



ready at five

## Understanding and Talking about Feelings

Young children have the same emotions as adults. Children get angry, sad, frustrated, nervous, happy, and embarrassed. It is very important for children to talk about their feelings: it helps them understand what they are feeling and learn how to deal with these feelings. As a parent, begin talking with your child about feelings and emotions at an early age; children who can open up to parents when they are small are more likely to talk with parents in their “teenage years.”

### INFANT:

- Even before your infant can talk, ask questions and talk about feelings. You can say, “Why are you crying? Are you sad? Do you need a hug?”
- Respond to your infant’s cries by picking her up when needed and feeding her when she is hungry. This will help her to understand how to let you know when she needs something.

### TODDLER:

- Play a game with your child: make different faces (happy, sad, or mad) and ask your child what kind of face you are making. Then, ask him to make the same face.
- Point out your child’s feelings as they arise. This not only helps her learn the words for different feelings, but also shows that you understand how she feels. For example, “I see that you are stomping your feet. It looks like you are mad and frustrated. Can you tell me why?”

### PRESCHOOLERS:

- Create a “feelings journal” for your child. Give her crayons or markers and let her draw when she is upset. When she is finished, talk about the drawing and her emotions.
- Help your child make a “feelings poster.” At the top, write: “I Feel...” Then, paste images of different feelings (happy, sad, excited, scared, calm, mad, tired, rowdy frustrated,) on the poster. Put a piece of Velcro under each feeling. Hang the poster where your child can reach it. Invite your child to stick an arrow (with Velcro on the back) underneath the emotion he feels at different times of the day.



Parent Tips



- Use puppets to encourage your child to tell you about her friends, her feelings, and her fears.

#### Book Suggestion

*On Monday When It Rained.* Cherryl Kachenmeister. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989.