stroven, Campaign Manager, at jen.stroven@kresa.org or call 269.250.9701. Like us at Facebook at [Kalamazoo County Talking is Teaching!](#)

LET'S TALK, READ, SING ~
AND BUILD YOUR CHILD'S FUTURE ONE WORD AT A TIME!

More early childhood services at Kalamazoo RESA:

- ▶ **Great Start Collaborative** offers virtual "Parent Cafes" to connect and feel supported! For more check us out at KalamazooGSC.org, or call 269-250-9635.
- ▶ **Seeds for Success** offers developmental screenings and home visits to all families. Call 269-250-9647.
- ▶ **Early On** offers free evaluations and home visiting for children birth to age 3. Call with any developmental concerns. 269-250-9649

#TALKINGISTEACHINGTIPS CALENDAR



Talk, read, and sing with your children every day! Simple interactions like the ones below can help boost children's brain and language development, setting them up for success in school and beyond. Please share photos of your family talking, reading, and singing using the hashtag #TalkingIsTeachingTips.

- 1 Help your child explore their feelings. At the end of the day ask your child: what was the funniest thing that happened today?
- 2 Let's explore some of things your child loves. Ask them: what are three of your favorite things about this season?
- 3 Let's read a book together! Ask your child, "Will you show me your favorite book?"
- 4 Draw a picture of your family with your child! Share a special memory of each person in the picture.
- 5 When your child is acting out, try helping name a feeling they are experiencing. Ask them: are you feeling happy, sad scared or mad?
- 6 Find photographs of your family and relatives. Name the people in the photographs and talk about them with your child.
- 7 Cook together! Share your favorite family recipe with your child. Talk about the different flavors and colors in the food!
- 8 Ask you child: what's a memory that makes you happy?
- 9 Have fun pretending to move and sound like different animals. "Ribbit and hop like a frog" or "chirp and flap your wings like a bird"!
- 10 Talk about your job or workers you see out and about! What is the construction worker building? How does a firefighter help people?
- 11 Use colors to express feelings! Encourage your child to scribble or draw a picture using colors to show how he is feeling. Talk together about the colors and feelings.
- 12 Talk about water on a rainy or snowy day! What does water feel like? Taste like? Sound like?
- 13 Use words to describe time with your child as you do different activities. Was the walk long or short? Do you like long walks or quick walks?
- 14 Use your senses to explore the environment around you! What do you see? Hear? Smell?
- 15 Make a mood meter. Include "smiley faces" with different emotional expressions. Practice choosing a face that describes how they are feeling.
- 16 Have fun finding things of different sizes and using words to describe them Ask, "Can we find something big? Humongous? Small? Tiny? Short? Tall?"
- 17 Talk about shapes as you eat healthy and yummy snacks! Compare the shape of a square cracker or a round tomato!
- 18 Spending time drawing and coloring with your child can develop her creative, motor, and language skills! Ask her to draw their favorite food or animal!
- 19 Practice saying and spelling your child's name with them! Write it out and trace the letters together, or spell out their name in a song!
- 20 Get out crayons or markers and ask your child to draw a face that is happy, sad, angry, and goofy! Ask them how they can tell when someone has a certain feeling.
- 21 Celebrate the things that make your child unique! Create a song with your little one about what makes her special and sing it together.
- 22 Establish a consistent family routine, like family game night or eating meals together. This strengthens family bonds and can boost your baby's social-emotional development!
- 23 Use stories to spark creativity and imagination. During story time, ask, "What do you think will happen next?" Or ask her to make up a story of her own!
- 24 When reading a book together, ask your child what a character is feeling. Ask do you think they are happy, sad, scared or mad?
- 25 Talk with your baby about his day! Ask them what he did, how he felt, and what he wants to do tomorrow!
- 26 Laughing is an important part of learning! Play fun games like "peek-a-boo" or sing funny nursery rhymes.
- 27 When your child is upset, try saying: It looks like you are sad (or mad, etc.). Let's try taking a deep breathe together.
- 28 Go on a number hunt! Take turns pointing to and naming the numbers you see on signs, in books, or at the store!
- 29 Take plastic eggs and with a marker create top and lower half faces that express emotions. Explore putting different faces together with your child.
- 30 When you read together, let your baby help turn the pages—it can help build their interest in books.



SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOR



Your child's behavior says a lot about how they're feeling at that time. The way they express their feelings depends on their age and development. Babies may cry when they're hungry, uncomfortable, or tired.

As they get older, they can learn to use words and gestures to communicate. Even when their behavior is challenging, try to understand why your child is behaving a certain way. Here are some ways you can help:

BE A "FEELINGS DETECTIVE"

What makes your child anxious? Happy? When does she feel hungry? What makes her fussy?

In challenging situations, try asking: "What else could be going on here?" This can help you respond calmly and consistently to her needs.

TALK ABOUT FEELINGS

Talking with your child about his feelings can help him feel heard and understood. For example, you might say, "I can tell you're sad because you didn't want to leave the playground", or "You look mad because he took your ball away and you want it back."

The more words he has to express himself, the more he can learn to communicate his needs and feelings in a positive way.

OFFER SIMPLE CHOICES

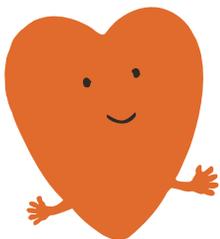
Giving your child simple choices can help her feel better, especially in challenging situations.

For example, "Let's wait our turn by playing with these blocks instead," or "Let's sing a song while we wait."

DON'T FORGET ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS, TOO!

It's natural for parents to have all kinds of feelings when children are crying, being demanding, or having a tantrum. These behaviors are a normal part of childhood and when you act calm during these moments, you are teaching your child to manage her emotions too.

Be kind to yourself and if needed, take a break to breathe and cool down.



For more about age-specific information on ways to understand and manage your child's behaviors, please visit: talkingisteaching.org/big-feelings.





SETTING LIMITS WITH LOVE

Young children depend on their parents and caregivers to provide them with a stable and loving environment so they can learn and grow. An important way that parents and caregivers can help their young children feel safe and secure is by participating in activities with them like talking, reading and singing every day. These nurturing activities build young children's brains, and help parents and caregivers feel more connected to their children, too.

Although it may sound strange, setting limits is another important way to establish a loving environment for young children. Setting limits is a way of letting your child know that you care for them and want to protect them. When parents and caregivers set limits, they encourage their children's healthy social-emotional development by teaching them the skills they need to resolve conflict, treat others with care, and manage their emotions. These early social-emotional skills help children do better in school, build positive relationships with others, and stay safe and healthy as they grow up.



Setting limits is a way to establish a loving environment.

So how can parents and caregivers set limits for young babies and toddlers?

THE FIRST STEP: ESTABLISH COMFORTING ROUTINES

Routines help babies and young toddlers know what to expect every day so that they can focus on learning and growing. During the first few weeks of life, it's best to follow your baby's lead. But as your baby adjusts to the world outside the womb, you can gradually establish a regular schedule for your baby's sleep, play and meal times every day. And because every child is different, pay attention to your baby's patterns and then try to stick to the schedule that works for them.

DAIly REMINDER: TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

The more responsive a parent or caregiver is to a baby's needs, the more secure that baby feels. But all parents and caregivers feel stressed out by a child's cries or tantrums sometimes. If you begin to feel anxious or angry, place your child in a safe place like their crib, and give yourself a break. A short walk around the house, a few deep breaths, and even trading places with another parent or caregiver can give you the time you need to calm down and recharge. Take care of you, too!

“DO AS I DO”: MODELING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Young children learn by watching the parents and caregivers in their lives. The best way to show a young child how you want them to behave is to praise good behavior, and to act out positive ways to solve problems, take turns, and cooperate. As your toddler gets older, talk together about appropriate and inappropriate ways to respond to things they don't like.

LEARNING ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

Here are some basic age-appropriate ways that you can set limits for your child:

BIRTH TO 9 MONTHS OLD

- Consistency is important. When parents respond consistently to their babies' cries for loving attention or care, babies learn about the consequences of their actions and that when they need help, they'll get it. Respond consistently to your baby's cries, and make sure other caregivers are just as responsive.
- Spend quality time with your baby. Talking, reading and singing with your baby every day helps build a trusting relationship with you, and promotes healthy brain growth.
- Follow their lead. By watching your baby closely, you will learn what they are trying to tell you, and how to make them feel happy and secure.

9 MONTHS TO 18 MONTHS OLD

- Set consistent limits. Help your baby enter toddlerhood by encouraging their natural curiosity and providing safe objects and places they can explore. Routine is important for older babies, too, so provide consistent meal times and bed times.
- Encourage independence. Older babies are interested in feeding themselves, and in crawling or walking around their environments. Be ready for them to make a mess with their food—these messes help them learn! Give them small bits of food they can play with and that clean up easily.



TALKING, READING AND SINGING
WITH YOUR BABY EVERY DAY HELPS
BUILD A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP.



Want to learn more about how to set firm but loving limits? Check out our video “Abuelita: Grandma Sets Limits With Love” and find more tips at talkingisteaching.org/big-feelings

18 MONTHS TO 24 MONTHS

- Pick your battles. Toddlers at this age may want to do more things on their own, but may still need your help for some activities. Encourage them to try more things on their own, and reserve a firm but calm “no” for things that may be harmful.
- Let them make safe choices. As toddlers learn how to communicate, they may be more interested in picking out their own clothes or food. Offer them “either/or” choices, so they feel more in control.
- Tantrums are typical! Routines can help you avoid tantrums, but not all of them. Use diversion and play to distract toddlers from tantrums, or remove them quickly and calmly from the situation until they can calm down. If possible, stay with your child during a tantrum and stay away from punishment—young toddlers learn how to manage their emotions better if you use the time after a tantrum to talk briefly about what happened and how to calm down in the future.

24 MONTHS TO 36 MONTHS

- Encourage words to express feelings. Older toddlers are beginning to use more words, so you can take this opportunity to help your child find the words to express what they’re feeling and thinking.
- Explain consequences. As your child gets older, you can help them think about the consequences of their actions so they can make better choices.
- Keep meal times stress-free. Toddlers can be picky, and this can cause a lot of stress at meal times. Set simple rules about appropriate ways to act during meals, but let your child choose how much to eat.

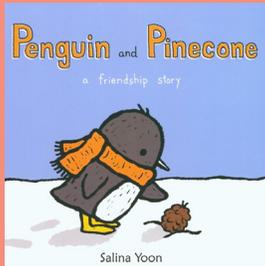
Special thanks to Dr. Joshua Sparrow and the Brazelton Touchpoints Center for their guidance on these materials, and inspiring work on children’s development. More at <https://www.brazeltontouchpoints.org/>.

LET'S TALK, READ AND SING ABOUT FEELINGS!

BOOK AND VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN



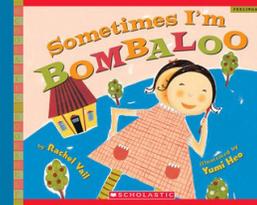
BOOKS



Penguin and Pinecone

By: Salina Yoon

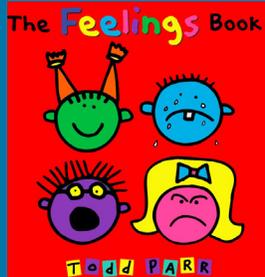
When Penguin finds a lost pinecone one day, he doesn't know what it is, but an unlikely friendship blooms. This endearing story celebrates friendships lost and found and overcoming the odds to be with the one you love.



Sometimes I'm Bombaloo

By: Rachel Vail

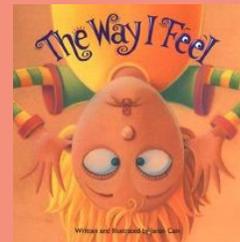
Katie is a young girl who describes what happens to her when she gets angry. It's a story of understanding one's own emotions and learning to express them in a more socially acceptable ways. Children will be able to associate with the character regarding things that make them upset and angry.



The Feelings Book

By: Todd Parr

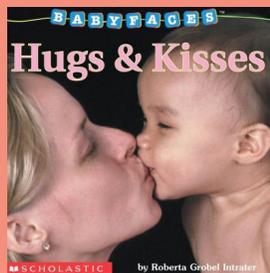
The Feelings Book vibrantly illustrates the wide range of moods we all experience. This book will inspire kids to discuss their multitude of feelings in a kid-friendly, accessible format, told through Parr's trademark bold, bright colors and silly scenes.



The Way I Feel / Así me siento yo

By: Janan Cain

The Way I Feel, is a delightful book that helps kids describe their emotions and understand that feelings are a normal part of life. It provides a means of introducing both the concept of feelings and the vocabulary that helps children express their emotions with words.



Hugs & Kisses (Babyfaces)

By: Roberta Grobel Intrater

Babies are mesmerized by other babies. The photographs in this book capture endearing moments with babies and toddlers as they get hugs and kisses from parents and siblings. Coupled with the simple, rhyming text, this is a perfect snuggling book.

VIDEO



Small Children Have Big Feelings

Watch the "Big Feelings" video or download our handout with tips for understanding and managing your child's behavior. Learn more about limit setting with love and taking care of yourself during the challenging moments. Check out the resources here: [\[English|Spanish\]](#)

For more tips and information, please visit: www.KalamazooGSC.org