

Partnering with Parents to Support Emotional Literacy

Roselia Ramirez: Hello, everyone, and welcome to the "Home Visiting" webinar series. We are so happy that you have joined us today for our session. The topic that we're going to be focusing on is emotional literacy and how home visitors can partner with parents to support its development. Let's get started first by meeting your host for the session, Roselia Ramirez from the National Center on Early Childhood Development Teaching and Learning. I'm pleased to be joining you from my home in Arizona. I'm going to turn it over to my partner and have her introduce herself.

Joyce Escorcia: Hi, everyone. My name is Joyce Escorcia and I get to work alongside Roselia. I'm glad you're joining us today, and I'm joining you from the not-so-cold state of Louisiana. We are excited to have a guest with us today, Kelli McDermott, from the National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety. And Kelli, so glad you're here. Do you want to introduce yourself and share a little bit about yourself with our participants today?

Kelli McDermott: Sure. Thank you all so much for having me. I'm thrilled to be here. As Joyce said, I'm from the National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety. I'm a clinical social worker, so part of the behavioral health side of the house on our center, and I'm looking forward to digging into this topic with you. I'm joining you from Boston.

Joyce: Well, thank you. We're going to hear some more from Kelli in just a few moments. Again, we are excited that you're with us today. We're looking forward today and what we're hoping that you walk away with is the ability to speak to what emotional literacy is and why it's important to children's development. We hope that you walk away with some resources and strategies that you can use to foster and support emotional literacy in the home environment that you're working in and supporting parents and families.

We want to start today with just a poll to talk a little bit about what emotional literacy is. You're going to have a poll pop up, and you're going to get to choose A, B, or C on what you think emotional literacy — what is it? It's the ability to do what? We have, A, recognize emotions in oneself and others. B, understand emotions in oneself and others in a healthy manner. Recognize, understand and respond to emotions in oneself and another in a healthy manner. Yes, I'm popping those up.

And it looks like the consensus was C, that emotional literacy is really the ability to recognize, understand and respond to emotions in oneself and others in a healthy manner. For those of you that chose A or B, I'm one of those that everybody's a winner. Those pieces of emotional literacy as well. We're going to say you got pieces of that puzzle right, as well.

And that's really what we're going to be talking about today is emotional literacy, what does it look like and how can we support it in the home environment? When we think about emotional literacy — let's start the conversation just by taking a look at like this picture.

Here we see this child here, and how do you think he's feeling? We're going to invite you just to respond via the Q&A widget. Just pop your responses in there. What do you think he's feeling? Whatever you think he's feeling, what clues are there that tell you that? And let me pop up the Q&A here so we can see things as they come in. When you see him what do you think? What do you think he's feeling? What do you think he's thinking? And how did you come to that decision? Go down here.

I see, Crystal says, bored or frustrated. Rhonda also says, bored. Marilyn said he just looks tired. Bonnie says, curious. Karen also adds thirsty. Someone said, even worried, maybe a little sad or lonely, just relaxing. That's great. What makes you think that, as well? You can pop that in the chat too. He's just thinking, I see that come up. Sorry, our Q&A's filling up so it's hard to keep up with the names as well. Marie says hot, he looks hot and tired.

Roselia: I know because his cheeks are so red.

Joyce: Yeah, I know, with his little cheeks. Unsure. He could be all of those things. And the reason we brought that up is so we all made our assumptions on what we thought his state of being was. Whether it is anything from being curious to just being very pensive, to he's just bored, or maybe a little sad about something. We all made those assumptions based on what we see there.

The knowledge that we have as adults about how people are feeling is a part of emotional literacy. And when we think of children, it's a skill that they're just starting to develop. Emotional literacy is the ability to recognize and respond to those emotions in oneself and others in a healthy manner. Just the way that we like, and, with some intuition, and some looking at some of those cues we made our own assumptions or decisions about how this wonderful little child was feeling, that's all part of emotional literacy, and that's all what we're going to be talking about today.

When we think about developing this skill, it really is a lot like learning to read. As adults, we show children how to read emotions rather than just, like, letters and words, but it's that same process. With support and guidance where young children can learn words and cues to recognize emotions in themselves and emotions in others. When children don't have that emotional language, it can be challenging. It can be challenging for them, and it can be challenging for the adults around them when they're not able to label their own emotions, or even understand their own feelings, as well as being able to identify feelings of those around them.

We are so excited to have Kelli with us again from the National Center on Health, Behavioral Health and Safety, or sometimes we also like to call it HBHS, so if you hear that come out, just know that's what that acronym means. Again, Kelli, thank you for joining us. And Kelli, I guess we just want to start the conversation by asking you, why do you think emotional literacy is such an important skill for young children to develop?

Kelli: Well, I would first love to hear from everybody in the Q&A, if you could share, if this is something you're often thinking about, if it's a new topic for you, just to have a sense of where we're starting. But I also want to highlight that nurturing emotional literacy helps little ones discuss and reflect with others their personal experiences with the world around them. We know that kids go through a lot of things in the course of a day, just like adults do, and they don't always know how to process that or express what they're feeling about those experiences without a little bit of help, especially when they're having some big feelings as a result of those experiences.

Emotional literacy skills are really the foundation of other social skills. We're thinking about this as building blocks for big stuff like empathy and waiting, sharing, and turn-taking that we want to see kids engage in with their peers and with other adults in their lives. We want to think about emotional literacy almost as a gateway to developing positive relationships with others in their lives and fostering resiliency that they will use for the rest of their life. I'm going to take a peek in the Q&A. Thank you so much for sharing. It's a little bit of a smattering, some people are thinking about this on the daily, other people are brand new. I'm happy that you're all here. We can share some wisdom together.

I want to just break down what emotional literacy is for us. It is absolutely the foundation of emotional development. This is a cornerstone idea. Kids need emotional literacy to be successful at managing their frustration and all the other feelings that they might be having throughout the course of the day and the course of their lives. When kids have emotional intelligence, which is the ability to move through different emotional states with ease and with healthy coping skills, they typically have fewer conflicts, have more positive behaviors, and are more successful in relationships with peers and adults. And I think we can all agree that that's what we want for our kids.

I'm curious about your thoughts when it comes to the benefits of emotional literacy. What are some things that are missing from this slide? Like I said, this is a quick summary. This idea that kids can bump into something hard, bump into something challenging, and move through it with more ease if they've got more of a skill set. And when you're able to move through challenging things with more ease, you'll have fewer conflicts, you'll have more positive behavior. All of that feels logical. Overall, we know that kids with more emotional literacy skills are healthier. But what else is missing from this list?

Roselia: Kelli, while folks are sharing their ideas in that Q&A, we also want to add that the ability to label emotions is a developmental skill that's not present at birth. This is something that children will learn as they're growing up and developing through their developmental progression. I think we also know that it's a skill that even some adults often can struggle with. When we take a look at how children develop skills, there's a wide variation in the point at which children start to demonstrate things such as appropriate use of books, when they begin to write or recognize letters.

Just like these skills, some children's ability to not only identify but to understand and label their emotions are going to develop at different rates or different variations. As we're waiting for some of these responses and sharing some of those maybe that's something to think about. And if you can share with us your thoughts on what accounts for some of these variations in children's ability to label emotions.

Kelli: That's great. I am seeing lots of things coming through on the Q&A, I really appreciate it. Lots of highlighting of more positive relationships, more empathy. We want to think that kids who have these skills are more likely to have friends. They're more likely to be able to maintain those friendships and to feel good in their relationships. We know that they're more likely to be able to accept help, and when things get hard, to keep trying, which is all so important for early development. Thank you so much.

Like Roselia said, this is not something that we come into the world primed and ready to do. We don't come with these skills; we need to learn them. Just like all skills, this happens at different rates for different kiddos, and it's dependent on having the opportunity to practice. Oftentimes this can happen organically without a whole lot of setup, but it does require intention. It requires an adult to know what to look out for, to tolerate children having a range of feelings, even if they're subtle about expression, and an adult with their own strong feelings vocabulary, who's able to label their own emotions, they're more likely to support a child in teaching emotion words in context as they move through the course of the day.

Now, if you think about a possible range of emotions that someone might feel from the time they wake up to the time they go to sleep, there's a lot of possibility in there. It changes with context and what kinds of things you're doing throughout the day. But ultimately, we're not feeling one, two, or even 10 things in one day, we're feeling many, many things and many, many times. The more adults are able to notice and label and practice with children, the more likely a child is to learn those terms, what they look like, what they feel like in their own body and in the body of somebody else.

One of the things that we want to highlight is that this is culturally informed. The way that we experience emotions, what elicits what emotions come up around different experiences, and how we express our emotions is determined by who we are as individual people, who our families are, and who our backgrounds are. We're going to talk a little bit more – what our backgrounds are. We're going to talk about that a little bit more as we move through the hour today. Just want to make sure that we're saying that up front as well.

Roselia: Well, thank you so much for that insight, Kelli. Let's keep moving forward and let's shift gears a little bit and let's begin to explore how the adults and the lives of these young children can support children as they begin to learn and develop this strong foundation in emotional literacy. As adults, we can help children learn emotional literacy by first being able to understand our own emotions, and then being able to recognize our feelings, as well as how we're responding to situations and what impact that is having to those around us. We know that adults are going to play a key role in modeling positive emotions and responses, which is

going to provide those opportunities for young children to begin to build that foundation with these skills.

Children learn emotional literacy a couple of different ways. First, we know that that is going to be by watching other children and adults around them, as well as having opportunities to interact with other children and adults. Lastly is receiving guidance from those caring adults that are in their lives. Kelli, I want to turn it back over to you and explore this particular question, what can adults do to support this process?

Kelli: We are going to pull out a tool – everybody's excited about adding something to their toolbox. We want to think about emotional literacy as an important skill, not just for social and emotional development, but important to development overall. We mentioned that it helps children to learn about their feelings, the feelings of other people, how to move through those feelings, and use some of their tools to get to the other side. Especially for the big feelings.

But what we need to really emphasize, especially as home visitors, is that this takes time. I can think of some adults who are still working really hard on developing this skill. And depending on the day, maybe that's true for all of us. Because we bump into really hard things sometimes, too, and come out of that feeling thinking, oh, maybe I wasn't my best self, or maybe I didn't use all the tools that I thought I had access to at that time. We really want to normalize that and emphasize that this is something that needs a lot of practice, needs a lot of opportunity.

Patience is important, and patience in parenting can be really tricky. Having a warm spot to land and to just say, I get it, this is really hard, can go a long way. And that ultimately children learn these skills when parents practice them with them on a daily basis. We want to see lots and lots of opportunities for this to play out. Parents have a huge role in helping their kids to learn how to manage their feelings and emotions and how to move out of those feelings, to make choices about what is an okay behavior and what's not so okay in their household.

As home visitors you can work with families to, first of all, create an environment of trust and respect and support, but also some expectations for what's okay and not okay in their home. I'm going to share this acronym with you. As you'll see in green on your slide, it spells out RULER, and it is a good way to break down the components of emotional literacy and how you can practice in an intentional way. We're going to move through these together. If you are familiar with the RULER strategy, please pop into the Q&A and let us know, if you've used it before, how did it go? If it's new to you, we always want to hear that too.

The R, U, and L are here. We want to be able to recognize emotions that is the first step of any emotional literacy goal. If we don't know how we're feeling, we're not going to be able to do much about it. Recognizing cues, what tells us that we're feeling a certain thing, is a really important part of recognizing feelings. This is something, again, that needs a lot of practice for us to become comfortable with, especially depending on our backgrounds, if we're not necessarily comfortable with the feeling that we're experiencing in general. This might be an opportunity to really stretch and say, okay, I'm not going to shut this down. I'm going to notice what I'm feeling and connect it to a word.

Next, we want to understand what we're feeling. Asking ourselves, where did this come from? What happened that made me feel this way? As feelings change throughout the day, think about the possible causes of these feelings. We know we all experience ups and downs, and sometimes we don't even realize that we're on the other side of something we were feeling earlier, that's a totally normal human experience. But if we take a second to slow down and think about the journey that we've been on with our emotions for some set period of time, we can try to identify what was influencing those feelings as we had them. When we know what causes our feelings, we can address them a little bit more effectively.

Then, we want to label. This is hugely important; we need to be able to say what words describe how we're feeling. This is important for communication so that people can support us if we need help. There are 2000 emotion words in the English language, that is so many words, and many of us use a very limited sample of those 2000 words. We'll talk a little bit more about this, but the big three come to mind, and it's happy, sad, and mad, especially when we're talking to young children.

We want to intentionally make a rich vocabulary with very varied experiences so that kids can draw on those so that we as adults can draw on them. We want to think about surprised and excited and nervous as much as we think about happy, sad, and mad. All right, wrapping up the RULER here. We have the E for express. What is an okay expression of this feeling? How many of you have heard the phrase, "all feelings are okay, but all behaviors aren't okay." We want kids to be able to feel what they feel without shutting it down.

Sometimes we hear people with good intentions say, "oh, you're so sad, don't be sad, don't be sad here, we want to make you happy." And that's coming from a place of love because we want our children to be happy. But it's a little bit of a shift to say, "oh, you are so sad, I see that you're crying. Can I offer you a hug?" We don't want to shut down sad, we want to enter into some supportive role. And acknowledge that that makes sense. Maybe there is something that happened in their world that is making them sad.

If they're expressing it safely, we can draw some attention to the behavior that feels okay and offer some support, which moves us into regulate. Sometimes our feeling is great, we want to stay in this place. I'm in a great mood, and my energy's up, I'm ready to embrace the day. How am I going to maintain this feeling? What do I need to support myself? Is it connection with other people? Is it a routine that I'm engaging in? Those are important questions to ask.

Then there are sometimes when we're in a feeling that we're not super comfortable with, and we want to maybe make a change. That's an opportunity to say, "okay, how am I going to get out of this place that doesn't feel so comfortable?" Maybe I'm really sad and I want to give sadness it's time, but then move on to something else. Having some tools about that is also really important.

As an example, during a home visit, you might use book characters with a parent to externalize this a little bit. Help a child understand what a feeling looks like in somebody else for recognizing and labeling. Different things that cause feelings themselves and others for understanding. Extend that storyline a little bit, and then what they can do if they feel those feelings in their own body.

Joyce: Thank you, Kelli, for sharing all that. I'm still processing what you shared about there being 2000 words to express emotion in English language. Like, that that just did something for me, especially knowing just as an adult, like, how many words do I use. Thank you for sharing that. I could just see, going in and supporting parents, just facilitating some conversations around that could be really interesting and eye-opening, just like it was for me. Thank you for sharing that.

And that's a great segue into the next portion of our discussion, which is really beginning to explore some other resources and strategies to support emotional literacy in the home environment. As we share resources and strategies, please, please, please keep the conversation going in the QA and share other resources and strategies that you're currently using that you found to be really helpful. And we've got some support in that Q&A and they're sending the responses out to everyone. It's a nice way to share information.

Let's talk about some of those practical strategies. That is home visitors that you can share with families to foster that emotional literacy. These are strategies that you can also implement to support how parents can develop and strengthen their own emotional literacy and own emotional intelligence. Kelli, let's start with the strategy we see here with scaffolding with cues and prompts. What can you tell us about the strategy?

Kelli: This is so important. We want kids to know the difference between different emotions. We might say, "how do you know when you're angry, or are you frustrated, or are you sad right now?" Children can only answer those questions if they know those words if they know those emotions, what they feel like, and what they look like. Children need to learn how to read cues, that's the first step for being able to identify their own feelings. Adults help with this by pointing out what they notice, expressions on faces, different body language, tone of voice. And children need to also be able to observe and understand other people's emotions. We want to work with parents to help them identify emotions in themselves and in others.

This can sometimes feel like a big change for people especially if they're not used to talking about their feelings, and we want to be patient. We're going to go back to that idea of patience. Also invite parents to practice this with their children at any age, even babies, by using emotion words to describe what they notice about their child. What's nice about doing this with children is that children are pretty forgiving. Sometimes adults feel nervous about engaging in this, and we want to say, okay, you don't have to try it out on me, you can try it out with your child.

The other thing that's really special is kids are often pretty firm in what they know once they're starting to learn these words. If you say, "oh, it looks like you're frustrated right now," sometimes they'll correct you. That's a huge win because it shows that they know not only what they are feeling, but what they aren't. We want to highlight also that the best time to practice this is when a child is calm, and we'll think about different ideas for practicing this, and some teachable opportunities as we move through our time together.

Roselia: Absolutely. I'm glad you mentioned that calm part because I think it's really important, particularly for home visitors that have that opportunity to come into the home, that they're really stressing that the child needs to be calm, for it to be like a — and I'll just call it a successful, teachable moment. Here some examples of what this might look like. As a home visitor, you might begin by first modeling this for parents. We do want to say that modeling can be tricky because we do want to be sure that you ask a parent if they would like a demonstration, would they like to see what that looks like, and not just move right into modeling.

Here are some strategies that home visitors can support families with. One is using emotion words to describe what they notice about their child's emotions as well as their own emotions. An example of this might be, perhaps when you arrive for that home visit you want to come over and say hello to the baby, and then you add something like, "oh, you're kicking your legs so fast, you seem so excited." Or perhaps when you're leaving or arriving and the child gives you a hug, you could say something like, "that was such a nice hug, thank you so much, that makes me feel really loved."

This also helps children to read cues, as Kelli was talking about. It's really important for them to understand and learn how to read those different cues. Naming and describing expressions on faces, that body language again, and then also tone of voice. An example of this might be during this session you might want to point out something like, "oh, did you see your brother's eyes got very wide? He jumped a little bit and squeaked; I wonder if he was surprised." Those are just a few examples. Kelli, I'm going to turn it back over to you to tell us more about this whole notion of emotion words.

Kelli: As home visitors you can also work with families to build on an array of emotion words. Like I said, there are the big three that most three-year-olds know, happy, sad, and mad. And we know that their emotional experience extends way beyond those three things. What's important to know is that their vocabulary for these emotion words influences how they will get through a social situation and how they will make it through a situation when problem solving skills are needed.

Interestingly, in a study it was found that children who had fewer emotion words in their vocabulary showed ongoing challenging behavior. The first thing that I think would come to mind for a lot of people is, well, it makes sense that children who have less language will have more challenging behavior. That link has been made many times. But this study actually took that into account and really honed in on kids who had fewer emotional vocabulary words in

their toolkit and found that with that control in their study there was still more challenging behavior.

The other piece that it found was the kids who had fewer emotional vocabulary words were more likely to know negative feeling words. More on the sad, mad, frustrated, angry and fewer positive feelings. The other piece of this, which is super important, was they would often see depictions and modeling of positive feelings, like happy or surprised or excited, and still label them as negative. Having more of an emotional vocabulary is so important because it helps kids to communicate better with others, but it also supports their own overall development, like we've talked about.

Roselia: Yeah, that's very, very interesting information that you shared there. One of the things that comes to mind is an example of how home visitors can support this process with the families that they're visiting is perhaps, during a home visit; if they hear the parent that's using the three big words that you talked about, that happy, mad, and sad, they could call that out and say, hey, I noticed you're using words happy, mad, and sad with your child. You could also use words like surprised, annoyed, and excited to help build your child's emotional vocabulary. Then you can engage that parent in exploring other emotion words that they might want to use.

When we think about like our dual language learners, it's a great opportunity to also expand on some of those words as well and learn. We know a lot of our Native communities; they're wanting to learn their heritage language. It's a great way to start introducing that during this time as well. I really love this quote that says, "Like other forms of literacy, the richer the vocabulary, the more rewarding the experiences." I think it really speaks to what we've been talking about here. I'm going to turn it back over to you, Kelli.

Kelli: What we know is that children learn emotional literacy by watching, interacting, receiving guidance from grownups and peers, we've talked about that a lot already. But a great strategy is to label and describe what you notice about children's moods, interactions, and emotions, and include how it makes you feel in return.

Joyce: Definitely, Kelli. An example of this would be just taking a look at the picture you see there on the slide. And it could be throughout the day, maybe like indirect teaching would be like when a parent says, "wow! You really seem happy playing with your sister," and you're laughing, smiling, hugging each other, and that makes me happy too.

As a home visitor you could also guide parents by encouraging them to ask children how they feel. This is a strategy that really helps them identify their own feelings. Parents can provide clues like I noticed that you were playing all by yourself and just wonder aloud how might this make a child feel. There's different ways that you can do that – that parents and families can do that throughout the day.

Kelli: Using books is a great strategy to teach kids about emotions and really just about anything in the world. And a great way to add to their own bookcase. Many children's books talk about

or show feelings and use emotions words, but we know that not all families have these sorts of books readily available. As a home visitor this can be something to engage with a family around visiting the local library. One of the things you could do is start by bringing in a book or two to share from that library and use the storybook as an intentional way to go about supporting the development of children's emotional literacy.

Roselia: Absolutely. I agree with you, Kelli. I think that storybooks can be a very intentional way of supporting emotional literacy, and as home visitors they can really use this as a strategy to model for families. Bringing along a book to share or asking the child to share their favorite book with you. As you go through the book you can ask questions about what characters are feeling and why.

You can share new emotion words and meanings based on what the child is sharing with you. You could also with the parent plan some activities around related to some of those emotions that are in that book. For example, making a drawing of their favorite character or how a character might be feeling. Just a few ideas.

Kelli: The RULER acronym that we were talking about earlier can guide home visitors in your discussions with families and children about each new feeling word. For example, you can use book characters, and parents can help their child understand what a feeling looks like, recognizing and labeling, different things that cause these feelings in themselves or others, which would be that understanding, or U. And appropriate ways to show those feelings in different situations and how to move through or to maintain depending on the situation at hand.

Joyce: Definitely, Kelli. And just some of the questions that come to mind thinking about the RULER, which was such a great strategy with thinking about, like, recognize, it could be questions like, how is the character feeling? Or how do you know he or she's feeling that way, can you show me a happy face or a sad face? We're thinking about understanding — it could be things like what happened to make such and such feel that way?

There's all kinds of different ways that you can incorporate those questions. Thinking about labeling, where would you put that character — what would put that character in the mood that they're in? What's the name of that feeling? All of those things to get them to think about what they're feeling and beginning to put, like, names to it as well. Thank you for bringing us back to the RULER.

Roselia: This is a great time to add that, as home visitors, we know that we are often working with materials that are found in the home. We've been talking about books, and we do want to acknowledge that not every family will have them available within their home. As Kelli mentioned, this is a great opportunity to utilize perhaps the local library to connect families to books. But we also want to mention that as home visitors we could also work with families to make their own books.

Here on the slide, here's a sample activity that you could help a family with, and that is making a scrapbook or perhaps putting together like their own book using children's photos or artwork about their feelings. What you see here on the slide, this is an actual drawing that my own child made when he was four years old. It was for a book that he was putting together on the adventures of what he called Big Brother and I. The caption on the back reads, "I feel happy when me and my brother look for flowers in backyard." These scrapbooks are also wonderful keepsakes for the families.

The four-year-old that drew this is now almost 24, and he just really loves when I pull these out and loves reading the stories that he created when he was a child. Just another idea to share on how home visitors can support utilizing storybooks. Now, let's talk about how small changes can make a big impact in one of our special segments, which is small change, big impact. You can find a light bulb on the first page of your participant guide, which breaks down the different segments that we've been sharing throughout our home visiting series.

But in this segment, we want to spend a little bit of time sharing how small adjustments or modifications that we make to the environment can make a big difference in a child's emotional literacy learning, particularly for children with disabilities or suspected delays. Kelli let's explore this a little bit more. What are some small changes that home visitors can discuss with parents when it comes to their child?

Kelli: One of the things that we can think about is that every child learns differently and engages differently with what they have around them in their learning environment. Really individualizing this plan to make sure that a child has more opportunities to practice will result in more learning, and I think that's what we all want.

One of the things that we can add is a visual support, which means you are intentionally adding visual information to the environment so that kids know what to expect and to process information in a new way. These can be helpful for all children. I encourage them for all children, but they are especially effective for children with disabilities or suspected delays.

And what we know is that some children might have a hard time listening to, understanding, or even processing verbal information; visual supports are static, they're concrete, and they don't change. They can help to outline routines and expectations in a really predictable and consistent way. And they're available even when someone is finished talking. They're really a wonderful strategy for helping kids to develop emotional language and vocabulary related to emotional literacy.

Using these visuals, along with the verbal and sign language, presents information in a way that can help children pick out the key elements so that they're processing really what you want them to know. Visual supports can be designed to meet the individual needs of a child. Of course, there's lots of ways that you can customize this for age and developmental level, learning style, and even preference.

We can think about including specific characters and all sorts of different things that kids will connect to based on who they are in their individual little bodies. We want to make sure that we are thinking about all of those pieces when we're deciding what visual formats to share and what to include in the space.

Joyce: Definitely, Kelli. And there's a question that came up in the Q&A that I think this could fit with – I'm going to check in with you, and it was just a question about, do you have any strategies for incorporating this with multiple dual language learners? I was thinking about these visual supports. Do you think that that could be a strategy to use with those children who are dual language learners?

Kelli: Absolutely. If you look at these emotions cards as an example, there are very few, if any, three-year-olds, for example, who are going to be reading the words that are listed there. Of course, they could be in many different languages, but I think most children can connect with the fact that those three facial expressions are different from each other. That's the first piece of wanting to make sure that we're supporting emotional literacy by identifying that there are different ways to express different feelings.

Joyce: Definitely. I think another idea you'll see in the picture too; you see the little dolls there to your left? That could be maybe something else. Those are just made with socks, something that we all have around the house. And I have plenty of lonely socks because they get lost in the wash. Maybe there's, you support parents and families that they have the same. Helping to make some of those like little soft dolls to express some of those emotions can be a fun activity, that they could do even with their children too. Again, just while they're doing it, exploring those different emotions and things like that. Thank you for sharing that with us, Kelli.

Roselia: The strategies that we've been discussing are intended to foster social and emotional skills for all children. In our focus on equity segment, we are going to look at and explore a little bit cultural differences related to emotions. Then, we're going to ask you to think about how to have these conversations with families that are related to emotional literacy.

Let's take a look at the question on your screen. You are also going to find this question in your participants guide, and we invite you to reflect and to jot down some of your thoughts. Of course, we also invite you to share your thoughts in the Q&A because we'd love to hear. Kelli, when it comes to families and culture, this is the question that we're reflecting on, in what ways can cultures vary in the way that they value emotions, and why is this important for home visitors to know?

Kelli: Absolutely. Such an important question. Home visitors understand that children might be learning different cultural expectations related to emotions at home, that makes tons of sense. If they do so they're more likely to know which strategies to share and how to guide conversations about those strategies with the family. We know that our role in home visiting is so much more effective when it feels relevant to the family that we're working with.

For example, a child who's sitting quietly while a parent demonstrates building a tower with small boxes might seem like they're not super interested in the activity, but with a little bit more knowledge about the family, it might actually be that this child was taught to observe first, remain calm, and is actually quite motivated to try the task when it's their turn. The way we express feelings is influenced by our cultural norms. And the expectation is not that anybody's going to walk into a family's home and know what those cultural norms are.

There's many, many layers that influence the way that we experience emotions and express them. It's super important to maintain a stance of curiosity and to learn about each family individually. One question you could ask is, "what does it look like when you feel whatever emotion you're curious about," you can use happy. And how do you know when your child is feeling that? Are they similar or different? And what is okay and what is not okay in your house is also really important to consider.

Like I said, it's important to treat each family individually and to recognize and respect the values and beliefs of each family. This is absolutely part of Head Start culture, and I think that we're leading the way in this in a really important way. One of the things that we need to keep in mind is that we don't want to paint with a broad brush. When we go in and meet with a family, we might have heard things about certain kinds of cultures and values and expectations that fit with a family, and sometimes they don't.

Having a conversation to say, "hey, what's important to you, what do you want to let me know about expressing feelings in your culture? What are expectations for your child? How do you motivate them? And how do you know it's working?" For some parents it might feel like using a little bit more of negative talk, like, oh my goodness, I've never seen anyone who's three behave like you in this, like, get it together motivating way. And some families that might feel really shaming and in other families that might just be very normal. Having a good sense of who you're talking to, where those values come from, how they were influenced, is super important so that we maintain a non-judgmental stance and really examine our own bias.

Joyce: Definitely. Kelli, when you were talking just a few strategies that came to mind were just talking with parents about their own values and practices, what they believe, really understand the difference between cultures and what they hold as important. Just what you were talking about earlier about maybe a child not just jumping into building the tower, but you have to understand the family, their value system and how they function in order to understand what's really going on and how learning's happening. Thank you for sharing about that.

Just another great segue into our last segment of the day, which is we just want to talk about some additional resources and strategies that you could use to support families in your work. And I think, Kelli, you've got some exciting things to share from from "Sesame Street," starting out. You want to tell us a little bit about that?

Kelli: Yeah, for those of you who don't know, Sesame Street in Communities is a partner for NCHBHS, which is the national center I'm visiting from, and it's a wonderful resource for both families and home visitors. When you first enter the site, it will prompt you to identify yourself

as either a provider or a parent and caregiver. And it gives you a nice, customized experience to all sorts of resources. There's activities you can print out, there's videos, and articles and workshops that you can view. And there are many, many topics to dig into.

Today we are going to look at exploring emotions because it's a perfect fit for what we are talking about. This is a video clip called "The Big Idea," and it's helpful for children to sometimes see somebody else working something out. We talked about books, but this video is just another idea for something that can be offered to children. What we know is that when they enter toddlerhood, they begin to experience more than one feeling at a time, which can be really confusing. This video is really to just help kids understand that that's normal and it takes time to sort it all out.

[Video begins]

Man: Sure, you've got lots of big feelings about this.

Abby: Yeah, but how can I have different feelings at the same time?

Man: Abby, these are strong emotions and it's all right to feel different ways all at once.

[Singing] There are so many different feelings that can be inside of you. You could feel mad or bad or scared or sad all at the same time, too. It's confusing when you are dealing with so many different feelings, especially when facing something new. You got big feelings. Feelings jumbled up inside. You got big feelings. Feelings...

Abby: Yeah.

Man: [Singing] it's hard to sort them out. You can't brush them aside because your feelings are important and it's all right to feel lots of different feelings all inside of you.

Abby: I don't want to keep them inside anymore.

Man: Abby, listen. [Singing] Your feelings are your feelings, to have them isn't wrong, but the thing that you must remember is sometimes they don't last long. You may find some come and go, and that's okay, too, you know, in time things can get easier.

Abby: I hope so. [Singing] But for now I've got big feelings, feelings jumbled up inside.

Man and Abby: [Singing] I got big feelings, feelings.

Abby: [Singing] Yeah. It's hard to sort them out.

Man: [Singing] You can't brush them aside because your feelings are important and it's all right.

Man and Abby: [Singing] To feel lots of different feelings.

Man: [Singing] They may come and go, those feelings.

Abby: [Singing] Lots of big, big feelings.

Man and Abby: [Singing] All inside of you.

[Video ends]

Joyce: Wow. Thank you, Kelli, for sharing that. And we want to be sure we have time for you to share a couple more resources. And we see Tucker, the Turtle, coming up, he's always a favorite around our parts. You want to tell us a little bit about this resource?

Kelli: Yes. This is a really fun resource. It's interactive and it helps kids to learn strategies to work through big feelings, particularly anger. I think that every adult who's got a kiddo around wants help with this. Want to highlight that Tucker helps parents support their children. This isn't something that we're asking kids to learn how to do by themselves.

One of the available resources is a scripted story, "Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think at Home," which is quite a mouthful. But home visitors can share this resource with families to support them in helping their child develop strategies for coping with these strong feelings. The link to this resource is in your participant guide. This resource helps to teach emotional regulation with a few simple steps. Having this visual is really containing for the adult as well, I can say, because we want to also have a grounding experience when we are helping kids navigate through big feelings.

We recognize what we're feeling. Oh, I'm mad. I'm going to stop my body. I'm going to tuck inside my shell and take three deep breaths and come out when I'm calm so I can think of a solution. Tucker promotes emotional literacy, problem solving, self-regulation, and all of that is an engaging, fun way. Parents can use these steps to help their children practice thinking like a turtle when they're calm. The more that kids have opportunities to see a parent act out these steps, the more fun and engaging it will become. I often encourage adults to go through this process as well when they're noticing big feelings in their own body.

Joyce: Thank you, Kelli, for all of the great resources that you're sharing. And here with the NCPMI we see this with the family resources, anything you want to point out quickly here for folks to take away with them?

Kelli: There are tons of resources on NCPMI, I'm sure many of you are really familiar with this site, but I want to highlight that teaching social emotional skills includes activities, materials, and tools to help children promote self-regulation and problem solving. You will find all sorts of stuff if you click on this blue box that says teaching social emotional skills that you can explore and offer to families to utilize at home or to practice with you.

Joyce: Definitely. Thank you so much. And because we are just so used to using our acronyms, NCPMI, I didn't say what it meant when I introduced it. It means the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. As Kelli said, lots of great resources you may be familiar with, or

this may be the first time you're seeing it. Thank you for joining us today. We will see you as and we look forward to continuing that conversation on MyPeers.