

Emotions Alive!



Design Thinking



Introduction

Finding ways to discuss feelings can help children recognize and manage emotions. In this project, children will have fun as they design a card game that weaves social and emotional responses into the game play to help build understanding of themselves and others. The game will focus on recognizing emotions and gaining self-management skills.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Children will:

- design a fun game that recognizes emotions;
- identify and communicate emotions through art, drama, movement, music, and writing; and
- connect emotions to ways people can manage their own behavior and relationships with others.

Vocabulary

feelings	communicate	appropriate
emotions	interpretation	consequences
relationships	imaginary	
awareness	real	

Supplies

- Index Cards (several dozen or paper cut into 3" X 5" pieces)
- Crayola® Markers
- Crayola® Colored Pencils

Prepare

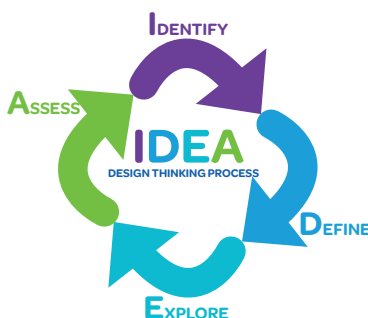
There are several steps to this project. Children will need an area where they can design the game cards and then play the game which will likely include some creative movement and drama, so it would be good have an open space. Store cards and writing tools in a clear bag between uses.

Essential Questions

- How are emotions communicated through facial expressions and body language?
- How do artists communicate emotions through drawing, dance, music, and drama?
- How do people learn to express feelings in ways that do not hurt themselves or others? What does it mean to share emotions appropriately?
- Why are some emotions more difficult to manage than others?

Guiding Questions

- How could a game help people talk about and understand emotions?
- What are some descriptive words that help convey a variety of emotions?
- How do humans use facial expressions, body language, and vocal tones to communicate emotions?
- Where in real life or in imaginary stories do creatures express their emotions? Describe some examples.
- Why is it important to recognize and honor what people are feeling?
- What persuades people to change how they are feeling?



Applying the Design Thinking Process to this Project

- **IDENTIFY** a way to track emotions and creatures.
- **DEFINE** possible game structures and rules.
- **EXPLORE** ways to sketch the game cards and play the game. As problems arise, try a different approach.
- **ASSESS** which solutions work best. Which rules help the game flow smoothly and keep players on track? What parts of the game system might be revised and improved?



- Have children make a list of emotions. To inspire a conversation on this topic you might ask, *What words describe how you feel when you're enjoying some of your favorite activities? How do you feel when plans are changed and you are not able to do what you want to do or go where you want to go? What words describe when you feel safe versus frightened?*

- Talk about living and non-living creatures. Review how living things breathe, eat, grow, and have babies. Explain that this project will focus on humans and other animals.

- Help children design a card game that helps them understand emotions by playfully answering the question, *What if...?*

- Children will design their own game systems and rules to decide how creatures will communicate emotions, and how players earn points. Some games honor collaboration, so children may decide that players can earn points for helping other players. It is great when children come up with their own game designs and rules.

- Encourage children to use all the arts in their game system. For example, the game might ask players to express the creatures' feelings through singing, acting, dancing, drawing, writing, or their choice of a different communication method.



Mark S.



- Children should practice playing the game they designed and revise the rules or system as needed to improve the game. After practicing, they should teach the game to someone else, which might be a friend or family member online using a virtual communication platform.

- It is best for children to come up with their own gameplay system and rules, but one suggestion might be for them to place the *Living Creatures* cards face down in one pile and the *Emotions Alive!* cards face down in a separate pile. Players select one card from each pile and determine how that creature will communicate that emotion to others.



- Urge children to reflect on the creatures portrayed in the game. How did we know they were living creatures? Were they real or imaginary?

- Ask children to imagine what might cause creatures to feel the different emotions. Children could come up with short story snippets where they describe what happened to a creature that resulted in that emotion. For example, did a hunter's trap almost hurt the creature? Did they make new friends while flying somewhere special?

- Help children respond by thinking of ways to manage feelings and behaviors. The creature metaphors can help children consider interesting ways to manage feelings that they can then relate to their personal emotions and behaviors. If something scary is happening, what are some things that make them feel calmer or safer? When something great is happening, how can they share that feeling with others?



- Help children connect the creatures' emotions and responses to what is going on in their lives. When do they feel [insert some emotions that children discussed]? If it is a positive feeling, how can they share it or recall it at a future time? If it is a scary, worried, or frustrated feeling, what are some things they can do to recognize that it is a real feeling and to find the root cause so the burden can be lessened?

- Talk about how all emotions and feelings are real. Life changes constantly and human emotions often go up and down, like a

roller coaster. It is important to know how to manage how we treat others and ourselves and to consider how our emotions impact behavior.

- Explore some responsible ways to manage behaviors. The solutions are very personal so frame them as questions, not directions. Could dancing help lessen the tension when you feel frustrated? Does drawing help you feel calm and joyful? Does singing relieve stress or express a celebratory or comforting feeling?



Robby B.



Amanda C.



Amy P.



For Younger Children

- Read stories about animals who experience a variety of emotions. Some suggestions include: *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae, *The Lion and the Mouse* by Jerry Pinkney, *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry* by Molly Bang, *Today I Feel Silly* by Jamie Lee Curtis, and *Feelings to Share from A to Z* by Todd and Peggy Snow.
- Have children draw pictures of themselves expressing the feelings from their list or the *Emotions Alive!* cards. Compare their feelings with those the creatures experienced during the game.

- Agree to a few categories for the game and add more next time it is played. For example, children might start by picking *Draw It!* cards only and sketching their answers. Add *Sing It!* cards and have them use original songs to show the emotions before adding another mode of expression. Next they might try *Dance It!* or *Act It!* cards. If there are children of various ages playing the game together the older children can help with *Write It!*.



For Older Children

- Personification, giving attributes of humans to non-human things, is used widely in cartoons, anime, poetry, and theater. How would a computer feel if crumbs were scattered on its keyboard? Use creative movement to show how a car feels when it has too many boxes in it.
- Create personalized emotion management strategies. For example, the game might help older children identify triggers that upset siblings or parents as well as the types of experiences that spark personally intense feelings. What suggestions do older children have for calming themselves, releasing anger, or dealing with frustration?



Jessica L.

Child Reflections

- How did your experience with games help you design this game and its rules?
- How many different designs did you try before assessing which one was best? How did you decide?
- How did you feel while teaching others how to play the game?
- Where there emotions that you would like to add to the *Emotions Alive!* cards next time you play the game?

Adult Reflections

- What did you notice about children's confidence in working independently without adults deciding the rules and systems?
- What conversation prompts helped children identify emotions beyond *happy*, *sad*, and *angry*?
- What emotion management strategies do you use to support yourself? How do you share those with children?



April H.

STANDARDS AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Educational standards outline what children should know and be able to do in a variety of academic disciplines. Use your imagination to modify the project to address specific standards from your children’s curriculum and make changes that are suited to your children’s interests and needs. This project aligns the following educational standards:

LANGUAGE ARTS

- Write using words, numbers, and images to inform and explain, share experiences, and create narratives, either fictional or non-fictional.
- Speak and listen to develop comprehension and presentation skills.
- Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.
- Develop an increasing command of vocabulary and use it accurately to communicate ideas and feelings.

MATHEMATICS

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- Attend to precision.

SCIENCE

- Describe what living organisms have in common (eating, breathing, growing, and reproducing) and distinguish them from non-living things.
- Ask questions, observe, and gather information about situations that people want to change.
- Define a simple problem that can be solved through the development of a new or improved object or tool.

THE ARTS: *Visual, Dance, Music, and Theatre*

- Use art vocabulary to describe choices while creating art.
- Use personal experiences to make and talk about art.
- Experiment with a variety of self-identified inspirations for movement.
- With minimal guidance, demonstrate and discuss personal reasons for selecting the arts that express ideas and emotions.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL CORE COMPETENCIES

- **Self-awareness**—recognize and name personal emotions.
- **Self-management**—regulate one’s emotions and manage stress.
- **Relationship Skills**—work within a team and communicate ideas and feelings.