



Supporting Systems

Creative Brief: Home Version-Feelings Thermometer

How are we today?

Purpose

The Feelings Thermometer is a learning tool co-designed by ECL practitioners, teachers and parents, to help children learn about their own and others feelings. Used every day, the



Feelings Thermometer can help increase children's sensitivity to the needs of others and their sense of belonging in the group or family. It encourages children to express their feelings and discover what affects well being of themselves and others in their family.

Your family can use this tool at home to explore emotions and develop a common language, which can grow in sophistication with use. When using the Feelings Thermometer, family members are able to create a snapshot of how they are that everyone can share. The thermometer creates a visual representation of the emotional and motivational mood of the family as a whole, allowing the whole system to celebrate together, accept difficult emotions, and to support those under stress.

I think for use in the family, the adults need to be aware that they are the ones supporting their children and not the other way around. They can let children know their mood, but care should be taken to use according to the child's development. Perhaps, have the children use first through the day and then the parent can use the thermometer with keeping in mind the welfare of the child. If you are angry or sad, the child can know that, but resourcing for that emotion should not be on the shoulders of the child. You can model emotions and then how to resource them to maintain balance as a resource for your children.

Systemic exercise-How to set up your Feelings Thermometer

The Feelings Thermometer can hang anyway in the house. The kitchen refrigerator may be a good place because you can use magnets to set up and use, but anyplace you decide can be right for your family. It gives members of the family the opportunity to explore and register their emotions, or levels of motivation which they are experiencing at any one time.



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As a family you may wish to decide on the colours and then decide what each colour represents each emotion. You may also like to add words to aid what each colour means to the class. Each member then has their own peg, clothes pin or magnet, which they can decorate and personalise to include their name.

Children place their own personal peg on a coloured “feelings scale” they have chosen. This can be done daily at the start of the day as a check-in on how the class is and then used throughout the day. Moving someone else’s peg is not an option but noticing others placing is encouraged. The pegs can be moved when people feel the need, at certain times of day or in response to an event or decision. The parent is able to take simple “readings” of the family dynamics during the day and to notice the needs of particular individuals.



Extensions

If you have the feelings thermometer on the refrigerator, maybe some magnets with resources can be added for different difficult emotions. You can model using your own and maybe the children can come up with their own. Play with it to see if it helps create balance.

This activity was adapted from an ecl tool. Some of the language in the beginning comes directly from their activity with permission.