

# The 3Es of Social-Emotional Development

Erin Mills Connects Workshop | June 6, 2023

## Workshop Handout

*What you will find here:*



- *The 3Es Cheat Sheet*
- Emotion regulation development chart
- Emotion regulation resource
- Empathy activities to do at home

You are your child's first teacher and know them the best. You already have knowledge, strengths, and experience that help you raise and care for your child. Our hope is that this workshop provided you some extra research-based knowledge to add to your toolbox!

**The 3Es Workshop** is based on 20+ years of research on social-emotional development and adversity from Dr. Tina Malti and her team at the Centre for Child Development, Mental Health, and Policy (CCDMP) at the University of Toronto Mississauga. To learn more about our training and workshops, contact us at [raise.ccdmp@utoronto.ca](mailto:raise.ccdmp@utoronto.ca).

### About the CCDMP

Our vision is to foster every child's healthy development and potential for kindness, both locally and globally. To achieve our vision, we conduct research that advances a holistic understanding of children and generates services and practice solutions to enhance their potential and healthy development.

### How to get involved:

- Sign up to participate in our research at [utm.utoronto.ca/ccdmp/participate-our-research](https://utm.utoronto.ca/ccdmp/participate-our-research)
- Follow us on social media @UTM\_CCDMP
- Be the first to receive our e-newsletter coming fall 2023! Sign up for our mailing list at our website.

### Want more?

Our magazine, the *pip o. Gazette*, is all about child development, mental health, and flourishing. You'll find articles about latest research, fresh parenting and teaching ideas, and tips from child development experts and caregivers with lived experience. Read more at [tinamalti.com/pipo](https://tinamalti.com/pipo).

*Suggested read:* "How to Promote Empathy for Others?" by Dr. Ruthie Speidel at [tinamalti.com/pipo/article-05.html](https://tinamalti.com/pipo/article-05.html)



### Keep in touch!



# MODULE 1 CHEAT SHEET



## THE 3 E'S OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**EMOTION REGULATION:** Our ability to control the occurrence, intensity, and expression of our emotions to help us achieve goals and behave appropriately in different situations.



### IMPORTANCE

*Strong emotion regulation skills support:*

- 1) Self-awareness.
- 2) Perspective taking.
- 3) More positive & kind interactions.
- 4) Academic success.
- 5) Emotional & behavioural well-being.

### KEY MOMENTS OF DEVELOPMENT

- Infants have some self-soothing strategies (e.g., thumb-sucking).
- Between ages 3-4, children recognize more feelings and learn how to communicate feelings.
- Even as emotion regulation grows more independent, caregivers remain critical co-regulators.

### STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT

- 1) **EMOTION COACH:** Label emotions, all emotions are opportunities to grow closer, Validate emotions, Elaborate about emotions.
- 2) **MINDFULNESS:** Engage in a mindful activity each day.
- 3) **MODEL SELF-REGULATION:** Modelling self-calming strategies supports children's learning.

**EMPATHY FOR THE SELF:** Our self-orientated emotional development and our ability to "feel with" ourselves (e.g., thinking about and reflecting on ourselves, our thoughts, and our feelings).



### ELEMENTS & IMPORTANCE

- 1) **SELF-REFLECTION:** Ability to observe and think about oneself.
- 2) **GUILT:** Feelings of sadness following wrongdoing and involves understanding we hurt someone.

*Strong empathy for self supports:*

- 1) Emotion regulation.
- 2) Self-esteem.
- 3) Lower aggression.
- 4) Moral development.

### KEY MOMENTS OF DEVELOPMENT

- Sense of self emerges in infancy.
- In preschool, children begin to identify different feelings, needs, interests and abilities in others and themselves.
- Guilt emerges early in life, increases between ages 4-8 years, then grows more stable.

### STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT

- 1) **ENCOURAGE SELF-AWARENESS:** Encourage reflection during everyday conversations or during book reading.
- 2) **LINK ACTIONS TO CONSEQUENCES:** Focus on current actions not on child character (e.g., "Your friend is crying because you knocked her tower").
- 3) **PROMOTE AND MODEL SELF-KINDNESS:** Praise effort and character when children do well. Model self-kindness to show the importance of treating ourselves with gentleness.

**EMPATHY FOR OTHERS:** Our other-oriented emotional development and our ability to "feel with" others (e.g., experiencing the same or similar emotions as others and feeling concern for others).



### ELEMENTS & IMPORTANCE

- 1) **EMOTIONAL:** Feeling the same emotion as others.
- 2) **COGNITIVE:** Understanding and evaluating another's perspective and emotional state.

*Strong empathy for others supports:*

- 1) Less aggression.
- 2) Kind, other-oriented behaviours.
- 3) Positive peer interactions.

### KEY MOMENTS OF DEVELOPMENT

- The emotional element of empathy emerges (0-2 yrs) before the cognitive element (3-4 yrs).
- From 3-4, children relate better to others when they share the same emotions.
- As perspective-taking skills increase, empathy increases through middle childhood.

### STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT

- 1) **PROMOTE PERSPECTIVE-TAKING:** Teach children social and ethical norms through play, book reading, and conversation.
- 2) **ENCOURAGE KINDNESS:** Support and praise children's small and large acts of kindness.
- 3) **MODEL EMPATHY:** If children receive empathy and compassion, they are more likely to treat others with empathy and compassion.

# BIG EMOTIONS IN THE **HEAT** OF THE MOMENT!



Big emotions such as anger or anxiety can show themselves differently in each child. Tantrums are common, especially for children who are learning to express themselves and regulate, or manage, their emotions.

So, how can you keep your **cool** in the **heat** of the moment?



## 1 PUT OUT THE FIRE

- **First, make sure your child is safe**, especially if they are running around, kicking, etc. Gently lead them to a safe area or remove objects out of reach.
- If they are not ready to listen or receive a hug, **stay close** so they can see you.
- **Check in often**, even if it's just to let them know you're still there are ready to support them when they need it.

## 2 WHAT CAUSED THE FIRE?

- Once the fire is out (child is calm), hugs or reassurance are given ("Would you like a hug?" "It's okay, I'm here."), then it's time to **find out what happened**.
- **Be open and listen** to what your child has to say. Keep in mind their behaviour is not a sign that they're choosing to misbehave or be defiant; it's usually a sign of stress, pain, or discomfort. You can **work together as a team** to figure out the source of the stress or pain.



## 3 PREVENT + PREPARE

- Once you and your child identify the source of stress, talk about how they might handle it next time. For babies and toddlers (and maybe even older children!), it may help to **HALT** first: check if they're **Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired**. If so, address that need first.
- Be **proactive** by talking to your child about feelings, what they are (label emotions), what they look and feel like, and that they're normal.
- As you begin to notice what may trigger your child's big emotions, you can help them start to pay attention to them too. Then, you can work as a team to **prevent future "fires"**. For example, if your child is working on sharing, remind them before entering a shared play area that they will need to take turns.



## THINK LIKE A FIREFIGHTER!

- A firefighter might feel nervous or scared going into a fire, but they **stay cool** by remembering their training and the fires they've successfully put out in the past.
- Firefighters also wear protective gear and have all the necessary equipment to protect them and help put out the fire. **Think of the strategies that you've learned as tools that you can use anytime you need them.**
- And remember, **firefighters don't worry about what onlookers think** of their strategies -- their priority is putting out the flames and making sure those inside are safe! If you're out in public when your child is having a "meltdown," try to keep focused on them and not those looking on. Onlookers will forget once they leave, but your care and attention will stay with your child throughout their entire lives.





# HOW TO BE AN EMOTION COACH

We can support ourselves and children through big emotions by being an emotion coach. The 4 steps to being an emotion coach spell out LOVE. See page 2 for examples of phrases you can try to practice these steps!



## **Label emotions**

Sometimes simply recognizing and labeling how we are feeling can help us start to feel better. Labeling children's emotions helps them feel heard and builds their understanding of emotions.



## **Opportunity for growing closer**

All emotions (even big emotions!) can serve as an opportunity to grow closer together. We can bond over shared joyful moments and emotions, and we can also problem solve and comfort each other through big or challenging emotions.



## **Validate emotions**

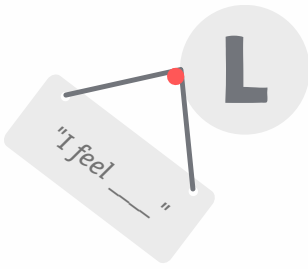
We are all human and are all going to experience big emotions sometimes. And that's okay! It's actually good and healthy for us to feel a wide range of emotions. Acknowledging and validating emotions is often an important first step to moving forward.



## **Elaborate about emotions**

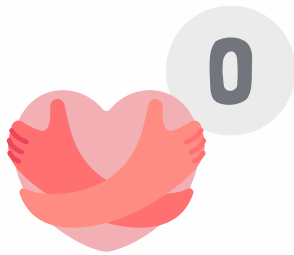
Elaborating about emotions, including discussing the signs, causes, and consequences of emotions can help children learn to manage their emotions in a constructive manner.

# TRY THIS!



## Label emotions

- "You are feeling \_\_\_\_."
- "Your face is red, and your fists are clenched. It seems like you might be feeling angry. Is that right?"
- "How are you feeling?"
- "Do you want to tell me how you're feeling?"
- "When I am angry, I \_\_\_\_\_. What do you do/feel when you're angry?"



## Opportunity for growing closer

- "It's okay to feel angry. We all do. Let's take a few deep breaths together because that can help us feel calmer. Then we will be more ready to decide what to do next."
- "What is something we could do to help you feel better?"
- "What did you do last time you were feeling \_\_\_\_?"
- "Let's problem solve this as a team. I'm lucky I have such a good problem solver with me."
- "Do you want a hug?"



## Validate emotions

- "It's okay to feel \_\_\_\_."
- "Yeah, that is sad/scary."
- "Yeah, that would make me feel \_\_\_\_ too."
- "It's okay to feel \_\_\_\_\_. Sometimes I feel \_\_\_\_ too."
- "You're right. That's not fair."

### We can also validate while holding boundaries:

- "It's okay to feel angry, but it's not okay to hit."
- "Playtime is over for now and it's okay to feel sad about that."



## Elaborate about emotions

### Identify signs of emotions:

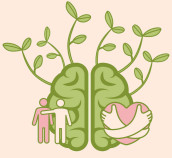
- "I could tell you were feeling sad because your body was droopy and your lips were quivering a bit."

### Identify causes of emotions:

- "The dog chasing you made you feel scared."
- "Me asking you to put your toys away makes you feel angry."




### Let your child lead. Ask open-ended (what/where/when) questions:

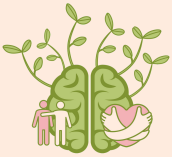
- "Why did that make you feel \_\_\_\_?"
- "How does it feel in your body to feel \_\_\_\_?"
- "What did we do to make you feel better?"
- "What could you do next time?"



# The 3Es of Social-Emotional Development




## DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTION REGULATION

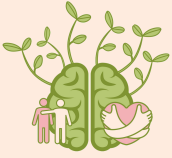
 <p>Ages 0–2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caregivers serve as sources of external regulation</li> <li>• Some self-regulation strategies emerge (e.g., distraction, looking away, physical self-soothing, such as thumb sucking)</li> </ul>
 <p>Ages 3–4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation skills grow more internal</li> <li>• Children recognize and label feelings in themselves and others</li> <li>• Begin to communicate by talking about their feelings</li> <li>• Continue working on difficult tasks, simple problem-solving</li> <li>• Briefly wait to receive a reward</li> <li>• Caregivers remain important supports</li> </ul>
 <p>Ages 5–8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More sophisticated regulation capacities continue to develop</li> <li>• More complex processes (recognizing others are distinct with their own thoughts and feelings) and more flexible problem-solving skills</li> <li>• Caregivers remain important supports</li> </ul>



# The 3Es of Social-Emotional Development

## DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY FOR THE SELF

 <p>Ages 0–2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around 18 mo, infants can recognize their image in the mirror</li> <li>• Verbal self-descriptions emerge around 2 yrs (e.g., “I am tall”, “I am a boy”)</li> <li>• Early signs of guilt emerge; toddlers show tension in response to a wrongdoing (i.e. looking away, show negative emotion and bodily tension)</li> </ul>
 <p>Ages 3–4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around 3 yrs, as children learn more about feelings and the world around them, they identify different needs, interests, and abilities, and can understand the ideas of “mine”, and “theirs”</li> <li>• From 3–4 yrs, verbal self-descriptions move from describing physical appearance to more internal self-descriptions (e.g., “I am a kind boy”, or “I am a helpful girl”)</li> <li>• By age 3 or 4, children can judge moral violations as wrong even in the absence of rules or authority figures prohibiting the action and report sadness over wrongdoing</li> </ul>
 <p>Ages 5–8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reflective skills and perspective taking skills continue to increase</li> <li>• Guilt increases steeply between ages 4–8, and then it becomes more stable</li> </ul>



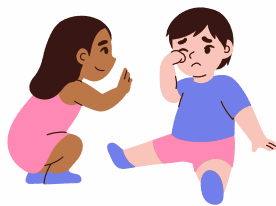
# The 3Es of Social-Emotional Development

## DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY FOR OTHERS



Ages 0-2

- The emotional component of empathy develops around 8 to 14 mos
- Infants react to the distress of others with negative emotion



Ages 3-4

- The cognitive component of empathy develops along with perspective taking. Preschoolers can make connections between emotions and desires and can respond to others' distress with soothing gestures (like stroking or patting)
- Preschoolers relate more to the feelings of others when they share the same feeling or perspective about the situation



Ages 5-8

- As perspective taking skills increase, empathic responding continue to increase through middle childhood
- 5 and 6 years olds learn how to read others' feelings through their actions, gestures, body language, and facial expressions





## The 3Es of Social-Emotional Development

### Continue the Conversation at Home



Here are some empathy activities to try together!

Empathy is an important social-emotional capacity that is actively developing throughout early and middle childhood. Research shows that empathy supports children's well-being and their potential for kindness and compassion towards others and themselves.

#### DRAW MY DAY



*What you need:* Paper, pencils/pencil crayons/crayons

This is a twist on the "How was your day?" question many of us ask children after school with a little empathy boost!

1. Ask your child to tell you about something funny/unexpected/weird/great/sad that happened to them today.

2. As they speak, listen carefully. When they're done, draw something inspired from what they told you.

It can be as simple as a scribble with colours that represent the feeling you heard, a stick figure picture of what happened, etc. Don't worry about the drawing part, the main point is capturing the feeling or a detail that stood out.

3. Challenge them to do the same for you now.

4. Have them describe their picture to you. Acknowledge the details that they remembered ("Yes, you're right, I did feel upset about that. But I feel a bit better now after talking about it.") and thank them for being such a good listener!





# The 3Es of Social-Emotional Development

## **FEELINGS COLLAGE**

*What you need:* Paper, scissors, glue, flyers/old magazine

**1.** Have your child choose an emotion. Talk about it: what does that emotion look like, feel like, sound like? If that emotion had a colour/shape, what would it be? There are no right or wrong answers.

**2.** They can cut out the pictures and words from flyers or magazines that remind them of that emotion. Make one for yourself!

**3.** Ask your child to describe their Feelings Collage. Observe any similarities or differences in your two collages and let them know that feelings can look and feel differently for everyone.

**4.** This can be repeated with a different emotion on another day if there's interest.

## **PET'S POINT-OF-VIEW**

*What you need:* Your pet if you have one (or point out animals you see on a walk or outside the window)

**1.** Ask your child, "How do you think your pet/that animal is feeling right now?" Listen to what they say.

**2.** Then ask, "Why do you think that?" and simply listen again to their thoughts and ideas.



## **READ MY MIND**

*What you need:* Book (or TV show)

**1.** When reading a book or watching TV together, ask your child how they think a character is feeling. How can they tell? Point out the character's expression or body language, or the words used to describe them at that moment. How would they feel in the same situation? What do they think the character should do? What would they do?

**2.** Keep these conversations casual and only go as long as it's interesting and fun for your child. This is something that you can continue doing from time to time to draw their attention to emotions.

## **VOLUNTEER**

*What you need:* A good cause!

Spending time giving back to the community is a great way to "put yourself in someone else's shoes". While some volunteer activities are restricted due to age, there are still many ways to volunteer and doing so as a family can create wonderful connections with each other and with others. For example, you can host a virtual playdate or party and encourage guests to donate to their local food bank. Connect with your local charities for more ideas on how to support them.



# The 3Es of Social-Emotional Development

## LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION

*What you need:* A comfortable space

Mindfulness is linked with improved self-regulation, prosocial behaviours (such as cooperation, sharing), and academics, and lower anxiety, depression, and stress).

Loving Kindness is sending kind and friendly wishes to ourselves and others, even to someone with whom they might not get along. There are many different ways and phrases to practice this, but here is one version to try.

1. Sit together in a comfortable place. You may close your eyes or leave them open. Take a few deep breaths together.
2. Start by sending Loving Kindness to yourselves! You can give yourselves a hug and ask your child to repeat the following phrases to themselves (can be aloud or in their mind):

***May I be happy***  
***May I be healthy***  
***May I be safe***  
***May I live with ease***

3. Ask your child to think about someone they love. They don't have to tell you who it is. Once they have this person in mind, ask them to picture them or think about how they feel when they are with this person.

4. Keeping this person in mind, have them repeat these phrases after you:

***May you be happy***  
***May you be healthy***  
***May you be safe***  
***May you live with ease***

5. Repeat with someone they do not get along with right now and with someone they don't know too well (for example, a neighbour, school crossing guard, etc.).

**em·pa·thy**

*noun*

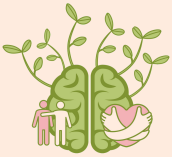


the ability to understand and share the feelings of others.





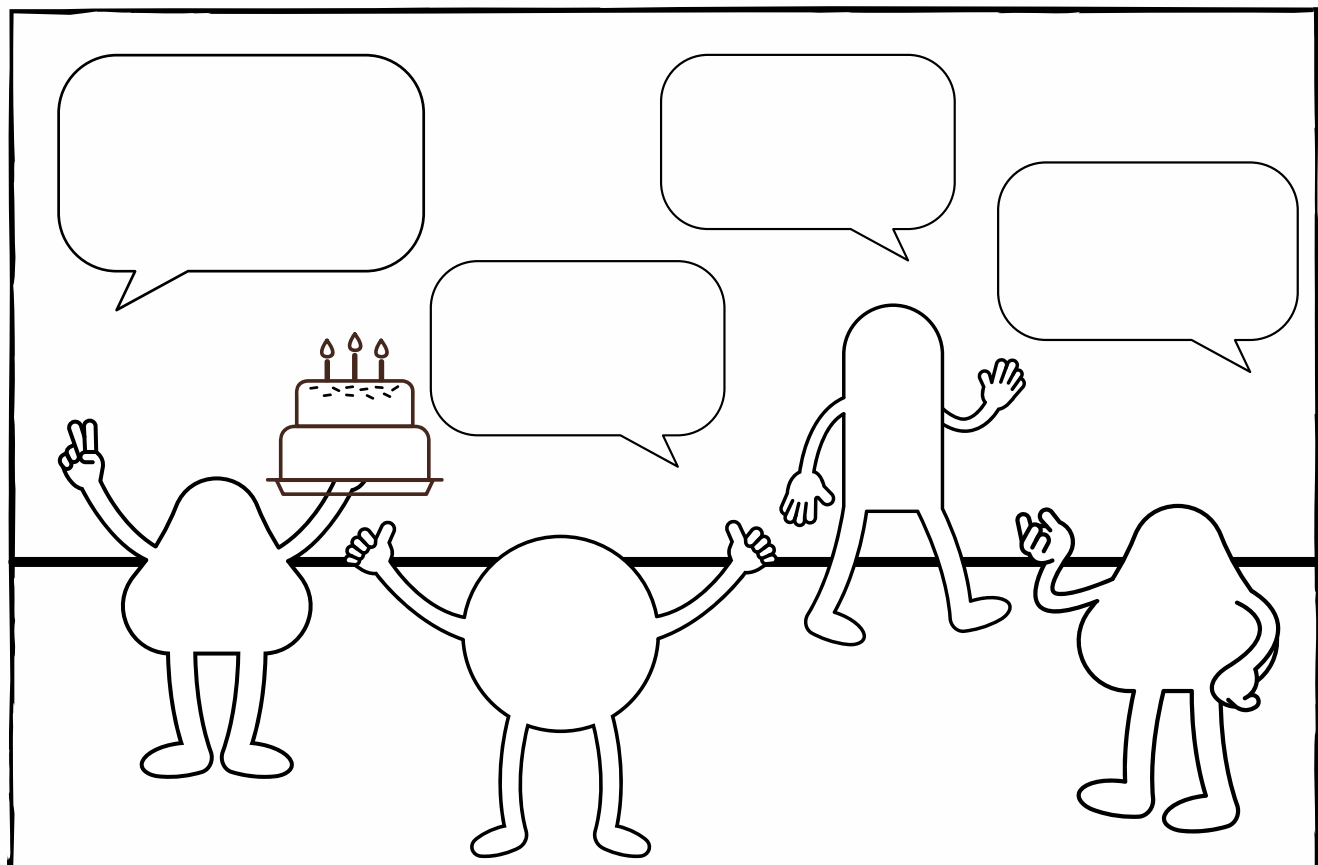
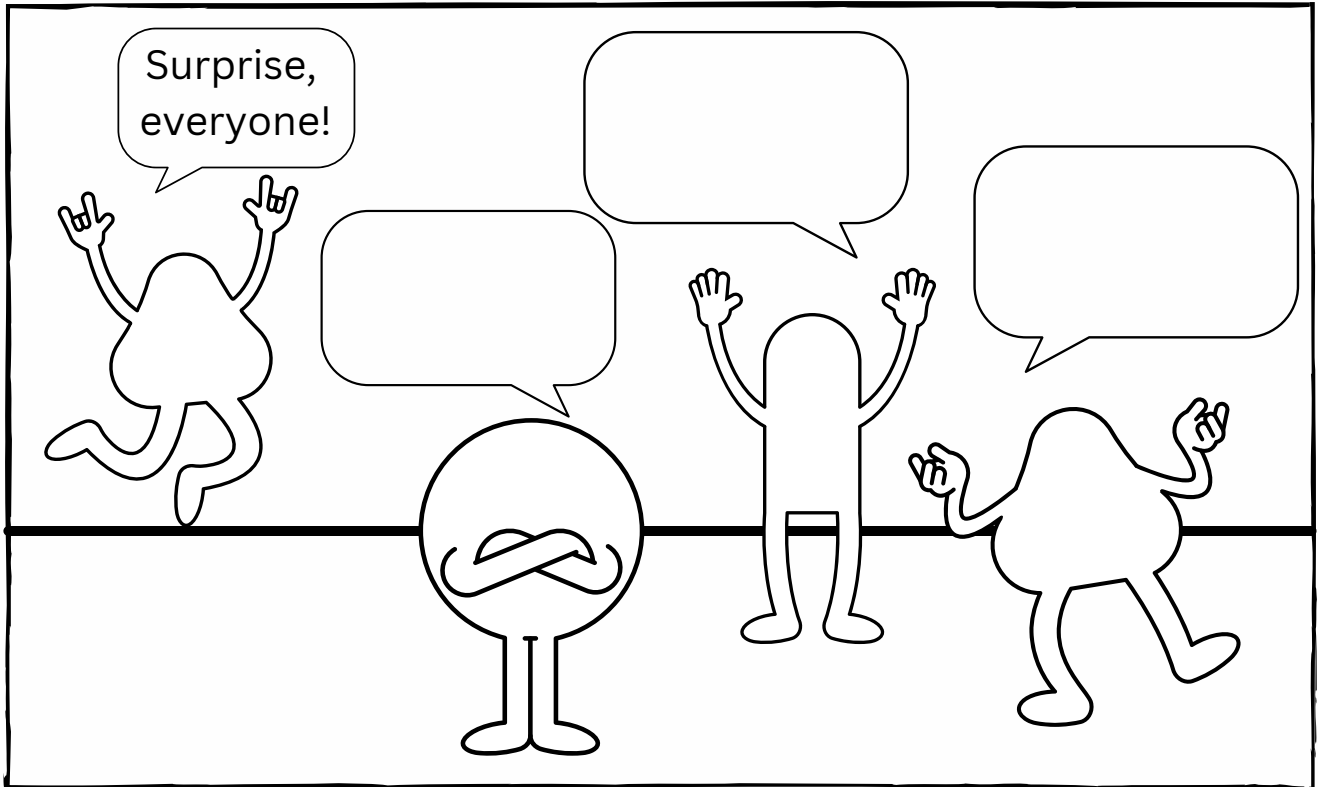


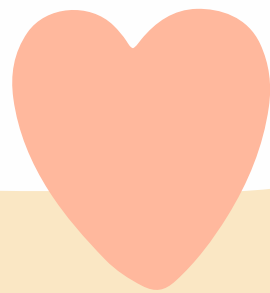
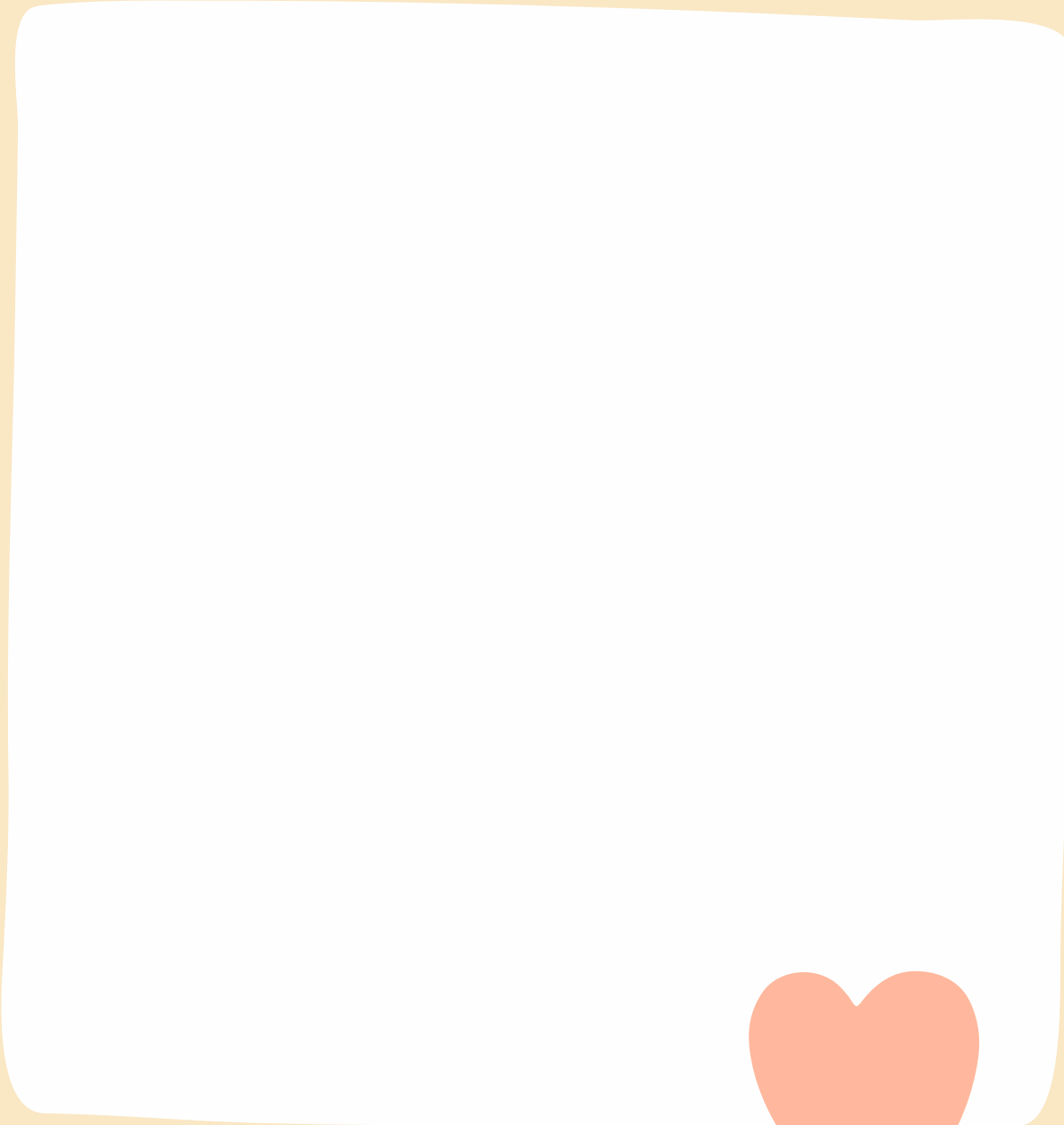


# The 3Es of Social-Emotional Development

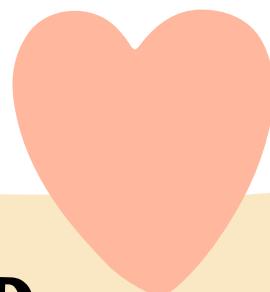
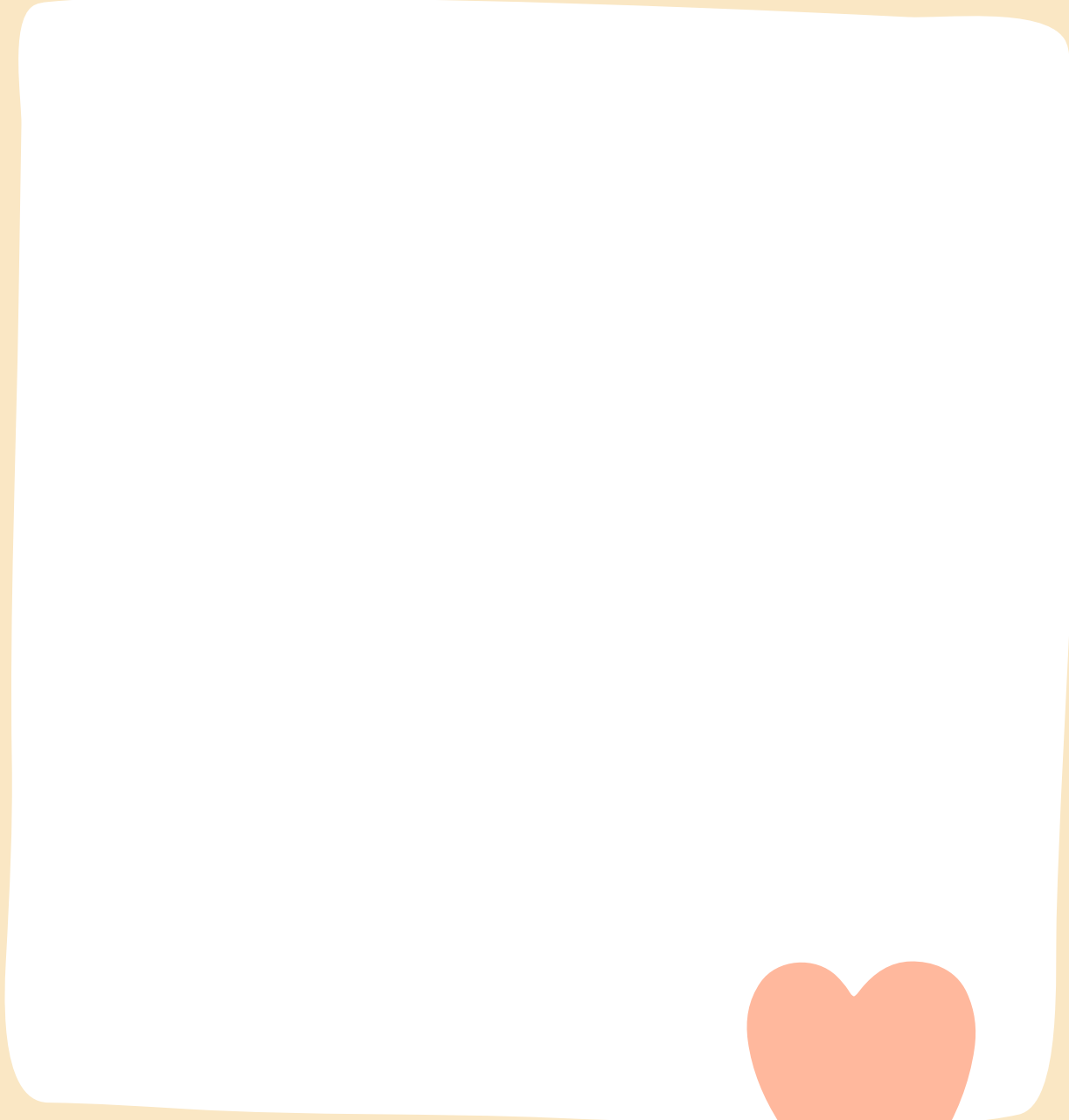
## COMPLETE THE COMIC

Finish the story by adding faces. What are they saying? What is happening?  
Complete the comic by colouring it in!





**DRAW YOURSELF DOING  
SOMETHING KIND FOR SOMEONE**

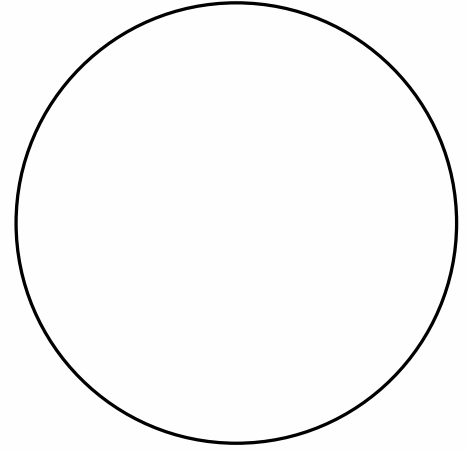
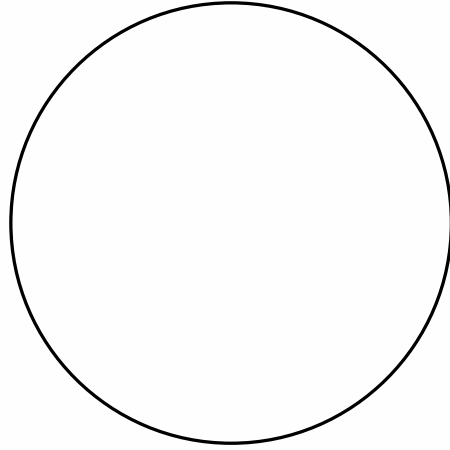
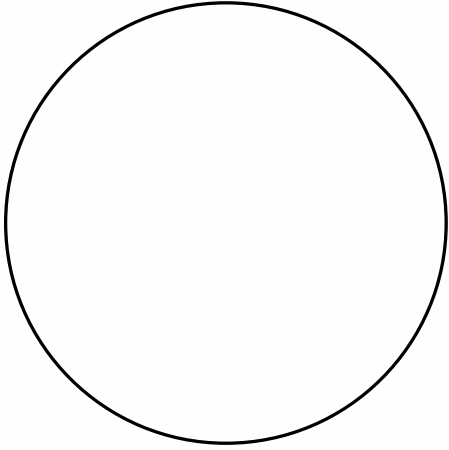


**DRAW SOMETHING KIND  
YOU DO FOR YOURSELF**

# FEELING FACES



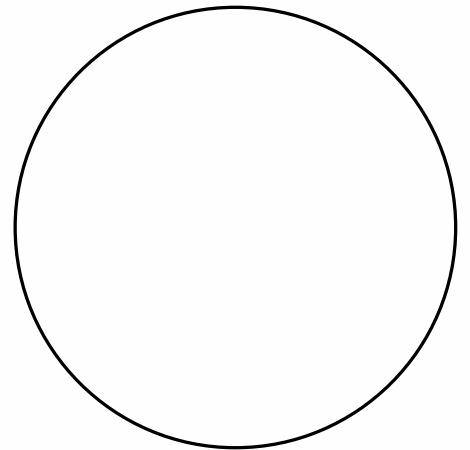
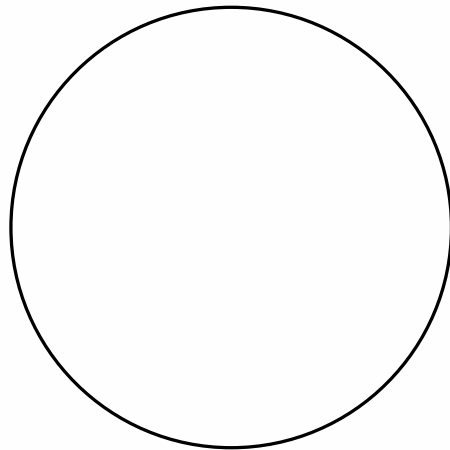
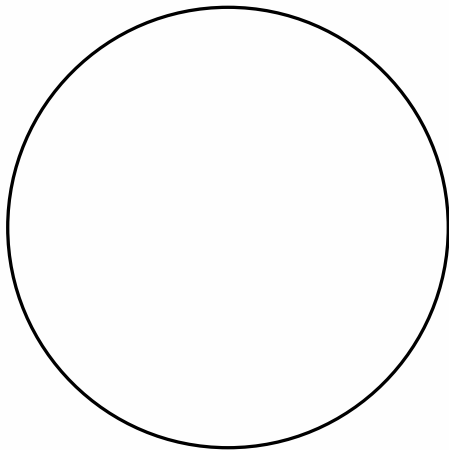
**DRAW AND LABEL EMOTIONS IN EACH OF THE CIRCLES.**



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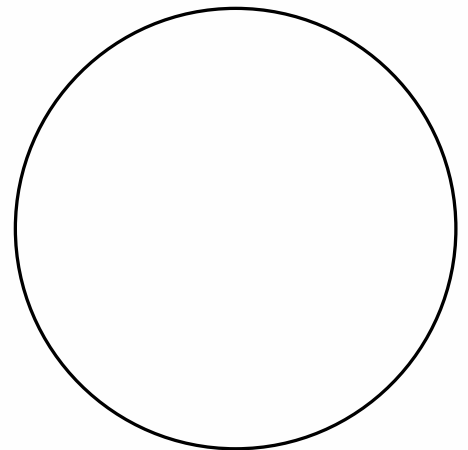
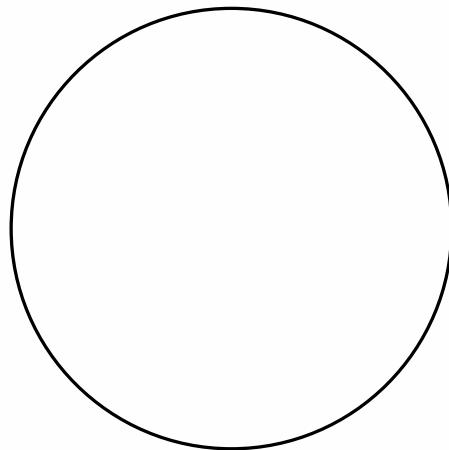
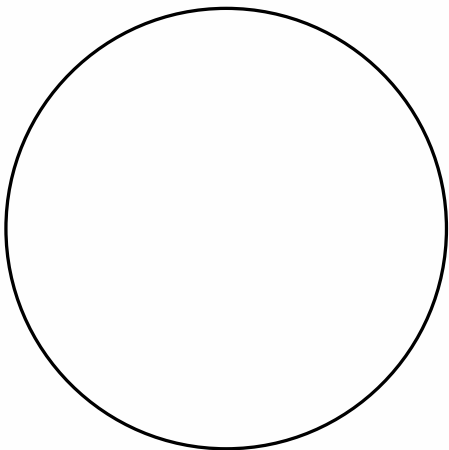
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