Parent University • 2026

Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

RULER

Bringing RULER & Emotional Intelligence from School to Home

Pre-K – 8th Grade

November 11, 2026

Parent University • Team

RULER Leadership Team

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Elementary School Principal

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Principal, Lincoln Early Learning Center

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Middle School Principal

Mrs. Megan Temple
Instructional Coach

Mrs. Krista Winkelman
Executive Director of Student Services

Parent University • Culture Goal

SAFE, HEALTHY & CONNECTED CULTURE

Leading a healthy culture that promotes wellness, safety, and belonging for ALL, requires a continuous improvement approach inclusive of student, staff, parent, and community voice and engagement.



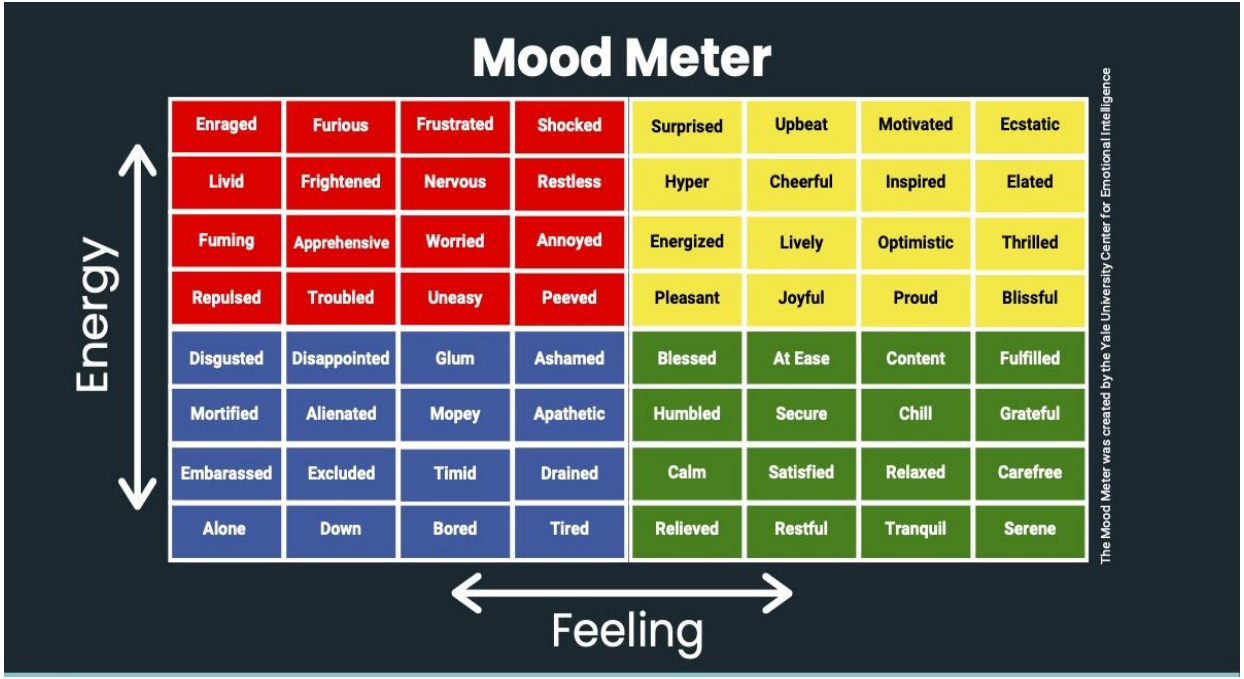
Objective 1.a.

Implement high-quality, consistent social-emotional health, wellness, and safety practices for adults and students.

- **Initiate the 3-Year SEL RULER roll-out plan**

Parent University • Tool

Inclusive Welcome: The Mood Meter



Why Feelings Matter 💡

🎯 Attention & Focus
Impacts learning and memory

💡 Decision-Making
Influences choices and actions

🤝 Relationships
Drives empathy and connection

❤️ Physical & Mental Health
Manages stress and well-being

Core Insight: Ignoring emotions means ignoring critical data.

> ***"If we don’t feel, we can’t heal."***
>
> **— Marc Brackett**

PRINCIPLES

All emotions matter

Emotions are social

Emotion skills can be developed

TOOLS

Charter

Mood Meter

Meta-Moment

Blueprint

The RULER Framework 📏

R — **Recognizing**
Emotions in self and others

U — **Understanding**
The causes and consequences of emotions

L — **Labeling**
Emotions accurately

E — **Expressing**
Emotions appropriately

R — **Regulating**
Emotions effectively

RULER Anchor Tool #1 – The Family Charter

What it is: A collaborative agreement co-created by everyone in the household.

1 Desired Feelings

How do we want to feel in our home each day?
(e.g., Respected, Safe, Loved, Calm)

2 Actionable Behaviors

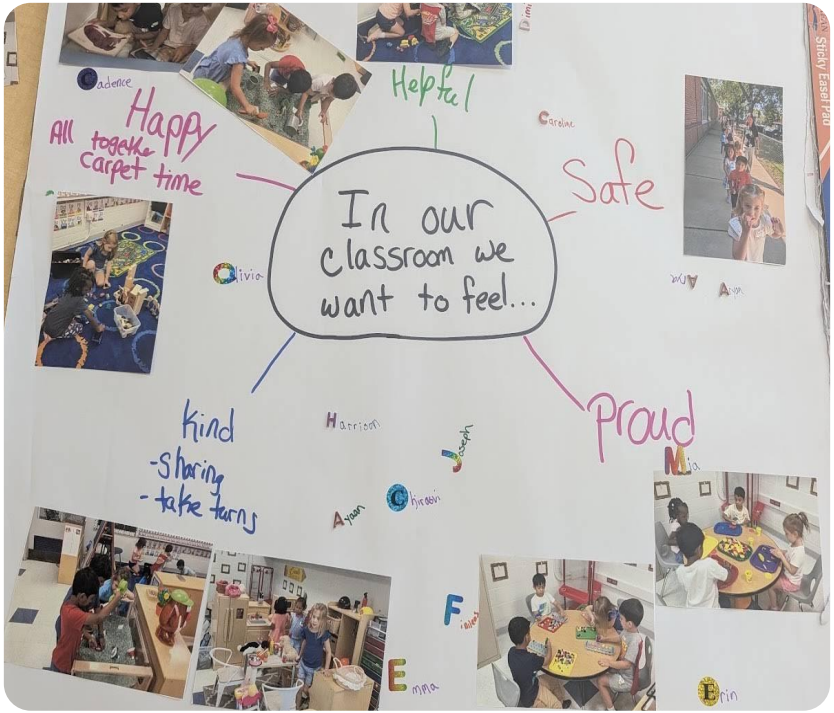
What specific habits will create these feelings?
(e.g., "Listening without interrupting," "Asking for space gently")

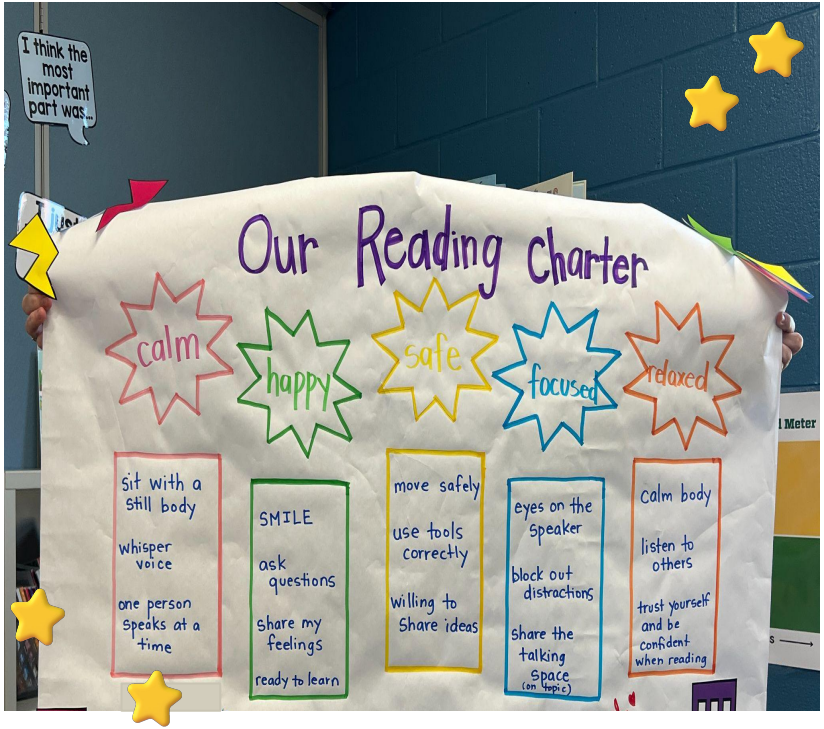
3 Reset Agreement

How will we let each other know when the charter isn't being upheld?



The Family Charter - Samples





The Mood Meter

OVERVIEW

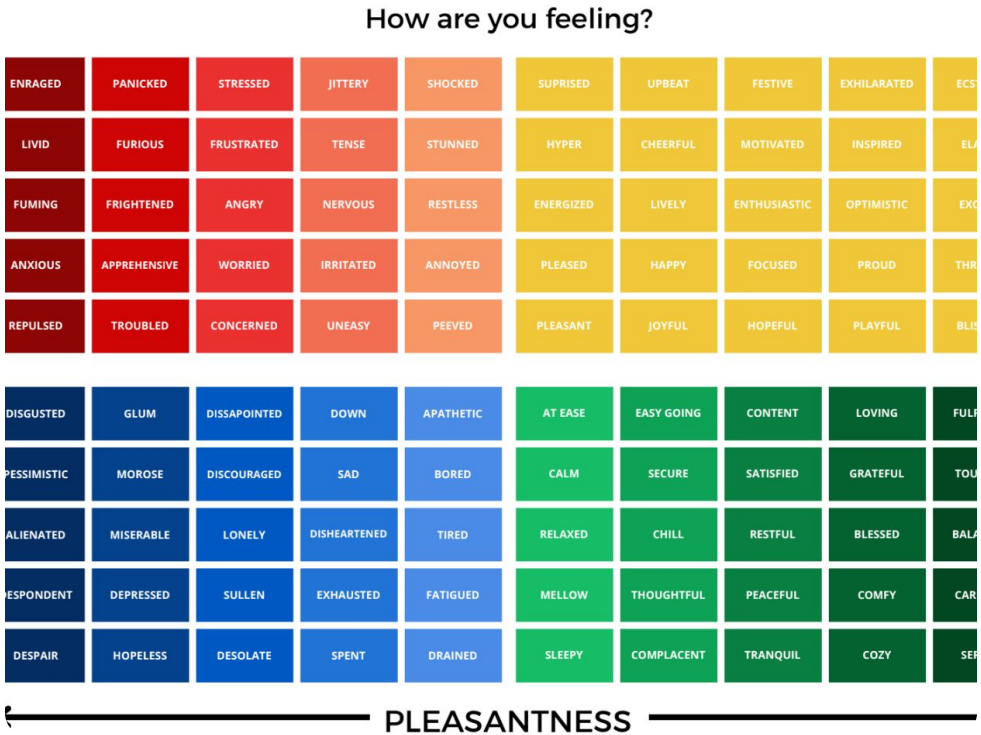
Is a tool from the RULER framework that helps individuals recognize and label their emotions based on energy and pleasantness levels.

Pleasantness Level

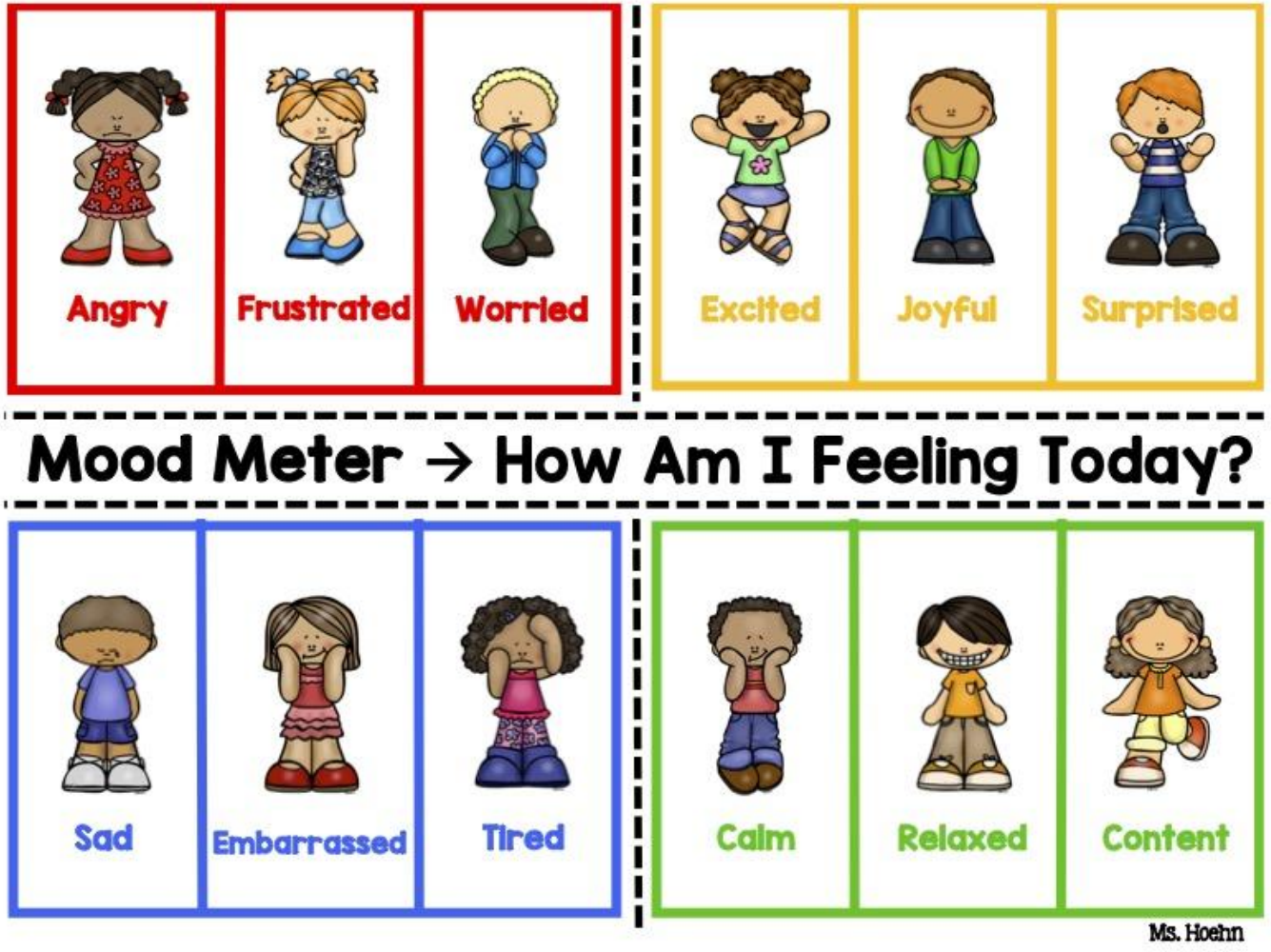
Measures emotional feeling from unpleasant to pleasant across the horizontal axis.

Energy Level

Measures physical energy in the body from low to high across the vertical axis.



Sample Mood Meters



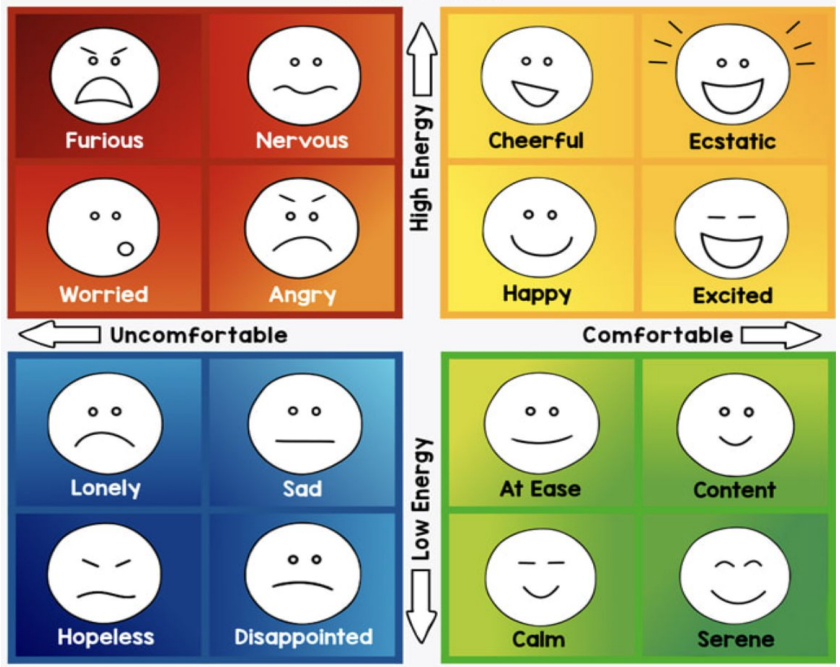
Sample Mood Meters











The Mood Meter: 3 Ways to Use It at Home

1

Fridge Check-In

Post a Mood Meter magnet on the fridge for quick morning or dinner check-ins.

2

Parent Out-Loud Modeling

"I'm in the Red Zone because traffic was stressful, so I'm taking 3 deep breaths before starting dinner."

3

Bedtime / Transition Debriefs

"What color quadrant were you in during recess today?"

Unpacking Positive Feelings (Moving Beyond "Good" or "Fine")

Proud 🌟

Meaning: Satisfied with effort or accomplishment (e.g., mastering a spelling word).

Parent Response: *"You worked really hard on that! How does it feel to see your effort pay off?"*

Content / Peaceful 🟩

Meaning: Relaxed, comfortable, and safe in their environment.

Parent Response: *"It sounds like your body is feeling nice and relaxed right now. Let's enjoy this calm moment."*

Optimistic / Eager 🟡

Meaning: Excited and hopeful about an upcoming event or activity.

Parent Response: *"I can see that big energy! What part of tomorrow are you looking forward to the most?"*

Appreciated / Valued 🟨

Meaning: Feeling seen and recognized by a teacher, friend, or parent.

Parent Response: *"It feels wonderful when someone notices our hard work or kindness, doesn't it?"*

Connected 💚

Meaning: Feeling a sense of belonging with friends, family, or a team.

Parent Response: *"It sounds like you had a great time being part of the group today!"*

Unpacking Challenging Feelings (Moving Beyond "Bad" or "Mad")

Frustrated 🔴

"I feel bad" ➔

Need: Help breaking down a task or taking a short break from a challenge.

Overwhelmed 🔴

"I feel bad" ➔

Need: A quiet environment, deep breathing, or reducing sensory input.

Excluded 🟦

"I feel bad" ➔

Need: Empathy, validation, and problem-solving around friendships.

Disappointed 🟦

"I feel bad" ➔

Need: A listening ear to process expectations that weren't met (e.g., canceled plans or lost games).

Apprehensive / Anxious 🔴

"I feel bad" ➔

Need: Reassurance, predictability, or breaking an upcoming event into smaller steps.

Embarrassed 🟦

"I feel bad" ➔

Need: Reassurance that mistakes are a normal part of learning and that they are safe.

Home Strategies - Feeling Words

🎨

Emotion Art & Soundtrack Swap

(Creative Expression)

How to use it:

Ask children to draw what an emotion looks like (e.g., "Draw 'Frustrated' as a monster") or play/hum a tune matching a feeling.

Why it works:

Younger children or visual/kinesthetic learners often express abstract feelings through art or sound before articulating them verbally.

🎭

Emotion Charades / Mirror Face-Off

(Physical Clues)

How to use it:

Play a 5-minute game after dinner acting out feeling words using only facial expressions, body language, and vocal tone!

Why it works:

Directly builds the **R - Recognizing** skill by training kids to spot non-verbal physiological and facial cues in themselves and others.

🚗

Car Ride Temperature Check

(Transition Routine)

How to use it:

On the drive home, ask: "If your day was a weather forecast, what was it?" (e.g., "Sunny with a sudden thunderstorm").

Why it works:

Low-pressure reflection strategy that helps kids process their day without feeling put on the spot by direct questioning.

Home Strategies - Feeling Words

The "Emotion Upgrade" Game

(Vocabulary Building)

How to use it:

When reading or watching a movie, challenge your child to replace basic words with "level-up" words (e.g., "Instead of 'sad', what's a more precise word? Disappointed? Lonely? Dejected?").

Why it works:

Directly supports the **L - Labeling** skill and expands active vocabulary.

The "Best Self" Pause

(Meta-Moment Practice)

How to use it:

In calm moments, discuss what "Best Self" looks like at home. In conflict, prompt: "Let's take a deep breath—how would your Best Self handle this?"

Why it works:

Builds self-regulation without triggering defensiveness.

Dinner "High, Low, & Green"

(Family Reflection)

How to use it:

Share at dinner: One High (Yellow/Green highlight), one Low (Red/Blue challenge), and one moment in the Green Zone (calm/content).

Why it works:

Models emotional vulnerability and shows kids all experiences are normal and welcome.

RULER Anchor Tool #3 — The Meta-Moment Reset



Step 01

Notice Physical Cues

Clenched fists, racing heart, loud voice.



Step 02

Pause & Breathe

Take a slow, deep breath to calm the nervous system.



Step 03

Envision Your "Best Self"

Ask: *"How would my Best Parent / Best Student handle this right now?"*



Step 04

Choose a Strategy

Mindful breathing, cognitive reframing, or taking space.

Meta-Moment – Home Strategies

🛑

1. "Hand on Heart"

Secret Signal (Co-Regulation)

How it Works:

Agree on a non-verbal family sign (hand over heart, "pause" symbol) when emotions start escalating.

At Home Application:

Instead of shouting *"Calm down!"*, use the signal to indicate entering a Meta-Moment and taking a pause together.

🖼️

2. "Best Self" Avatar

Character Avatar (Visualizing)

How it Works:

In a calm moment, have your child describe or draw their "Best Self":

- **Pre-K–2nd:** Calm, kind superhero or animal.
- **3rd–8th:** 3 adjectives (e.g., *Patient, Fair, Strong*).

At Home Application:

When triggered, ask: *"What would your 'Best Self' character do right now?"*

😮‍💨

3. "Anchor Breaths"

Physical Cues (Noticing)

How it Works:

Help kids connect body sensations (racing heart, clenched jaw) with the pause.

At Home Application:

Practice fun techniques during calm times:

- **Pre-K–2nd:** *Hot Cocoa Breath* (Smell 4s, cool down 4s).
- **3rd–8th:** *Box Breathing* (Inhale 4, hold 4, exhale 4, hold 4).

RULER Anchor Tool #4 — The Family Blueprint

What it is: A structured tool for resolving conflict, restoring relationships, and building empathy between siblings or parents and children.

The 4 Blueprint Reflection Steps:

1. What Happened?
Describe the situation from your perspective.

2. How Did You Feel?
Name your feelings and guess how the other person felt.

3. What Caused These Feelings?
Identify the triggers and underlying needs.

4. What Can We Do to Repair?
Agree on action steps to make things right and move forward.

Vocabulary Expansion Ladder (Pre-K–8th Grade)

Base Feeling 🧸	Pre-K – 2nd Grade 🎒	3rd – 5th Grade 📱	6th – 8th Grade
Mad 🔴	Upset, Grumpy	Frustrated, Annoyed	Furious, Agitated, Resentful
Sad 🟦	Down, Hurt	Disappointed, Lonely	Dejected, Gloomy, Heartbroken
Happy 🟡	Glad, Silly	Excited, Proud	Ecstatic, Energetic, Optimistic
Calm 🟩	Cozy, Quiet	Content, Relaxed	Peaceful, Mindful, Serene
Scared 🔴	Afraid, Shy	Nervous, Worried	Anxious, Apprehensive, Overwhelmed

Real-World Home Scenarios

Scenario 1: The After-School Meltdown
(Pre-K–4th)

SITUATION

Child throws shoes and cries over a small request.

RULER SHIFT

Recognize Red Zone energy. Provide 10 minutes of quiet transition time and a snack before discussing chores or homework.

Scenario 2: Sibling Conflict
(Pre-K–8th)

SITUATION

Two children arguing over sharing a game or screen.

RULER SHIFT

Pause the moment using a Meta-Moment. Sit down together with the **Family Blueprint** to ask: *"What happened? How did each of you feel? How can we repair this?"*

Parent Action Plan

Level 1
Mindset Shift

Be Curious 🟢

Action Step:

Practice being an **"Emotion Scientist"** at home.

Ask "Why?" before reacting.

Level 2
Daily Routine

Speak the Language 🟦

Action Step:

Put a **Mood Meter** on the fridge.

Use **Feeling Words** during storytime or car rides.

Level 3
Agreements & Repair

Use the Tools 🟨

Action Step:

Host a 15-minute family meeting to write your **Family Charter**.

Resolve conflict using the **Blueprint**.

Parent Resources

- RULER Resources for Families
- RULER Family Engagement
- Fremont Family Resources
- Make Your Own Family Charter- template and examples
- Copy of Mood Meter and Calm Choices - Lincoln Early Learning Center

Parent Resources

Family Resources

Family Resources

Text-a-Tip
Text Fremont to 1-844-823-5323

Emergency Hotlines
- Domestic Violence Hotline
- DCFS Hotline Information
- Child Abuse Reporting

Bullying
- stopbullying.org
- Text HOME to 741741

Contact Building Principal

Parent University
- Fremont sponsored programming for parents
- Parent University information

Homeless Services & McKinney-Vento
- Contact Krista Winkelman
- Lake County ROE Homeless Services
- ISBE Homeless Information
- ISBE Youth in Care Services

Food Pantries
- Fremont Township

Shelter
- PADS
- Cool Ministries

Counseling and Mental Health
- Referral GPS
- Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Services

Counseling and Mental Health
- Family Support Program
- Counseling Connections
  Libertyville
- Simply Bee Counseling
  Vernon Hills
- Compass Health Center
  Northbrook
- Cherry Hill Counseling
  Vernon Hills
- Nicasa
- NAMI
- NorthStar Counseling Group- Mundelein

***Fremont School District 79 does not endorse or recommend these community resources.*
*The resources have been compiled as a resource for families. This is not a referral for services.***

Family Charter

- How do we want to feel when we are together?

- How will we help each other feel these things more often?

Family Charter

- How do we want to feel when we are together?
- What actions and behaviors will help create those feelings?
- How will we let one another know when the charter is not being upheld?

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

-Maya Angelou



Thank you!