

♥ Us Time

Feelings

For "Littles" Aged 4, 5, and 6

Spark Meaningful Classroom Conversations
To Promote Social and Emotional Development



sparkler

Find songs, videos, and more for this unit at www.PlaySparkler.org/ustime

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Introduction

Let's Grow Kids' Big Hearts!

People need "big hearts" (also known as social and emotional skills) to understand themselves and manage emotions and to connect and cooperate with others. Sparkler Learning — an early learning and family engagement organization — created Us Time to help educators working with children aged 2 through 6 help students explore the ideas of:

- ♥ Me (identity, feelings, self regulation)
- ♥ You (awareness of others, appreciation of diversity)
- ♥ Us (relationships, working with others)

What is Us Time?

Us Time is a framework for classroom community meetings for young students, encouraging teachers to use activities, songs, and stories from Sparkler and our partners to grow kids' hearts. This is an action-oriented guide that teachers can print and use. It will help:

- ♥ Build multi-session curriculum lessons;
- ♥ Address issues in classrooms; and
- ♥ Stretch and support the hearts, minds, words, and bodies of young students.

Us Time will invite children to embark on the life-long discovery of how to be with ourselves and each other in the world. It will also help teachers

engage parents and caregivers, tapping into activities, tips, songs, and interactive tools available from Sparkler Learning and its partners. Each lesson can be pared down — or expanded — to meet the needs of your classroom. Find the interactive version online at playsparkler.org/ustime.



Who Made This Guide?

Sparkler Learning is a nonprofit organization that works with educators and other providers serving young children to engage and support families. Our goal: Sparking healthy early childhood development and helping every child get a strong start! Sparkler also collaborated with Noggin — Nick Jr.'s early learning service — and other partners to create a social and emotional learning campaign called Big Heart World, which provides free resources to help parents, caregivers and educators grow kids with big hearts.

Us Time Elements



A Place to Gather, Plus Materials

During Us Time, students gather together on a rug or in a corner of the classroom. Make it yours! If materials are required (or optional) we let you know.



Opening Song

An opening song helps establish a tone of joyful participation, and gives Us Time a feeling of ritual. We know that Us Time has started, because we just sang the song! You can access the song online at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs



Voice and Body Breaks

Voice and Body breaks provide a break from sitting and waiting your turn. These moments can also be opportunities to reinforce big ideas through our bodies. Putting all our hands together, following the leader, building a giant machine with our bodies, stepping around the room in unison: these are all chances to practice working as a group, listening to each other, and expressing ourselves.



Discussion

Discussion is the heart of Us Time, when children get to share their own experiences, brainstorm ideas, and articulate lessons. Discussion can also be a good time to learn vocabulary — or "big words" — which help children to express their big ideas. If children have a lot to say, you can encourage them to turn to their partner to chat, instead of speaking as a full group together.



Activity

This is when children solidify their understanding through song, activity, or dramatic play. This helps them build a visible and physical manifestation of the lesson.



Story Time

Read together to explore the theme.



Vocabulary

Sometimes we will share vocabulary words, which educators and students can use during Us Time. These are never meant to be used as a list for memorizing, but rather ways to increase shared community understanding of key terms and phrases.



Play

We incorporate videos of songs and examples to enhance learning. A closing song book-ends Us Time, and sends us into our next activity, but with the understanding that the Us Time lessons stretch throughout our day, and our lives! You can access songs online at playsparkler.org/ustime



Take Home Resources

Each lesson is paired with a take-home resources that summarize the lesson and the language of the meeting, and shares some ideas for at-home activities to reinforce lessons.

**Us Time will start with this unit on feelings and eventually contain:
Feelings; Identity; Community; Play; Upstanding; and Inclusion.**

Learn more: www.playsparkler.org/ustime

Please email with questions/feedback or to get on the list for new releases: support@playsparkler.org

Us Time: Feelings Unit

Angry! Happy! Frustrated! Silly! Scared! Sad!

Every person on the planet has a range of emotions, and children's feelings are just as real and important for them as adults' emotions. Babies express their feelings through smiles and cries. Toddlers start to experience a greater range of feelings and, with help, can start to identify their feelings. Before children's language and regulation skills develop, they will use their facial expressions and bodies to express their feelings. This might include crying, stomping, or even hitting. It takes time to learn how to manage feelings. Children learn about their feelings — and how to control them — by watching their teachers, parents, grandparents, and caregivers. So remember: the kids are watching!

It can take years of practice for people to learn to express big feelings and to gain the language skills necessary to express themselves verbally. Remember: All the hard work will pay off. Identifying feelings and managing emotions helps children to develop empathy and independence. It helps them learn to tolerate frustration and navigate relationships with others, now and as they grow up.

The Us Time Feelings Unit

Throughout this seven-lesson unit, children will practice: naming feelings, talking about feelings, recognizing feelings in others, "coming down" from big feelings, and building empathy — feeling the feelings of others. By devoting a structured classroom time to discussions of feelings, you are showing your students how essential an understanding of feelings is to their play, learning, and growth.

You will also be able to refer back to these lessons during during difficult moments in the classroom or playground, as children build a powerful language to express their rich internal lives and navigate the complex world around them.

This unit has 7 Lessons, which make up most of this guide:

1. **Us Time!** Introduce the structure and purpose of Us Time.
2. **What are feelings?** Introduce the idea of feelings, and start naming them.
3. **Identifying our feelings/Feelings Detectives!** Can we identify feelings?
4. **Big Feelings: Anger.** How do we express anger in safe and productive ways?
5. **Big Feelings: Sadness.** It's OK to be sad. What are some ways to express and cope with sadness?
6. **Empathy: Sharing Feelings.** How can we feel other people's feelings?
7. **Feelings Party (Review).** What have we learned about feelings?

Feelings: Lesson 1 – Us Time Intro



10-12 MINUTES



Lesson 1 Goals

- ♥ Introducing the structure of Us Time
- ♥ Introducing the purpose of Us Time
- ♥ Sharing the songs!

Materials



Get Ready!

- ♥ A place to gather
- ♥ Us Time Songs
- ♥ Paper or board for writing/drawing agreements

Us Time!



Us Time Song (1 min)

Open Us Time with the "Us Time" song. Sing it together or play the video, which is available online at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs.



Us Time Introduction (1 min)

Tell your children that when they hear that song, they know that it's Us Time — a time for community thinking, feeling, helping, and sharing.



Introduce Agreements (3-8 minutes)

- ♥ Agreements are rules that people decide, together, to follow.
- ♥ Ask the students to brainstorm a list of Agreements like:
 - ♥ Paying attention to each other
 - ♥ Keeping our hands to ourselves
 - ♥ Giving everyone a turn to speak.
- ♥ Write down the students' ideas (or draw pictures to represent their ideas) so you can return to the list later to add and/or recommit.
- ♥ Ask students to raise their hands or say, "I agree" to show that they agree to the list of agreements



Thank You: Us Time Closing Song (2 min)

Conclude with "Thank You," the Us Time "goodbye" song. This song marks the end of Us Time. Find the song [online at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](https://playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs).




Feelings: Lesson 2 – What Are Feelings?



20 MINUTES






Lesson 2 Goals

-  Defining "Feelings"
-  Naming the feelings
-  Beginning to explore each feeling

Materials



Get Ready!

-  Your Us Time classroom space, where the class will gather
-  Feelings Grid ([available in the back of this guide or online at playsparkler.org](#))
-  Coin or small object to toss

What are Feelings?



Us Time Song (1 min)

Open Us Time with the "Us Time" song. Sing it together or play the video ([available at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](#)).



Review Agreements (~2 mins)

Agreements are rules that people decide, together, to follow. Review the list that the class created. You can add to it, modify it, or just recommit.






Play a Feelings Song: "How You Feel" by Oh, Hush! and Grayson DeWolfe from Noggin's Big Heart Beats Album (2 mins)

Share a song to prompt conversation like "How You Feel" from Noggin's Big Heart Beats Album.

Play it at: www.bigheartworld.org/big-heart-beats-album-how-you-feel

Then Discuss (~2 mins):

-  What did you hear in the song?
-  What did you notice in the video?
-  How did it make you feel?





Discussion: What are feelings? (3-5 mins)

- Ask children: "What are feelings?" They should name as many feelings/emotions as they can.
- Have everyone repeat the feelings that their classmates share.
- Work together as a class to devise hand motions to go with each feeling – or suggest some that you think work well. Hand motions can be another way to express their feelings throughout the day.



Movement: Dance Your Feelings! (3 mins)

Listen to "Dance Your Feelings" ([Find it online at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](https://www.playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs)) and dance the different feelings as the music changes.



Activity: Feelings Grid (5 mins)

- Share the Feelings Grid ([available on p.25 or at playsparkler.org/ustime](https://www.playsparkler.org/ustime)).
- Ask the children to name and repeat the feelings they hear. You can create motions or moves that go with each.
- Toss a game piece and see where it landed!
- Ask children to share a story of experiencing that feeling (or share your own story).



Closing Discussion: (~2 mins)

- What were the feelings we talked about?
- Can we name them all?



Thank You: Us Time Closing Song (1 min)

Conclude with "Thank You," the Us Time "goodbye" song, which is available online at [playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](https://www.playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs).



For their Backpacks

Send students home with the Feelings handouts, which you can find in the back of this guide.

Sparkler Activities to Share with Families

- Dance It Out:** Some songs are slow and sad. Some songs are fast and happy! Let's listen to different types of music and move our body to the rhythms that we hear.
- Feelings Memories:** Families choose a feeling from the Feelings Grid and tell true stories about a time that they had that feeling.
- Royal Feelings:** Pretend to be royalty and display your feelings.



Feelings: Lesson 3 – Feelings Detectives



19 MINUTES



Lesson 3 Goals

- ♥ Reviewing our definition of "feelings"
- ♥ Reviewing our list of feelings
- ♥ Practicing identifying and naming feelings

Materials



Get Ready!

- ♥ Your Us Time classroom space, where the class will gather
- ♥ Kazoo (or use your hand and voice to imitate a kazoo)
- ♥ Puppet (optional)
- ♥ Feelings Grid ([available in the back of this guide or online at playsparkler.org](#))

Feelings Detectives



Us Time Song (1 min)

Open Us Time with the "Us Time" song. Sing it together or play the video ([available at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](#)).



Review Agreements (~2 mins)

Agreements are rules that people decide, together, to follow. Review the list that the class created. Add to it, modify it, and recommit.



Discussion: What are Feelings? Do we remember? (3-5 mins)

- ♥ Ask children if they remember the feelings that you discussed in the last Us Time.
- ♥ Encourage children to name as many as they can and remind them of the rest.
- ♥ Everyone should say the feelings with the associated motions from "What are feelings" (Lesson 2)



Movement: Dance and Play "Guess the Feelings" (3 mins)

Dance to the second version of the feelings song, "Guess The Feelings," with the feelings removed. See if children can guess the feelings as they dance.



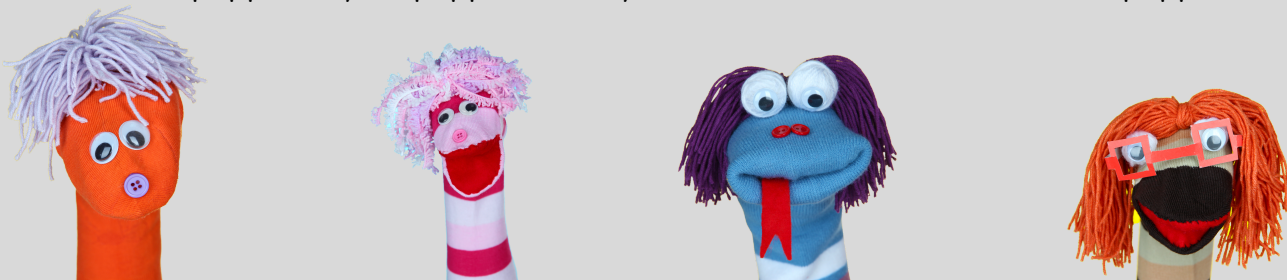
Activity: Introduce and Share Your Puppet (5 mins)

Puppets are powerful classroom tools. YOU can use a puppet to connect with students and reinforce key messages, and students can use puppets to express themselves. (If you don't have a puppet, you can use your voice, or hand, or even a sock to have a similar effect.)

- ♥ Introduce your puppet, and use your puppet to model feelings.
- ♥ Can the students guess which feeling is which and point to the feeling on the grid (available at the back of this guide)?
- ♥ Now try using the puppet to express a feeling with your kazoo, just modeling the tone of voice. Can the kids still point to it on the grid? ([Share demo online here: https://youtu.be/wl8uzxuikTk](https://youtu.be/wl8uzxuikTk))

The Power of Puppets

Research shows that handmade or store-bought puppets can help to: generate classroom communication, support positive classroom climate, enhance creativity, foster cooperation, and improve children's attitudes. Start with one puppet — your puppet! Later, your students can create their own puppets.



Closing Discussion: (~2 mins)

- ♥ What were the feelings we talked about?
- ♥ Can we be feelings detectives throughout the day?



Thank You: Us Time Closing Song (1 min)

Conclude Us Time with "Thank You," the Us Time "goodbye" song. Sing it together or play the video ([available at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](https://playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs)).



For Their Backpacks

Send students home with the Feelings handouts, which you can find in the parent resources at the back of this guide.

Sparkler Activities to Share with Families

- ♥ **Animal Feelings** - Pretending to be animals with feelings. Let's be sad horses, happy chickens, or angry pigs!
- ♥ **Feelings Charades** - Act out and guess different feelings
- ♥ **Shadow Puppet Feelings**: Using a flashlight and fingers to express different feelings.

Feelings: Lesson 4 – Big Feelings: Anger



18 MINUTES



Lesson 4 Goals

- ♥ Introducing strategies to manage anger
- ♥ Practicing dealing with anger

Materials



Get Ready!

- ♥ Crayons
- ♥ Paper

Big Feelings – Anger



Us Time Song (1 min)

Open Us Time with the "Us Time" song. Sing it together or play the video ([available at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](https://playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs)).



Review Agreements (~1 mins)

Agreements are rules that people decide, together, to follow. Review the list that the class created. Add to it, modify it, and recommit.



Discussion: Let's Talk About Anger (5 mins)

- ♥ What does it feel like to be angry?
- ♥ How does anger make our bodies feel? (Discuss how our bodies feel when angry — tight neck, hot face, etc.)
- ♥ What happens when we're angry?
- ♥ What can help you calm down? Brainstorm ideas and share: Deep breaths, walking away, stomping, using words instead of bodies to show anger.
- ♥ Practice saying "I am Angry!"



Movement: Hard Rock, Fluffy Cloud (~3 mins)

Practice this exercise that can help children to regulate big feelings like anger:

1. Let's pretend we are hard rocks. Let's tighten our bodies and hold our breath for three seconds: one, two, three!
2. Now, let's breathe out, relax our bodies, and lift up our hands like they are fluffy clouds.
3. Let's try it again!



Activity: Scribble Your Anger Out (~5 mins)

Crayons respond to the strength of children's pressure and movements across the paper, making them a great art supply to use when discussing feelings like anger. Practice Scribble Your Anger Out to give children a way to practice managing angry feelings:

- ✔ Let's get out our crayons and make feelings art.
- ✔ Let's imagine the last time each of us felt really angry.
- ✔ Let's pick a color (or colors) that represent that feeling.
- ✔ Let's close our eyes, take a deep breath, and think about how anger feels. When you're ready, open your eyes and start to draw with our crayon.
- ✔ As you draw, think about anger: how does it make you feel? Where in your body do you feel it? What color does it remind you of? What reminds you of the feeling?
- ✔ Let's talk about how your fingers, hands, wrists, and arms move while you're drawing. How does your hand feel when you're finished?
- ✔ Let's look at all of our finished art.



Closing Discussion (~2 mins)

- ✔ What did we learn about anger?
- ✔ Let's agree to calm down and use our words instead of our bodies when we're angry.



Thank You: Us Time Closing Song (1 min)

Conclude Us Time with "Thank You," the Us Time "goodbye" song. Sing it together or play the video ([available at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](https://www.playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs)).



For Their Backpacks

Send students home with the Feelings handouts, which you can find in the parent resources at the back of this guide.

Sparkler Activities to Share with Families

- ✔ **Punching Pillow:** Making a place to safely release angry feelings.
- ✔ **The "No!" Song:** Singing a new song together. Pretend to have a tantrum and then pretend to calm down again.
- ✔ **Freeze Dance:** Playing a "stop and go" game to practice the self-regulation skills necessary to manage anger.

Feelings: Lesson 5 – Big Feelings: Sadness



19 MINUTES

Lesson 5 Goals

- ♥ Introducing strategies to deal with sadness
- ♥ Practicing dealing with sadness



Materials



Get Ready!

- ♥ Crayons
- ♥ Paper

Big Feelings – Sadness


Us Time Song (1 min)

Open Us Time with the "Us Time" song. Sing it together or play the video ([available at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](https://playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs)).


Review Agreements (~1 min)

Agreements are rules that people decide, together, to follow. Review the list that the class created. Add to it, modify it, and recommit.


Listen: The Sad Song (~2 mins)

Listen to The Sad Song from Noggin's Big Heart Beats Album. Listen to the music and the lyrics in the song.


Discussion: Let's Talk About Sadness (5 mins)

- ♥ What does it feel like to be sad?
- ♥ How does sadness make your body feel?
- ♥ What can help you calm down when you feel very sad? (Brainstorm ideas and share! Some prompts: Deep breaths, cuddling a pillow, listening to a calming song, looking at a book...)





Activity: Drawing My Sadness (~5 mins)

Crayons respond to the strength of children's pressure and movements across the paper, making them a great art supply to use when discussing feelings like anger and sadness. Practice this activity to give children a way to practice managing sad feelings:

- ♥ Let's get out our crayons and make feelings art.
- ♥ Let's imagine the last time each of us felt really sad.
- ♥ Let's pick a color (or colors) that represent that feeling.
- ♥ Let's close our eyes, take a deep breath, and think about how anger feels. When we're ready, let's open our eyes and start to draw with our crayons.
- ♥ As we draw, think about sadness: How does it make us feel? Where in our bodies do we feel it? What color does it remind us of?
- ♥ Let's talk about how our fingers, hands, wrists, and arms move while we're drawing. How do our hands feel when you're finished?
- ♥ Let's look at all of our finished sadness art.



Closing Discussion (~4 mins)

- ♥ Let's listen to The Sad Song again.
- ♥ What did we learn about sadness? (Allow the class to share.)
- ♥ It's OK to be sad. When we're sad, we can use our breathing, art, and words to come down, so we can keep our day going.



Thank You: Us Time Closing Song (1 min)

Conclude Us Time with the "Thank You," the Us Time "goodbye" song. Sing it together or play the video ([available at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](https://www.playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs)).



For Their Backpacks

Send students home with the Feelings handouts, which you can find in the parent resources at the back of this guide.

Sparkler Activities to Share with Families

- ♥ **Llama Llama's Feelings:** Read or listen to Llama Llama Misses Mama and discuss his many feelings.
- ♥ **Feather Breath:** Practicing calm breathing by pretending to have a feather on your nose!
- ♥ **Emotional Drumming:** Drum on pots and express different feelings.

Feelings: Lesson 6 – Empathy: Sharing Feelings



20 MINUTES



Lesson 6 Goals

- ♥ Defining empathy/sharing feelings
- ♥ Practicing empathy: sharing feelings

Materials



Get Ready!

- ♥ Feelings Grid
- ♥ 8 Paper Plates or pieces of cardboard
- ♥ Markers

Sharing Feelings: Empathy



Us Time Song (1 min)

Open Us Time with the "Us Time" song. Sing it together or play the video ([available at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](https://playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs)).



Review Agreements (~1 min)

Agreements are rules that people decide, together, to follow. Review the list that the class created. Add to it, modify it, and recommit.



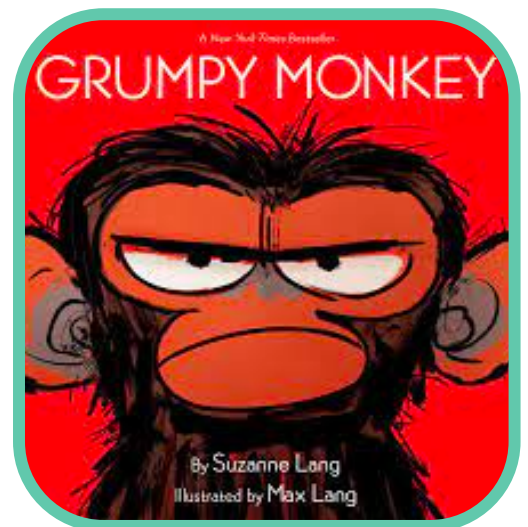
Story Time: Grumpy Monkey (~6 mins)

- ♥ Read Grumpy Monkey, written by Suzanne Lang and Illustrated by Max Lang.
- ♥ How was the monkey feeling?
- ♥ What helped the monkey?
- ♥ Have you ever shared someone else's feelings?



Movement: Share Your Feelings (3 mins)

1. Listen to the Dance Your Feelings Song
2. Choose one student to dance one of the feelings.
3. Can everyone in the class match their moves?





Activity: Feelings Memory (~4 mins)

This is a fun way to remember and match the feelings.

- 👉 Prepare feelings face pairs ahead of time. On the first four paper plates, draw four different feelings. Make the second four to match, so you have four feelings pairs.
- 👉 During Us Time, place the plates face down on the floor and mix them up.
- 👉 Have children take turns flipping over two plates. Do the feelings match?
- 👉 How many matches can we find?
- 👉 As we find matches, let's practice making the faces and sounds of each feeling.



Closing Discussion (~3 mins)

- 👉 What did we learn about sharing feelings?
- 👉 Let's brainstorm a list of ways we can practice sharing each other's feelings throughout the day.



Thank You: Us Time Closing Song (1 min)

Conclude Us Time with "Thank You," the Us Time "goodbye" song. Sing it together or play the video ([available at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](https://playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs)).



For Their Backpacks

Send students home with the Feelings handouts, which you can find in the parent resources at the back of this guide.

Sparkler Activities to Share with Families

- 👉 **Alien Encounter:** Getting to know someone very different from you — an alien!
- 👉 **Big Rescue:** Rescue toys from sand, dirt, or ice.
- 👉 **Get Well Gift:** Make and send a gift to help someone feel better.

Feelings: Lesson 7 – Feelings Party (Review)



25 MINUTES



Lesson 7 Goals

- ♥ Reviewing ideas from the unit
- ♥ Celebrating all of the feelings

Materials



Get Ready!

- ♥ Feelings Grid
- ♥ Strips of paper prepared for making crowns
- ♥ Various arts & crafts materials for crowns such as fabric, feathers, paper, tape, yarn, felt, etc.

Feelings Party!



Us Time Song (1 min)

Open Us Time with the "Us Time" song. Sing it together or play the video ([available at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](https://playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs)).



Review Agreements (~1 min)

Agreements are rules that people decide, together, to follow. Review the list that the class created. Add to it, modify it, and recommit.



Discussion: Feelings Party! (~4 mins)

- ♥ Today we are having a FEELINGS PARTY! What do we remember about feelings?
- ♥ How many feelings can we name (and dance?)
- ♥ What can help when we have big feelings, like angry or sad?
- ♥ How do we share each other's feelings? What helped Grumpy Monkey?



Activity: Feelings Crowns (~15 mins)

- ♥ Have children choose one feeling to represent on their crown.
- ♥ Support children as they decorate crowns to represent their feeling. What colors will they use? What textures? Children may choose to draw a feelings face or represent their feeling more abstractly.
- ♥ When finished, take turns sharing. Can everyone match the feeling they see?



Movement: Dance in Our Costumes (~3 mins)

- ♥ Dance to the Dance Your Feelings song.
- ♥ Dance to the "How You Feel" song.



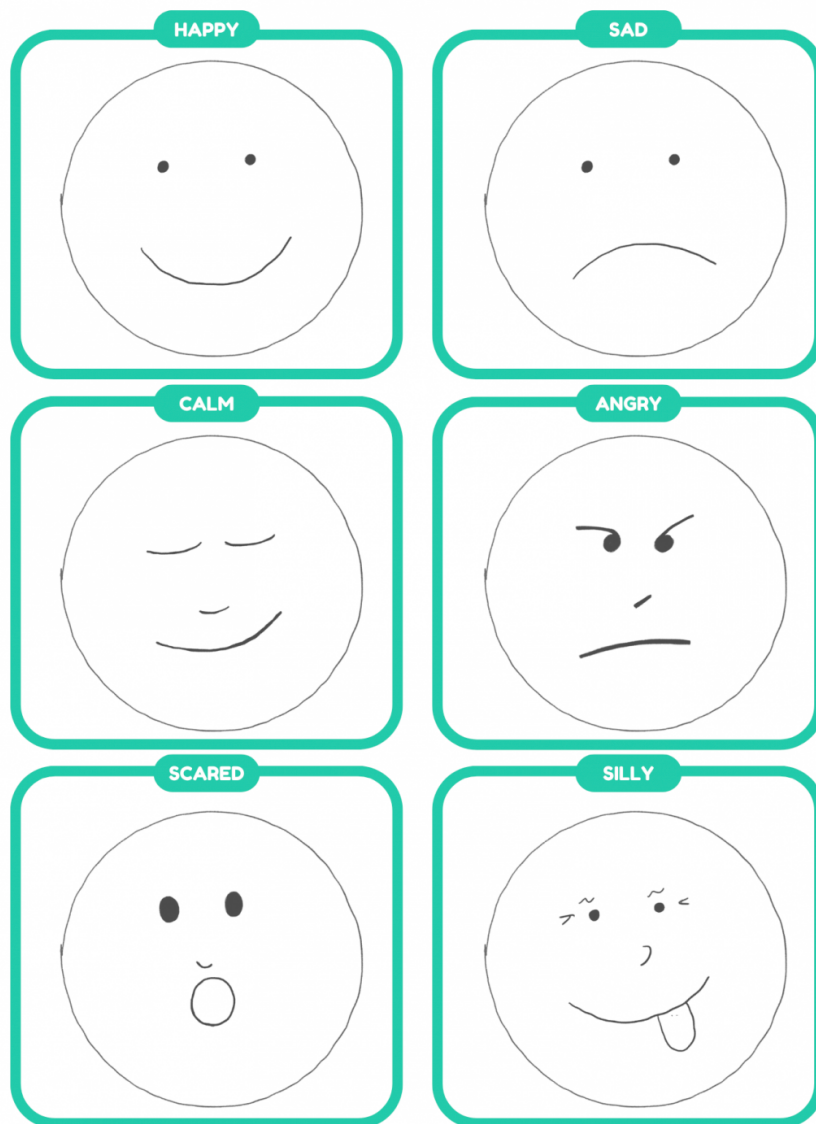
Closing Discussion (~1 min)

- ♥ We will learn about new things in us time, but we will keep practicing noticing our feelings, and learning about new ones!



For Their Backpacks

Send students home with the Feelings handouts, which you can find in the parent resources at the back of this guide.



Extension Activities

Learning about feelings is a lifetime project! If you have the time with your students, here are some more projects and activities that build on the Us Time: Feelings work in the preceding pages.



Activity: Feelings Wall

1. Use 6 big sheets of paper to create faces for each of the core feelings: Happy, Sad, Calm, Angry, Scared, and Silly. Space the faces out on a bulletin board with lines between them.
2. Children can add pictures, photos, and words to each feeling, creating an interactive board that they can continue to add to throughout the year. They can make art inspired by the feelings, cut out pictures from magazines related to the feelings, and write down observations about the feelings on lined paper, by themselves or with an adult's help. They might write: "I was feeling happy because I got ice cream," or "Cinderella was sad when she couldn't go to the ball."
3. You can use this wall when a child is having a big feeling: "Let's go over to the Feelings Wall, and see if you can find your feeling."



Activity: Feelings Stations

1. If you have the space in your classroom, create separate "feelings stations" for different feelings throughout the room, instead of one large wall.
2. For example, the "Angry Corner" could become a place where children can go when they're feeling angry, and practice some of the "Angry" activities that help them "check in" with that feeling and come down, like breathing or scribbling on paper.
3. You can use the feelings stations like the wall, asking children to identify how they're feeling and walk over to that station. You can use the stations for a body-break game: call out a feeling, and the kids move to that station.



Activity: Feelings Puppets

1. Help your students make their own puppets they can use to act out different feelings. For a quick and simple puppet, a child can draw an image on thick paper and then cut it out and glue it to a popsicle stick. For more involved sock puppets, see https://crafts.lovetoknow.com/wiki/Kids_Crafts:_Sock_Puppets for more detailed instructions.
2. When the puppets are ready, you can give students prompts for "Dramatic Puppet Play," pretending with puppets in pairs or small groups.
3. You could say, "Pretend your puppets are feeling sad today," or "Pretend your puppets need to calm down!"
4. Try playing a "Guess the Feelings" activity, in which children guess the feelings of each others' puppets. (See Lesson 3: Feelings Detectives)

Extension Activities Cont'd



Activity: Feelings Songs

1. Help children to write a feelings song inspired by the music from Us Time. Start with a prompt like "Let's say what we remember about feelings," or focus on one feeling in particular, like Calm.
2. You can write down children's words as they share, then help them find a tune to string their words together. Help them to create a very simple repeating chorus that they can sing together, like "I'm so calm, I'm so calm, la la la la I'm so calm!"
3. Then, you can add the song to your classroom songs, or make a recording to send home.



Activity: Read With Feeling (10 mins)

1. Read a favorite classroom book, focusing on the characters' feelings.
2. Pause the story to ask questions such as, "How are they feeling on this page?" "What happened to make them feel that way?" "How would you feel if that happened to you?" or "Have you ever felt that way?"



Activity: Explore Other Feelings (15 mins)

1. There are more than six feelings! Brainstorm some with your students, or list some feelings for them, and talk about them.
2. Ask: What do they feel like? What do they sound like? When have you felt them?
3. Then, pick a few to illustrate on paper, and create dances or songs for them. You can also model the feelings with puppets, or add them to your feelings wall.
4. Here's a list you can use:

♥ Hopeful

♥ Excited

♥ Loving

♥ Proud

♥ Caring

♥ Determined

♥ Satisfied

♥ Relieved

♥ Suprised

♥ Disappointed

♥ Frustrated

♥ Lonely

♥ Embarrassed

♥ Bored

♥ Annoyed

♥ Guilty

♥ Disgusted

♥ Confused

Family Resources



On the pages that follow, you'll find materials that you can send home during Sparkler's Us Time Feelings Unit. The suggested letter and other resources will help parents/caregivers understand what you're doing in the classroom, and help families explore the feelings at home with their children.

Dear Families

How are you feeling today? No really, HOW ARE YOU FEELING? Are you happy? Excited? Sad? Frustrated? Silly? Anxious? Joyful?

Our class is thinking and learning about FEELINGS this month, using a program called Us Time, which is created by Sparkler Learning (a nonprofit organization that our school/program works with). We will learn the names of many feelings, focusing on these six basic emotions:

♥ Happy
♥ Sad

♥ Angry
♥ Silly

♥ Scared
♥ Calm

We will learn to identify these feelings (and any others that arise) in ourselves and others, and think deeply about some of our BIGGEST feelings: anger and sadness. We will also start to think about empathy — when we feel each other's feelings!

Why are we focused on feelings? Research tells us that when young children learn to name and understand feelings, it lays a foundation that will help them develop in all areas, and helps them to do better in school and in life. When we focus on feelings now, your children will learn to express themselves clearly and confidently, resolve conflicts and solve problems that arise with peers, manage and regulate themselves when they feel a big feeling like anger or sadness without harming themselves or others, and much more.

At school, we emphasize the fact that ALL feelings are okay, even feelings that we sometimes view as negative, such as aggression, jealousy, or fear. All feelings are a natural part of the human experience. We never want a child to feel bad or wrong for feeling their feelings. Our goal is to help children learn what they can DO with their feelings: How can they express anger without hurting others? How can they let others know that they are feeling sad or lonely without feeling ashamed? How can you feel scared and still be a “big kid?” These are all questions that we hope to help children answer as we learn explore the feelings together.

There are many ways that YOU can help support your child’s learning at home! Below are some resources that you can use to help your child learn about feelings. Some of these will be familiar to your child as we are using them in our classroom. Others will be new, and will add to your child’s growth and learning.

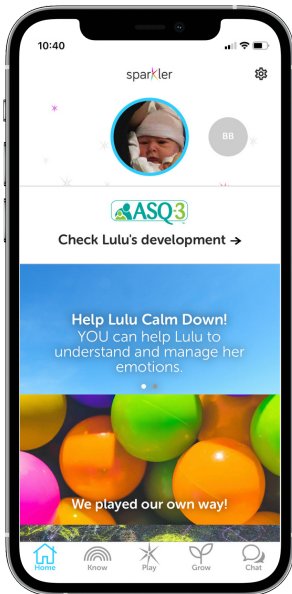
As always, please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns. We would love to hear from you.

At Home Activities



Play to Learn!

Reinforce what your child learns at school by playing at home! Play is a great way for your child to remember, practice and explore new concepts, skills and vocabulary.



Do you have access to the Sparkler App?

- ✔ Look for these activities in your Sparkler app to keep learning about FEELINGS with your child at home or on the go!
- ✔ Go to the "Play" section of the Sparkler app. Tap the four squares in the top right corner and scroll to find the right Playpack

- ♥ Rainbow Feelings (Rainbow Playpack)
- ♥ Shadow Puppet Feelings (Puppets Playpack)
- ♥ Animal Bath (Animals Playpack)
- ♥ Freeze Dance (Dance Playpack)
- ♥ Little Helper (Family Playpack)

No app? No Problem!

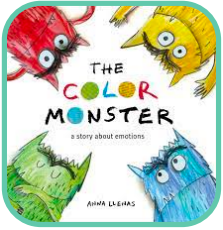
Access these free do-together activities from our colleagues at Big Heart World. Find them at bigheartworld.org (These activities are also available in the Sparkler app!)

- ♥ **Feelings Memories:** Toss coins with the whole family to practice talking about feelings.
- ♥ **Punching Pillow:** What can a child do with a big feeling? Punching a pillow is one strategy grown-ups and children can try.
- ♥ **How Do We Feel Now?** Pretend together to practice talking about feelings.
- ♥ **The "NO!" Song:** Sing "no" to the tune of Frère Jacques. When kids use their voices to advocate for themselves, they are taking the first step toward being upstanders!
- ♥ **Big Rescue:** Rescue animals from sand, dirt, or ice. This sort of pretend play is a great way for children to start developing empathy.
- ♥ **Bird Feeder:** Helping to take care of living things, like feeding birds in the park, helps children to develop skills that will lead to empathy.

Feelings Books

Books Make Life Better!

Here are a few books related to feelings, which you can use as part of Us Time or suggest to families. Research shows that reading aloud is a great way for kids to reinforce important ideas. If you have time, using books during Us Time will help students make connections between the lessons and their lives.



The Color Monster: A Story About Emotions

By Anna Llenas

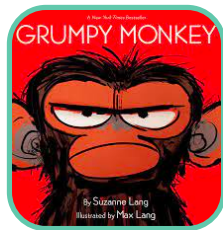
One day, Color Monster wakes up feeling very confused. His emotions are all over the place; he feels angry, happy, calm, sad, and scared all at once! To help him, a little girl shows him what each feeling means through color.



The Feelings Book

By Todd Parr

The Feelings Book illustrates the wide range of moods people experience, helping children think about the feelings they feel throughout the day or all at once.



Grumpy Monkey

Written by Suzanne Lang

Illustrated by Max Lang

Jim the chimpanzee is in a bad mood for no reason. His friends can't understand — and have suggestions to help him feel better. Maybe he just needs a grumpy day!

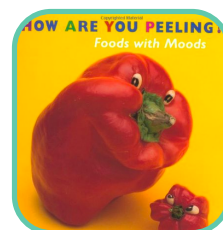


My Blue Is Happy

By Jessica Young

Illustrated by Catia Chien

What is your blue like? A lyrical ode to colors — and the unique ways we experience them — follows a little girl as she explores the world with her family and friends.



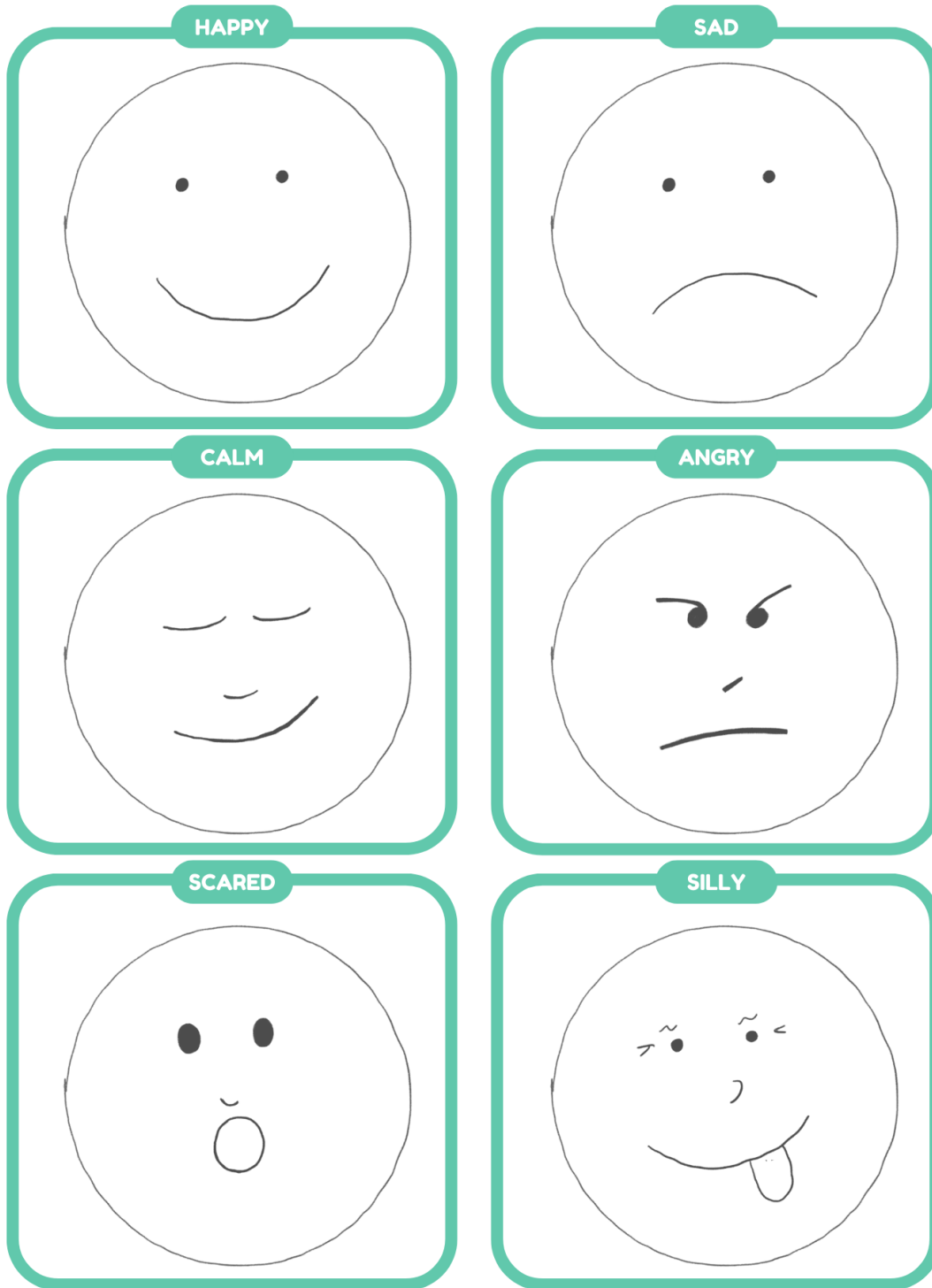
How Are You Peeling? Foods With Moods

By Saxton Freymann and Efficers Joost

Explore the feelings with produce! The book asks readers to explore how they feel in different situations, while the pictures give away the emotions on the "faces" of fruits and veggies.

Feelings Grid

Try to hang the grid on your refrigerator and use magnets to help everyone in your family share their feelings!



Extra Credit

- ♥ How Social and Emotional Learning can Promote Children's Health and Wellbeing by Dr. Divya Chhabra
<https://www.bigheartworld.org/sel-and-mental-health/>
- ♥ What is Social Emotional Learning? by Julia Levy
<https://www.bigheartworld.org/sel-infographic/>
- ♥ How to Raise an Empathetic Child: A Guide for Parents of Children Ages 2-6 by Dr. Colleen Russo Johnson
<https://www.bigheartworld.org/teach-empathy/>
- ♥ Helping Children Identify Their Emotions by Dr. Colleen Russo Johnson
(<https://www.bigheartworld.org/helping-children-identify-their-emotions/>)
- ♥ Tominey, S., O'Bryon, E., Rivers, S., & Shapes, S. (2017). NAEYC: Teaching emotional intelligence in early childhood. <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/mar2017/teaching-emotional-intelligence>
- ♥ Krögera, T., Nupponenb, A.M. (March 2019). IEJEE: Puppet as a Pedagogical Tool.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1212334.pdf>



Feelings

For Toddlers

Learn more:
www.playsparkler.org/ustime

Please email with questions or feedback
or to get on the list for new releases: support@playsparkler.org