**Developing Emotional Awareness – Early Years**

**Using Play and Stories to Develop Emotional Awareness Activity Ideas**

* Use any story book to discuss the characters’ emotions and use this as a starter for discussing the childrens’ emotions
  + Draw faces onto small balls or plastic eggs to reinforce emotions as you read the story or ask children to choose the matching egg
* These books are great for exploring emotions with children, helping them to identify and name emotions and find ways to manage big feelings
* How are you Feeling Today? By Molly Potter
* The Colour Monster by Anna Llenas
* The Worrysauras by Rachel Bright
* Sully the Seahorse by Natalie Pritchard
* Monty the Manatee by Natalie Pritchard
* Listening to my Body by Gabi Garcia
* In My Heart by Jo Witek
* Feelings: Inside my Heart and in my Head by Libby Walden
* Ruby’s Worry: A Big Bright Feelings Book by Tom Percival
* Ravi’s Roar by Tom Percival
* Today I’m a Monster by Agnes Green
* Find your Calm by Gabi Garcia
* Happy: A Children’s Book of Mindfulness by Nicola Edwards
* Breathe like a Bear by Kira Willey
* Use puppets or cuddly toys to act out emotions and scenarios
* Inside Out clips are great for starting discussions about feelings
* Use play opportunities to model and coach emotional awareness (“I think you are feeling…. because) and problem solving skills (“how could we sort this out?”) as the child will be most relaxed, engaged and motivated during self directed play

**Activities to Encourage Emotional Awareness**

* Make facial expressions on wipe clean face outlines using playdough or white board pens
* Use paper plates or circles and encourage children to cut out the shapes of facial features to create different facial expressions
* Match pictures of facial expressions to the emotion word/visual
* Group pictures of facial expressions/body language together
* Create a collage using the Inside Out pictures and other feelings pictures
* Use a large colour chart to pick what colour you feel like and why
* Use a large animal chart to pick what animal you feel like and why
* Large facial expressions/Inside Out characters chart to pick how you feel and why
* Have a mirror in the room and use a glass pen to draw the children’s reflections with different facial expressions.
* Match the event to the emotion visual (e.g. birthday party, spiders, going to the park, friend going home after a playdate, someone taking a toy)



