



RULER for Families

Conversation Starters and
Activities for Elementary
School Families

Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

Introduction

These simple activities and conversation starters are designed to promote social and emotional skills at home. There are three types of activities: 1) TALK ABOUT IT, 2) DO IT TOGETHER, and 3) DID YOU NOTICE.

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Grade 4-5

TALK ABOUT IT:
Emotions impact our ability to learn. Ask your child about a time they had a strong emotion at school. How did it affect their focus?

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Keep the conversation going! Ask: What can you do to refocus when a strong emotion distracts you? Practice the strategy together.

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Explore emotions through book characters. Ask: how do the characters' emotions affect those around them?

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Ask your child to identify a character who manages their emotions well. How does it affect their interactions and relationships?

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Strong emotions can affect us physically. Discuss a time when an emotion made you feel ill. What was happening in your body and mind?

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Emotions can affect us physically in helpful ways too. Share a time when pleasant emotions made you feel better physically.

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Knowing how we feel is the first step in dealing with it. Discuss: How do you know when you have a feeling? What are the clues?

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Explore feeling “stressed.” Ask your child: how does it feel in your body? What other clues let you know about the feeling?

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DID YOU NOTICE:
Recognizing others' feelings helps relationships. Ask: Can you think of a time you noticed a friend's emotions? What were the clues?

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Recognizing a friend's feelings can help tell us how to respond. Ask: what kinds of questions could you ask to learn more?

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Together, discuss the word valued. What makes each of you feel valued? How does feeling valued affect your relationships?

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Keep discussing the word valued. Ask: what do you do and say to show others that they are valued?

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DID YOU NOTICE:
A large emotion vocabulary can help in many ways! Talk about a time someone had just the right word for how you felt. What was that like?

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Having a rich feeling word vocabulary can help us connect! Each share a time that someone mislabeled how you felt. What was that like?

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DO IT TOGETHER:
A strong emotion vocabulary helps us label, understand, and manage our emotions. Look for new emotion words in songs this week.

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DID YOU NOTICE:
Music can communicate emotions in powerful ways. Listen to music and ask: what specific emotions do you think it's conveying?

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Ask: have you ever noticed how you and someone else express the same emotion differently? Why do you think that is?

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Many people are comfortable expressing some feelings, but not others. Which emotions are you each comfortable expressing?

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TALK ABOUT IT:
This week, discuss different ways to manage strong emotions. Ask: what are some of your best strategies for managing stress?

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Ask: What could you say or do to help a friend feel less stressed? Do any of those strategies help you feel less stressed?

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DO IT TOGETHER:
Exercise can be an effective strategy for managing emotions. Choose an exercise to do together!

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TALK ABOUT IT:
Have your child talk with family members about how they manage emotions. Ask: did you learn any new strategies you might try?

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