



12–36 Months

Social-Emotional: Awareness of Emotions

WHEN INTRODUCED: Block 14 for 12–24 months, Block 16 for 24–36 months

BEHAVIORS TO OBSERVE

- Looks at and/or imitates a facial expression typically associated with a particular feeling
- Shows awareness of happy and sad feelings¹

EXAMPLES OF OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

This *Guide* uses 12–24 months and 24–36 months age designations in relation to when specific types of emerging skills often can be observed. The age parameters are not firm; the timing of developmental pathways and milestones varies considerably across children.

Behaviors may be observed during a care routine, playtime, or guided activity, including a book sharing. Pertinent ELM activities (Social-Emotional) are cited in parentheses. The activities pertain to the age group indicated in the example.

Looks at and/or imitates a facial expression typically associated with a particular feeling

- 12–24 months: looks at happy and sad expressions of a dog in a picture book (Block 14, Option 1); looks at baby faces in a book (Block 16, Option 1) and attempts to make one or more similar facial expressions (Block 16, Option 2)
- 24–36 months: looks at and talks about baby faces in a book (Blocks 16, Option 1), and/or attempts to make similar facial expressions (Block 16, Option 2)

Shows awareness of happy and sad feelings

- responds correctly to a caregiver’s yes/no question about whether someone is happy (or sad)
 - 12–24 months: as part of sharing a book in Block 13, Option 1 (“Look at his face. Is Llama Llama happy?”)
 - 24–36 months: a toddler’s response to a caregiver’s question during an informal exchange (“Are you happy you are playing with your favorite toy today?”)
- points correctly to a pictured child’s facial expression or to an emotion doll that represents the emotion named by a caregiver
 - 12–24 months: as part of looking at pictures of facial expressions in Block 18, Option 1 (“Which face looks angry?”)
 - 24–36 months: during the closing segment of Block 17, Option 2; during the opening segment of Block 18, Option 1 (“Which baby looks happy?”)



- correctly says happy or sad in response to a caregiver question about the feeling communicated by a pictured child, animal character in a book, or emotion doll
 - 12–24 months: while looking at book illustrations in Block 17, Option 1 (“Is Daisy feeling happy or sad?”)
 - 24–36 months: during the opening segment of Block 17, Option 1 or the closing segment of Block 17, Option 2 (“Do you think the boy is feeling happy or sad?”)

EXAMPLES OF FOLLOW-UP LEARNING SUPPORTS

Reintroduce

Looks at and/or imitates a facial expression typically associated with a particular feeling

- 12–24 months: Use the dog character (Daisy) in Block 14 or the pictures of babies in Block 16 to reintroduce information on facial expressions associated with basic feelings, depending on the toddler’s interest. Toddlers generally like to look at pictures of babies, but the story of Daisy is also appealing. Use a one-to-one arrangement and focus on basic facial expressions as you point and describe. The story of the dog character (Daisy) offers more opportunity to talk about reasons for a specific emotion than the pictures of babies. The baby faces are easier to imitate than Daisy’s face. Demonstrate facial expressions as a complement to what is shown in book pictures. Focus on happy and sad expressions.
- 24–36 months: Repeat Block 16. Give attention to the baby’s gaze on the book cover in Option 1 and emphasize pictures of happy and sad faces. Offer Option 2 as a one-to-one experience and demonstrate a facial expression shown in the book prior to inviting the toddler to make a face like the one shown in the book. Be sure to use pauses and prompts to support a toddler’s contributions to discussion of the pictured facial expressions.

Shows awareness of happy and sad feelings

- 12–24 months: Repeat Block 17, Option 1 as a one-to-one activity. Encourage the toddler to point to and describe features of Daisy’s facial expression that show a happy or sad feeling. Emphasize reasons for the feeling. Incorporate Option 2 as a follow-up to the book discussion. Make up a story that includes items of interest to the toddler.
- 24–36 months: Offer Block 17, Option 1 as a one-to-one experience. Highlight pictures of happy and sad expressions by comparing characteristics of each. Encourage the toddler to point to pictured features you describe. In Option 2, also focus on the happy and sad emotion dolls initially. Encourage the toddler to talk about why someone can feel happy and also feel sad. In both options, broaden attention to other types of feelings after emphasizing happy and sad.



Reinforce

Looks at and/or imitates a facial expression typically associated with a particular feeling

- 12–24 months:
 - Invite the toddler to point to pictured features of feeling happy and feeling sad that you describe in sharing the Block 17, Option 1 book. Encourage the toddler to make a facial expression that shows the feeling.
 - Support the toddler’s use of a mirror in Block 18, Option 2 to make and look at facial expressions that represent different feelings, especially happy and sad. Talk with the toddler about features of his/her expression that show a particular emotion.
- 24–36 months:
 - Encourage the toddler to make facial expressions associated with the feelings included in the Block 18, Option 2 song. Give attention to feelings that appear to be especially pertinent to the toddler.
 - Adapt Block 24, Option 1 by inviting the toddler to offer a facial expression that shows a feeling discussed in the book and also shown in a corresponding picture. Emphasize happy and sad. Pursue the book’s opportunity for the toddler to imitate a facial expression that shows feeling mad and to also talk with you about why someone might feel mad (or angry).

Shows awareness of happy and sad feelings

- 12–24 months:
 - Emphasize the idea that our face may show what we are feeling inside (Block 19, Option 2).
 - Draw attention to how the feelings of the boy featured in the Block 21 book changed by situation. Adapt the Option 1 plan to focus on situations and associated feelings that you anticipate will be of most interest to the toddler. Help a toddler connect a story situation to his/her experiences. Example: For some toddlers, being sad because a kite crashed (in story) may be similar to feeling sad because a prized tower of blocks fell over.
 - Adapt Block 23, Option 1 by omitting the words happy and sad for a toddler to say while singing the “If You’re Happy and You Know It” song. Emphasize the actions associated with feeling happy (clap) and sad (hug self) suggested in Block 23, Option 2.
 - Talk with the toddler about things to do when we feel sad or upset. Emphasize what the boy did in the story featured in Block 21, Option 2. Talk about and/or practice ways to calm down when we feel upset (Block 22, Options 1 and 2).



- 24–36 months:
 - Emphasize how the little fox feels different ways in different situations in the story featured in Block 19, Option 1. Engage the toddler in a discussion of how a situation makes the little fox feel happy or sad. Give attention to emotions that seem to be of interest to the toddler. Follow-up with Block 19, Option 2, where the toddler becomes the teller of the story about the little fox.
 - Offer Block 20, Option 1 with attention to how “feeling up” means feeling happy and “feeling down” means feeling sad. Offer Block 20, Option 2 if the toddler shows good familiarity with the emotions included in the book.
 - Emphasize things to do when we feel a certain way. Talk with the toddler about how the boy in the story featured in Block 17, Option 1 hugged a teddy bear when he felt sad. Draw attention to the actions described in the Block 18, Option 2 song, such as clapping hands when feeling happy and giving ourselves a hug when feeling sad. Review ways to calm down when we feel upset (Block 21, Option 1).

EXAMPLES OF PORTFOLIO ENTRIES

We are helping children in our room understand how our facial expression may show what we are feeling inside. We focus on feeling happy and feeling sad. We look at and talk about books that show pictures of young children with different facial expressions. Adrianna likes to look at pictures of baby faces. She eagerly uses her face to show feeling happy and feeling sad. I will continue to provide opportunities for Adrianna to learn about different kinds of feelings.

*Leland is very fond of the book *A Ball for Daisy*. He likes to point to the pictures of Daisy after something important happens in the story, such as Daisy losing a kite. Leland uses the words happy and sad to describe how Daisy is feeling. The book is a good way to learn about different types of feelings. I will continue to share the book with Leland and offer other books that can help Leland become familiar with different emotions.*

Endnotes

- 1 Happy and sad feelings are emphasized in ELM activity plans for toddlers because research indicates these feelings are among the first emotions a young child begins to understand.