

How to use this feelings wheel together

The feelings wheel is a tool to help your child recognize and express emotions throughout the day, not just during big emotional moments, but during the small ones too. Here are some examples of how you can practice using the wheel together:

Consider familiarizing yourself with it first:

- When have you felt frustrated?
- What helps you feel calm again?
- How does excitement show up in your body?

Each color corresponds with a nervous system response:

- 🔥 Red (Mad, Frustrated) = Fight / Activated
- ☁️ Gray (Scared, Excited) = Flight / Activated
- ☀️ Yellow (Happy, Calm) = Engaged / Regulated
- 💧 Blue (Sad, Tired) = Freeze / Shut Down

Grouping similar responses together helps kid's notice the sensations that often accompany different nervous system responses, like tight muscles, racing hearts, or heavy limbs.

When kids can start identifying these body cues early, they can learn to interrupt big reactions before they take over and discover what their bodies need, like movement, a rest, connection, or space.

Get Curious Together

Introduce the child to the wheel during a calm moment or daily routine. You might ask:

- “What do you notice?”
- “Which one looks happy?”
- “Which one looks sad?”
- “What do you think this child is feeling?”
- “Do you remember a time you felt __? Tell me about it.”

For many kids, feelings like mad and frustrated can be hard to tell apart. That's okay! Be curious and take time to explore the differences together.

Explore Sensations & Needs

Help your child connect feelings to their body and to what they might need. Ask questions like:

- “Can you point to where you feel it in your body?”
- “Is it a quick feeling or one that lasts a while?”
- “If that feeling had a sound or color, what would it be?”
- “What helps when you feel like this?”
- “Would a _____ (hug, a break, a drink of water, or moving your body) feel good right now?”



Sensation Words

Offering kids words like hot, heavy, tingly, or tight gives them a way to connect what they're feeling in their bodies to the emotions on the wheel. Exploring these sensory words together helps build emotional awareness and gives your child tools to express themselves before big feelings take over.

Temperature Words

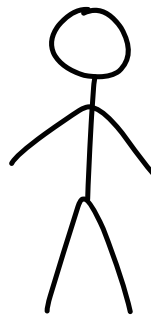
- Hot
- Warm
- Cool
- Cold
- Icy
- Burning
- Tingly
- Sweaty

Size & Space Words

- Big
- Small
- Tiny
- Huge
- Puffy
- Squished
- Heavy
- Light
- Full
- Empty

Movement & Energy Words

- Fast
- Slow
- Buzzy
- Tingly
- Still
- Wiggly
- Jumpy
- Floaty
- Tight
- Shaky
- Stuck
- Spinny



Texture & Sensation Words

- Scratchy
- Slippery
- Hard
- Soft
- Tight
- Loose
- Prickly
- Smooth
- Squeezy
- Fuzzy
- Cloudy
- Sharp
- Numb

Helpful Prompts to Try:

- “Is it hot like the sun or cool like ice?”
- “Does it feel big like a balloon or small like a pebble?”
- “Is it moving around or staying in one place?”
- “Does it feel tight like a knot or loose like jelly?”
- “Is it heavy like a backpack or light like a feather?”

Make an art project!

Explore emotions and body sensations through art.

Draw a stick figure, then illustrate where and how the feeling shows up in the body. Around the stick figure, draw things that bring up that emotion for you. For example, maybe a rainbow makes you feel happy, maybe a spider makes you feel scared or excited!

