



## ***Guiding Young Children's Behavior***

### ***Segment 6: Helping Children Identify and Express Emotions***

#### ***TRANSCRIPT for Objective 3***

#### ***Guide Children in Expressing Feelings***

*This video has captions. You can turn them on by clicking the captions icon at the bottom of the video.*

**Host:** We also want children to be able to express feelings in positive ways. Let's go to a pre-school classroom to see how one teacher guides a child in expressing strong emotions.

**Shannon:** Good morning Vanessa.

**Narrator:** Shannon Pimentel values the feelings of children in her classroom. She sees that today, Vanessa is sad. So, Shannon acknowledges Vanessa's feelings and helps her deal with them.

**Shannon Pimentel, Preschool Teacher:** I could see that her eyes were a little red and she was sad. She usually comes to school, she's bright and ready. But today she walked in quietly and came right over, so I wanted to make sure that she knew how she was feeling, and that she was able to express it.

**Shannon:** Tell Shannon why you're sad today. Can you stand up? Because I can't hear you.

**Child:** Because my sister went to the house alone.

**Shannon:** She went alone? Are you sad? Do you miss her? Shannon misses my sister's at work today. I miss her today too. We miss our sisters. What should we do?

**Child:** I want to write her a letter.

**Shannon:** Let's write her a letter.

**Shannon Pimentel:** I then shared with her that I miss my sister also so she knows that it's a great feeling to know more people than just herself feel sad and that's okay and then we thought how can we make ourselves feel better, what can we do? And she came up with writing a letter.

**Shannon:** What color should I use?

**Child:** Purple.

**Shannon:** Purple. What should I tell her?

**Child:** That I love her so much and I miss her.

**Shannon:** I- love- you...

**Host:** This teacher gives a child words and an activity to help her express her feelings. One way to help children express feelings is by using a strategy we looked at in segment 5, re-direction. With re-direction, the teacher doesn't make a big deal out of the inappropriate behavior. Instead the teacher lets the child know there is an alternative that is more appropriate. That same strategy can also be used to help children express their feelings in a constructive way. Let's say a child is frustrated because he is having a hard time with a puzzle and begins to say mean or inappropriate things. You can use redirection to guide the child in expressing feelings more appropriately. You could say, "I know you're angry, but you can't say mean things to your friends. If you're mad because the puzzle's too hard, you can say, 'I'm mad about this puzzle! It's too hard!' Can you say that?" Over time, the child will begin to express anger in this more appropriate way. In one research study, preschool teachers systematically redirected children by asking them to use words to express feelings when they were in conflict. After doing this for one month, the teachers found the aggressive behavior dropped significantly. By the end of the study, the researchers were finding that the children were reminding their friends to, "Tell me if you're mad, don't hit me."

**Sue Bredekamp, Council for Professional Recognition:** We have to be able to express our emotions in ways that are acceptable and that don't hurt other people. And very young children don't have those abilities. They're not born with the ability to control their emotions, number one, and number two, they aren't born with the ability to express them in positive and constructive ways. We have to teach children not to suppress all their emotions, but to regulate them, themselves, in a way that fits whatever the demands of the situation are. One of the ways we help them with that is by giving them language, helping them develop the language that they use to describe and then, of course, to express their emotions in ways that are clear to other people and don't require physical encounters. So, if someone makes you angry, it's important that a child has the words, "I'm really angry when you do that," or "It makes me frustrated when I can't get the ball to go in the hoop." If you give the children those, those words to express their feelings then they're much less likely to slam the other child in the head with the hoop or to throw the hoop across the room, because they're frustrated.

**Host:** Now we want you to think about an individual child in your class who needs help in learning how to express emotions. How could you support that child? What could you plan ahead and how could you use spontaneous classroom moments?

### **Activity 6A: Helping Children Express Emotions**

**Voiceover:** Think about an individual child in you class who needs help in learning how to express emotions. How could you support that child in learning to express emotions? What could you plan ahead and how could you use spontaneous classroom moments?

### **Did you consider ...?**

**Voiceover:** Here are some ideas on what you might plan:

- Select children’s books that focus on expressing feelings of anger, sadness, frustration, etc. Read these to the whole class or to this individual child during free play time.
- Take photographs of this child and other children in your class making faces that represent different emotions. Display the photos on a poster and ask the child to help you label each face.
- Invent a puppet show that dramatizes a conflict and feelings of anger. Ask this child and others to help the puppets think of ways to express feelings without yelling or hitting.

**Voiceover:** Here are some ideas on how you might use spontaneous moments:

- Acknowledge this child’s feelings during disagreements or problems: “I see that you are really angry. I get angry sometimes.”
- Suggest ways the child can express feelings, when angry, sad, or frustrated: “When someone calls me a name, I say, ‘I don’t like that!’”