

However, it is possible to choose the order you prefer, this is also decided in accord to the age and abilities that the child already possesses.

The smiley faces of emotions

This first activity helps children to know and name emotions. You will need some cards and paints (markers, pencils, watercolors or whatever you want).

This involves drawing and cutting out smileys that can represent at least 5 emotions: sadness, joy, fear, anger, disgust.

Once the cards have been cut out, you can dedicate yourself with your children to assigning a color to each emotion (for example, it could be red for the anger, yellow for joy and so on) and draw inside each face the expression that corresponds to that emotion for you.

You have to ask yourself: how are the eyes and mouth of each face?

Building this material together allows, while having fun, to talk to children about these emotions and help the child name them.

You can create new faces for worry, anxiety, shame, annoyance, boredom, surprise etc according on the age of the child and also on familiarity that he/she slowly develops with emotions.

The game of mime

This game helps children to learn and recognize emotions from non-verbal behavior, specifically facial expressions and gestures.

You will need emotion faces like those built for the first activity, in greater numbers, and a paper bag: one after the other, the participants in the game they draw a smiley face from the bag and, only using the facial expression and gestures, they will try to make guess to others emotions.

We guess emotions through sounds

Emotions faces and a paper bag will also be useful to do this activity. The game consists of draw a smiley face from the bag and the child try others guess what emotion is, using only his/her voice. Attention you cannot use words but only make a sound of joy, fear, anger, pain, disgust, surprise and so on.

Now... Let's change the smileys faces!

To play this game you will have to cut out some oval cards with only eyes and nose drawn inside. On another card, draw different types of mouths and eyebrows that you will then cut out. For example: frown, sad, happy, surprised eyebrows - angry, sad, happy, surprised mouth.

Now the game to play with your children begins: ask them to place eyebrows and mouth on the card designed to represent the different emotions.

Emotions and situations

To do this activity, you will still need the emoticons and the paper bag, but you will also need to create a new material: you need to write situations on cards that the child link to the different smileys. This time, the situation cards are built by the adults before playing the game.

The game will in fact consist in taking a situation card from the bag, reading the various situations and letting the child associate a face with them. I leave you some suggestions for creating situations that you can modify based on your own lives, and can be an incentive to create new ones to be able to repeat this game often:

- get the birthday present you want, get compliments for doing something right, hug a loved one back from a trip (joy)
- a friend does not let you play, you have lost your favorite game (sadness)
- a storm is coming and you hear thunder, near you there is a big dog not al leash (fear)
- your pants are torn, you fall in front of friends (shame)
- the teacher brings you a test, the mom doesn't come to pick you up at school (worry).

It can be very useful to reflect together on the fact that sometimes a situation can arouse different emotions in different people, emphasizing that there is no right emotion.

The emotion's bag

You need the smiley faces of emotions and a paper bag. Each, one after the other, draw a face and tells an episode where he/she felt this emotion. If there's not a personal episode you can tell an episode of a friend or of a character from some story or cartoon.

Obviously all these games can be played in group (brothers, sisters, cousins, friends), you just need to prepare a larger amount of material.

I hope these activities can be useful for you to talk about emotions with your children and I hope this stimulated your imagination to create new ones.

Please, share your new activities and games with us in the comments below, they can be useful for other parents too.

Good emotions to all!

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