

Using  
storytelling  
to talk about...

# Managing feelings & Behaviour

Stories, Poems and Activities to teach and learn in the Early Years

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# Introduction

## About the series

This book is part of the 'Using storytelling to talk about...' series which gives teaching practitioners the support and resources to develop and use storytelling and poetry/song performance skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each book has specifically-written short interactive stories and poems/songs that are linked to the three different learning and development areas, 'Personal, social and emotional development', 'Understanding the world' and 'Health and self care'. The prime area 'Communication and language' is a running thread throughout all five books.

## How to use the series

All the stories and poems/songs deal with issues or experiences that would be familiar to young children. They are short, interactive and simple to perform, with repetitive texts that offer the children the opportunity to respond and join in at their own level of understanding and language development.

The stories and poems/songs can be used in a variety of ways, for example:

- as a 'Let's have a short story (poem/song)' session at a set time each day or on a particular day of the week.
- as a way to help introduce, support or consolidate a topic or theme.
- by choosing a themed story/poem to support or discuss a particular issue, e.g. sharing.
- as an assembly or class performance resource.
- as a book corner recording for play sessions or quiet time.

## How to use this book

This book contains eight themed sections that are linked to different early learning goals listed in the focused learning and development area. Each section has a story or a poem icon to show what type of text it is. Use the contents page to select the theme or type of text that you require.

Each section is divided into the following parts:

### A. Teacher's notes

- **Theme name:** main learning skill or idea focus behind the story or poem/song and accompanying activities.
- **EYFS learning objectives:** relevant early learning goals from the book's main learning and development area.
- **What you need:** list of resources such as props, images/pictures, puppets and resource sheets.

### Before the story or poem/song

- **Getting ready:** tips on what resources to collect, prepare and have ready in advance.
- **Introducing the story or poem/song:** suggestions on how to stimulate the children's curiosity and imagination

about the theme, story or poem, e.g. telling and sharing an experience, introducing a character puppet and using props or images.

- **Performance suggestions:** suggestions on how to tell or perform a story or poem/song, e.g. body movements, use of voice and child participation ideas.

### After the story or poem/song

These two parts are designed as springboards for further exploration and discussion about the story or poem/song as well as its theme. They could be carried out straight after the story or poem/rhyme or over several days or weeks.

- **Ideas to reinforce the theme:** discussion ideas, activities and question examples to help consolidate the children's understanding and response to the story or poem/song and its main theme.
- **Consolidation activities:** interactive activities to reinforce the story or poem/song and its theme, e.g. using puppets, circle games, music, performance ideas, role play, parachute games and display suggestions.

## B. The story or poem/song texts

Body and voice actions suggestions are included for some of the stories and poems/songs. As you get to know the stories and poems/songs, you may want to add in your own ideas and actions.

## C. Related activities within the learning environment

A mix of child-led and adult-led cross-curricular activities relating to the story or poem/song and its theme. The activities can be carried out within activity stations, play or in specific learning sessions. Areas include: literacy, mathematics, art and craft, environment, small world play.

## D. Resource sheets

Most of the stories and poems/songs have character or picture images. These can be copied onto card, laminated and used as puppets or as story support. Other resource sheets include games, activity cards or templates.

## Other resources

### Storytelling and performance evaluation record

Use this record to self-evaluate your storytelling skills and performance after each of the stories and poems/songs and for future sessions.

### Observation suggestions and chart

Use 'Observation suggestions' and 'Observation chart' as an assessment guide to help you identify and note the developing skills, knowledge and attitudes of individuals or groups of children.

## Preparation

One of the most important elements of story telling and poem/song performance is good preparation. Areas to consider before you see the children are:

### 1. Choosing a place to read or perform

Choose a comfortable and spacious area to tell stories or perform poems and songs. This could be in a book corner or a place where there is a big rug for the children to sit on. Make sure that there is room for the children to move if they will need to use body actions.

### 2. Look, read and learn the texts

**a. Reading the text** - If you prefer to read the text to the children, practise reading it out loud several times on your own. Note any need for voice intonation and expression and simple body actions as well as repetitive words or phrases that the children could join in with you.

#### b. Learning a story or poem/song

- Read the story or poem/song out loud to yourself several times so you get to know the plot, characters, actions, voices and repetitive texts.
- Split the story or verses into easy sections to learn off by heart.
- You don't have to learn it exactly word for word but try and learn the repetitive text and choruses.
- Story memory aid: Have the skeleton of the story with the main repetitive words/phrases by your side or put it into a 'prompt envelope'. If you forget the story, tell the children that a character has sent you a letter or card about what happened next.
- Poem/song memory aid: Have the verses on a sheet of paper near you or add the verses onto the storyboard so you can read them if needed.

#### c. Props

Use props to introduce a story or poem/song, enhance the telling and message, encourage interactive participation by the children or aid discussion after the telling.

Prepare or collect your props before the session and plan out how they will be used. Have them close at hand and if possible away from the children's reach. If you need to show a number of props then make sure they are laid out in the right order so that you don't need to work out where each one is while you are performing.

When selecting props, think about the story or poem/song and decide which props would work well, e.g. a bucket and spade for a sandcastle story.

#### d. A special story and rhyme basket/box

Have a story basket (e.g. picnic hamper) or a box with a lid in which to store the props suggested in the story or poem/song. Over time, the children will become eager to find out what is in

the basket/box for that session. Keep them guessing or offer little clues, e.g. In the basket is something we can use to build sandcastles. What is it?

#### e. Story board - a visual aid

Some young children find visual images help reinforce story events or characters. These are especially useful for children who speak English as a second language. One way to do this, is to have a good sized storyboard in which you can attach pictures and characters (see Resource Sheets) before and during the performance or telling. Attach a sticky backing so they can stick easily onto the board.

### 2. Starting the session

Develop a routine where the children know that it is story time or poem/song time. Make sure children with sight or hearing disabilities are near to you and if possible, have adult support on hand for children with physical or learning difficulties.

Start with a simple rhythm or chant as a clear signal that it's time for stories or poems and songs, e.g. a clapping rhythm, word sounds or 'Time to sit, time to listen. 1-2-3 it's story time!'

#### Introducing the story or poem/song

It is important to engage the children's imagination and curiosity before you start telling your story or poem/song, e.g. a related prop such as baked bread for exploring senses; introducing a character image or puppet; using an image to encourage discussion or make up a small story about your own life that links to the story or poem/song theme.

#### Performance skills

A storyteller can use a range of different methods to tell a story or perform a poem or song to a young audience.

These include:

- speaking slowly and clearly to a point behind the group so that all the children can hear you
- looking around the group while you perform so that every child feels involved
- using different voice tone to distinguish between different characters and their moods, as well as highlighting sound effects, actions and events
- using body actions to illustrate movements and expressions
- using a small number of props
- involving the children where possible, e.g. join in with actions, words, sounds
- improvising the text or actions if you can't remember the words or in response to the children's involvement or reactions
- positively acknowledging any interruptions and then weaving back to the story.
- revisiting the story or poem/song several times so that the children recognise it and join in with words and phrases.

The most important thing is to enjoy, share and have fun with the stories, poems and songs!

# Theme: Recognising and dealing with feelings

## EYFS learning outcomes

To understand how we can:

- talk about how we and others show feelings
- talk about our own and others' behaviour

## What you need:

- Our special story and rhyme basket/box' (optional)
- 'My Different Feelings' – poem
- Story board (optional)
- 'Recognising feelings' cards Resource sheet 1 (RS1)
- 'Coping with feelings' cards – Resource sheet 2 (RS2)
- 'Masks template' – Resource sheet 3 (RS3)

## Getting ready:

Prepare a mask from Masks template – RS3 for introducing the poem. Copy and cut out 'Recognising feelings' cards – RS1 and 'Coping with feelings' cards – RS2. You may want to display them on the story board or invite children to hold them up.

### Introducing the poem

This poem looks at five examples of moods/feelings that most children would relate to. Show the children the mask and put it across your eyes. Ask the children to work out how you are feeling by looking at the expression of your mouth and body actions. Use some or all of the five feelings in the poem.

### Performance suggestions

Before you read out or perform a verse, place the relevant feeling from 'Recognising feelings' cards – RS1 on the story board or invite a child to hold it up. Use intonation and body language to illustrate each mood feeling at the start of a verse. Read out/perform the last two lines in a positive, upbeat tone. Display the matching positive images from 'Coping with feelings' cards – RS2. Read/perform a couple of times and encourage the children to mime along with the actions and facial expressions.

## Ideas to reinforce theme

- Use the 'Recognising feelings' cards – RS1 and 'Coping with feelings' cards – RS2 to discuss the different scenarios. For younger children, put the matching cards together. Point to a 'Recognising feelings' card and ask what the child is feeling and why. Point to the matching card and discuss how the child deals with his/her feeling. Mix up the matching cards for older children and encourage them to work out what goes with what.
- After the poem, ask: *Which one of these feelings have you felt today?* Be aware of and sensitive to the children's experiences as you ask the questions. Volunteer your own experiences of feelings. Work positively, with the children to think of simple ways to help cope with the four feelings. Talk about positive feelings too, e.g. happy, excited, calm etc.

## Consolidation activities

### Puppet

Use a puppet to act out a familiar scenario or share an experience about how it felt about an occasion, e.g. nervous about swimming. Encourage children to give advice and help to the puppet on ways it could deal with the feeling, e.g. take a breath, ask for help etc. Highlight how children can always ask for help in dealing with feelings they don't like.

### Circle game

Use a mask from Masks template – RS3. Pass the mask round the circle to a simple rhythmic beat. Once the beat stops, the child with the mask puts it over their eyes and make an expression using their body and lower part of their face to illustrate a mood. The others have to guess what it is. End the game with everyone counting to 3 and making a happy face.

### Display idea

Take photographs of the children each making a face for a different feelings. Enlarge the faces and place their decorated masks (see Art and Craft) and display with mood /feeling words under each one.

# My Different Feelings



When Sue is feeling angry,  
She wants to scream and shout,  
But when she counts from one to ten,  
Her anger all comes out.



When Hoe is feeling grumpy,  
He wants to stamp and cry,  
But when he tries to smile and grin,  
His grumpy mood goes by.



When Jade is feeling sad,  
She wants to stop her tears,  
So when she gets a lovely hug,  
Her sadness disappears.



When Naz is feeling nervous,  
He wants to hide away,  
But when he takes a big deep breath,  
His worries float away.



When Mel is feeling happy,  
She wants to laugh and play,  
So when she goes and sees her friends,  
She smiles and smiles all day.



## Related activities within the learning environment



### Literacy

Discuss words that describe moods. Write them down as the children say them. You will be amazed how many words they can find for just one mood.

Work with a group to create one or two more extra verses for the feelings poem using the same structure as the 'My Different Feelings'. Write it down as you go along.



### Mathematics

Practise counting up to 20. If the group is confident in their counting, try counting backwards from 20 to 0.



### Art & Craft

Give each child a card mask from 'Masks template' – RS3 to decorate in bright colours or materials. Attach sticks to them and let the children use them in class activities or their own play activities.

Leave out materials or show children how to create a calm-inducing item e.g. a soft toy, a soft chiming mobile or gentle sounding cardboard tube rainstick.



### Music

Leave out a range of musical instruments and encourage the children to investigate making different sounds to depict different types of feelings/moods. They could perform their ideas to the class or to a group of friends.

Provide music for the children to listen to that could represent different moods. What music makes them feel happy or sad? Why?



### ICT

Show a children's film/cartoon version of Sergei Prokofiev's '*Peter and the Wolf*'. Discuss Peter's changes in feelings in the story.



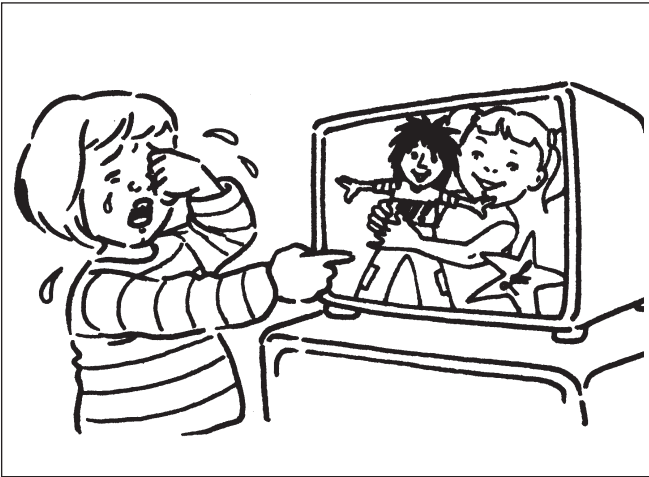
### Games

Copy and laminate one or two sets of 'Recognising feelings' cards – RS1 and 'Coping with feelings' cards – RS2. Let pairs of children use them to play matching games/pairs or create their own stories from the different scenarios.

## 'Recognising feelings' cards

Copy and cut out cards.

Use for discussion and game activities.



## Resource sheet 2

### 'Coping with feelings' cards

Copy and cut out cards.

Use for discussion and game activities.





Masks template

Copy and cut out.

Attach sticks to hold  
mask to face.

