



Handbook for Pre-K Teachers, Leaders, and Staff



Dear Educator,

This *Fun with Feelings* Handbook can support you and your program as you use *Fun with Feelings* to enhance your ongoing efforts in social and emotional development and family engagement. As pre-K teachers, leaders, and staff, you work hard every day to build your students' social-emotional skills and to create strong partnerships with families.

You have a powerful voice in conveying to families that they matter. We hope you will introduce the cards to children in the classroom and find ways to incorporate *Fun with Feelings* into a family event and your everyday interactions with families. This Handbook can help you get started!

Your DECE Social Worker or Instructional Coordinator can provide additional support as you plan how you will use *Fun with Feelings* in the way that best fits the unique needs of children and families in your program.

This Handbook and other *Fun with Feelings* resources are available online by visiting schools.nyc.gov/funwithfeelings. For questions about *Fun with Feelings*, please email prekthrive@schools.nyc.gov.



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1 Welcome to *Fun with Feelings!*

► WHAT IS *FUN WITH FEELINGS?*

Fun with Feelings is a set of cards and activities that gives families and teachers a playful way to help children learn about feelings and support social-emotional skill-building at home.

Teachers and families can use the cards with children, or children can use the cards independently to:

Build

Use the cards to build towers, bridges, or whatever you and your child imagine.



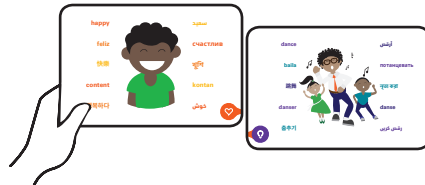
Play

Use the cards to play games, learn about feelings, and have fun together.



Teach

Use the cards to teach your child how to express and manage feelings.



► THE CARDS

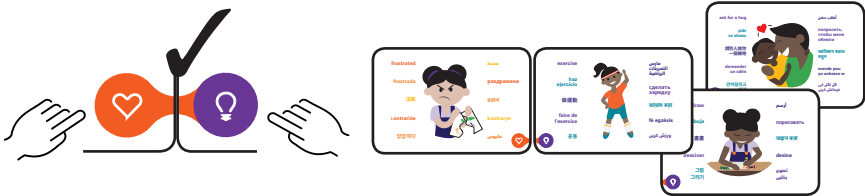
The **“I feel”** cards show a variety of feelings.



The **“I can”** cards show a variety of actions or ways to express feelings, calm down, or feel better.



Matching **“I feel”** cards with **“I can”** cards shows children that when they have feelings, they can choose an action that is helpful.



Each set of cards comes with a *Handbook for Families* that includes activities and ideas for families to try at home and on-the-go.

➤ **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN TO LEARN ABOUT FEELINGS?**

Children who learn how to manage their feelings:



Are better able to **stay focused** and **engaged** in learning.



Get along better with family and friends.



Have **higher self-esteem**.



Keep trying even when a task is difficult.

Children who have **NOT** yet learned to manage their feelings are more likely to:



Hit, throw tantrums, or withdraw from others.



Get teased, get into fights, and get in trouble at school.



Have **problems with alcohol or drugs as teenagers**.

Pre-K helps children learn how to manage their feelings by:



Learning feeling words, such as happy, sad, and scared.



Recognizing strong feelings in their minds and bodies.



Expressing feelings appropriately.



Finding ways to calm down or feel better, when necessary.

Visit schools.nyc.gov/funwithfeelings for this Learning About Feelings Handout available in 10 languages!

➤ HOW CAN *FUN WITH FEELINGS* HELP MY PROGRAM?

Social and Emotional Development

- *Fun with Feelings* supports foundational skills of the Social and Emotional Development domain in the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core by helping children identify feelings in themselves and others, express their feelings, and manage them appropriately.
- *Fun with Feelings* offers a shared language and specific vocabulary for adults and children to talk about feelings in order to support social and emotional development in your pre-K classrooms.

Family Engagement

- *Fun with Feelings* can help build families' capacity to support social and emotional development by helping children learn about feelings at home.
- The strategies provided in this guide offer opportunities for two-way communication and for strengthening relationships with families.



2 Distribution Instructions

Your shipment contains a *Fun with Feelings* card deck for every child in your Pre-K for All program and one for you to keep in each of your Pre-K for All classrooms. Please:

- **Give out one set of *Fun with Feelings* cards to every Pre-K for All family.**
If you host an event for families (see page 14 for more), we encourage you to give cards directly to each family at your event (and send the cards home in backpacks to those who couldn't attend).
- **Print and distribute one Family Letter to every Pre-K for All family in your program.**



The letter briefly explains to families what they are receiving and can be found online in 10 languages by visiting schools.nyc.gov/funwithfeelings.

See a sample on page 23

- **Place in every Pre-K for All classroom** at least one deck of *Fun with Feelings* cards.
- **Engage with families** about *Fun with Feelings*.

See page 8 for more

See page 14 for more



Didn't receive enough cards?

To request additional cards or to ask questions about *Fun with Feelings*, please email prekthrive@schools.nyc.gov.

3 Using *Fun with Feelings* in the Classroom

Using *Fun with Feelings* in the classroom can help support your children as they learn important social-emotional skills. Giving children multiple opportunities to practice those skills with the cards both at home and at school can help:

- **Build independence** as children use the cards to solve social problems and talk about or manage their feelings throughout the day.
- **Encourage critical thinking in learning centers** by giving children opportunities to incorporate social-emotional ideas into their free play and asking higher-order thinking questions.
- **Improve transitions** by making them interactive, engaging, and educational.



What Educators are Saying: “The more staff used the *Fun with Feelings* cards, the more they were able to see how useful they are, and they served as a springboard for teachers to do other feelings activities in the classroom.”

JANINE M. - PROGRAM LEADER, GREATER RIDGEWOOD YOUTH COUNCIL



➤ SAMPLE LESSON PLAN - SMALL- OR LARGE-GROUP

Use or adapt this lesson plan to teach children how to use the cards before placing them in centers and introducing them to families.

LESSON: *Fun with Feelings* Introduction

TYPE: Small- or Large-Group Activity

PKFCC FOCUS STANDARD: *PK.SED.2: Regulates his/her responses to needs, feelings and events.*

PROCEDURE:

Beginning:

Prior to implementation, divide the orange **"I feel"** cards and purple **"I can"** cards.

1. Tell children that you are going to show them some new materials that they will be able to use.
2. Show a few **"I feel"** cards and ask the children how they think the child on the card is feeling.
3. Ask the children to pretend they are feeling the same way and show the feeling with their faces.
4. Show a few **"I can"** cards. Explain that these cards show ways to express a feeling, calm down, or feel better.
5. Explain a few of the actions and invite children to act them out.

Middle:

- Show the children how the cards can go together.
 - For example, "When I feel worried, I can ask for help," or, "When I feel proud, I can dance."
- Pair various **"I feel"** and **"I can"** cards and invite children to act out the feeling and the action.

End:

- Share how the children will be able to use the cards independently.
 - For example, if you plan to place the cards in the writing center, let the children know where they will be and how they can use them (see pages 11-12 for suggestions).

Questions to Encourage Higher-order and Critical Thinking:

As children engage with the cards throughout the classroom, you can ask the following:

- How do you think this person feels?
How can you tell?
Tell me about a time you felt _____.
- Which “I can” card would you give to a friend who felt _____? Why?
- Why do you think you (or another person or character) might feel _____?
- Which “I can” card would you like to try the next time you feel _____?



► LEARNING CENTERS

Fun with Feelings cards can be incorporated into any center. Below are a few ideas to get you started!



Cozy Corner

Place the cards in a basket (or two) in the cozy corner. Invite children to look through the cards on their own, mix and match them, or use the cards to communicate their feelings to you or their peers throughout the day.

PK.SED.1: Recognizes himself/herself as a unique individual having his/her own abilities, characteristics, feelings, and interests.



Art Area

Assist children in choosing a few cards to display in the art area. These can be **“I feel”** cards, **“I can”** cards or pairs of cards. Invite children to paint, draw or use another medium to express their responses to the cards.

PK.CKW.1 (Visual Arts): Expresses oneself and represents what he/she knows, thinks, believes, and feels through visual arts.



Writing Area

Place the **"I feel"** cards in one basket and the **"I can"** cards in another. Encourage children to choose one card from each basket and use the two cards to write/draw a story.

For example:

What happened to make (the character) feel _____?
What happened after (the character) did the action on the **"I can"** card? What might that feeling look like?

As children are ready, prompt them to imagine more details. As additional feelings or actions come up, add the new words and pictures to the blank cards.

PK.CLL.3 (Writing): With prompting and support, use a combination of drawing, dictating, or writing to narrate a single event and provide a reaction to what happened.



Math/Manipulatives Area

Place the cards in a basket (or divided into two baskets) in the Math/Manipulatives Area.

Demonstrate how to use the cards to build structures. As children use the cards, describe their actions and the cards.

For example:

You are putting this orange card and this purple card together. I notice the girl on this card looks excited. Why might they be feeling excited?

PK.PDH.5: Demonstrates eye-hand coordination and dexterity needed to manipulate objects.

➤ **TRANSITIONS**

Fun with Feelings can be used throughout the day to support learning as children transition from one activity to another. *The Fun with Feelings Handbook for Families* has additional ideas you can modify for groups of children.

◆ **Choose an idea from the “Play” section**

Make a face! Select an **“I feel”** card. Make a face to match a feeling. You can name the feeling and explain your facial expression. “Yes, I was worried, my eyebrows were pushed together and my mouth scrunched up to the side.”



Act it out! Select an **“I feel”** card. Ask children to show the feeling with their bodies or voices. Invite them to describe (or silently notice with their eyes) how it feels or looks on their friends’ faces or bodies.

For example: Children might “sad walk” to the playground. Or, you can demonstrate the feeling and ask children to take turns guessing the feeling.

If they are transitioning silently, you might ask them to hold up a silent finger when they have a guess and allow one or more children to share when you reach your destination.

◆ **Choose an idea from the “Teach” section**

Let’s practice! Select an **“I can”** card with an action that children can practice during a transition. For example, your class might practice taking deep breaths together while you walk back from recess.



4 Using *Fun with Feelings* with Families

Families play an integral role in helping children learn social-emotional skills. Hosting a family event is a great way to welcome families into your program, build community, and partner with families. An event can also give children a chance to see their teachers and families working together and learning from each other.

A family event is an opportunity to:

- **Increase buy-in:** Introducing *Fun with Feelings* in person can increase the chances that families understand how the cards can help children learn and perceive the cards as relevant and useful.
- **Practice and personalize:** Providing time for families to practice and ask questions can help families use the cards effectively at home and on-the-go as their children grow.
- **Build knowledge:** Engaging with families about the *Fun with Feelings* cards can provide a common language for teachers and families to use in future conversations about social-emotional skills, reinforce the importance of learning these skills, and build on the work families do every day to support children’s learning at home.



Note about Distribution:

As mentioned on page 7, if you host a family event, we encourage you to wait until your event to give *Fun with Feelings* directly to each family so they can practice with them at the event and then take them home. Send the cards home in backpacks to any families who couldn’t attend.

➤ HOST A FAMILY EVENT

Powerpoint presentations are available online!

Something to consider:

An event including time for families to interact with their children is appealing to families and provides them with scaffolding as they explore how to use the *Fun with Feelings* cards with their children. If time, space, and staffing allow, invite children to attend your event with their families. If not, an event for adults without their children might be right for your program.

As you plan which kind of event is right for you, look for “if children” and “if only adults” choices and talking points throughout the agenda.

TOTAL APPROXIMATE TIME: 40-45 mins

ADVANCE PLANNING:

1. Decide if your event will include children.
 - **If children will be present** and the activity is during school hours, make a plan for how you will engage and support children whose families do not attend.
 - **If you have an event only for adults** outside of school hours, consider providing childcare.
2. Send invitation to families 1-2 weeks prior to the activity.
 - For an editable invitation in 10 languages, visit schools.nyc.gov/funwithfeelings.
3. Choose where in the building you will hold the event and who will facilitate.
 - Your DECE Social Worker may be able to help!
4. Consider the need for interpreters.

SET-UP:

- Have a station for family name tags and sign-in.
- **If children will already be in the room**, seat them to allow space for their family member(s) to join them. Ideally, there will be room for at least two families per table. Invite families to use the floor space if they are comfortable doing so.

HOST A FAMILY EVENT (CONT'D)

Look online for a family-friendly invitation you can tailor to your event!

AGENDA:

1. Welcome (3-5 mins)

- Greet families warmly. Have a plan to welcome late-comers and transition them smoothly into the current activity.

2. Build community (6 mins)

- Invite families to build with the *Fun with Feelings* cards however they choose. Demonstrate how to line up the slits to fit the cards together. You might also have an example structure set up to demonstrate.
- Encourage families to play and talk with each other. Reinforce participants' creativity, effort, and social-emotional skills (e.g., sharing, taking turns) using positive narration or specific praise. Consider using the examples from the *Fun with Feelings* cards.

➤ *To children, for example:*

Wow, you're flying the card like an airplane! You are using your imagination.

3. Briefly explain why it is important for children to learn about feelings (5 mins)

➤ *To adults*

Young children at this age are just learning about feelings. It is common for them to yell and shout when they are happy, or to hit and throw things when they are angry.

➤ *To children:*

We all have strong feelings. Sometimes we feel happy, excited, or proud. Sometimes we feel angry, sad, or scared. We may feel frustrated sometimes when we're learning to do something new.

➤ *To adults*

There is very strong evidence that learning to deal with feelings matters from studies that start when children are very young and follow their progress all the way through high school and adult life. Pre-K helps children learn how to manage their feelings.

HOST A FAMILY EVENT (CONT'D)

A printable Learning About Feelings Handout is available online!

Learning to manage feelings means:

- Learning feeling words, such as happy, sad, and scared.
- Recognizing strong feelings in their minds and bodies.
- Expressing feelings appropriately.
- Finding ways to calm down or feel better, when necessary.

➤ *To children*

One of the important things you are learning in pre-K is to notice when you have a strong feeling in your body. You can tell a grown-up or a friend how you're feeling. "I'm so excited I want to jump up and down!" Or, "I'm frustrated. I need help."

4. Introduce and Model using the *Fun with Feelings Cards* (5 mins)

- Show families the *Fun with Feelings* cards and the Family Handbook they will receive with their deck.
- Show the two types of cards: orange "I feel" cards show different feelings, purple "I can" cards show different actions you can take to express the feeling, calm down, or feel better.



- Show the three sets of instruction cards - **Build, Play, Teach**. Convey that the cards are designed for families and children to use however they choose.
- Model how you might use one of the ideas from the Handbook with a child. For example, read "Make a Face" on the Play page, hold up an "I feel" card, say the feeling, and make the face that goes with it.

➤ *Invite children* to make the face too and describe what you see. For example, "When you smile, your eyes sparkle."

HOST A FAMILY EVENT (CONT'D)

5. Invite families to continue to explore the *Fun with Feelings* cards (15 mins)

If Children Are Present

1. Choose one of the ideas from the **Play** page and suggest that families try that first. Hold up the Handbook and read aloud.
2. Encourage families to move ahead to the first **Teach** page when they are ready.
3. Support families who are struggling to engage their children in meaningful interactions by modeling strategies that you've found to be useful.

If Only Adults

1. Ask families to split into three groups.
2. Give each group one section of the Handbook to focus on: **Build, Play, or Teach.**
3. Ask each group to pick 1 or 2 ideas from their section and practice using the cards together. Encourage them to role play with one person playing the role of a child.
4. Walk around the room and check understanding.

As families clean up, ensure that each family ends up with their own set of cards and a Family Handbook, if you are distributing them at the event.

6. Self-reflection (5 mins)

Encourage families to reflect for a minute on what they have learned about social-emotional skills.

► **If Only Adults**

Invite families to think about or write down a social-emotional skill their child is already successful in and then one goal they have for their child this year. Families may not want to share with the group, but you can invite them to talk with their child's teacher about this goal.

HOST A FAMILY EVENT (CONT'D)

"We talked today about emotions and why it is so important for your children to learn about them. Given what we have learned, what social-emotional strengths does your child show already? Maybe sharing or naming their feelings?"

Give families a minute to think or talk quietly at the table.

"Now, think about what behaviors you see now and the behaviors you want to see instead. What is a goal you have for your child this year? For example, my daughter gets so frustrated when she's drawing. She rips her paper. I want her to keep trying and feel proud of what she can do. That is my goal."

7. Closing (5 mins)

Invite families to share about their favorite part of the event or any ideas they have for using the cards at home or on-the-go. Thank families for attendance and participation. If possible, make yourself available for brief one-on-one interactions with families as they leave.

8. Get feedback from families (optional)

Collecting feedback lets families know you value their perspective and provides you with useful information! Use a survey to invite families to share feedback about the event or ask for additional support (with the option to share responses verbally or privately). You can use these surveys to improve similar events in the future.

Questions/Items on the survey can include:

- Today's event was interesting/fun/helpful.
- My comments and opinions were welcomed and respected today.
- I am ready to try the *Fun with Feelings* cards at home with my child.
- I would like my child's teacher (family support staff) to follow up with me on the material that was shared today.
- What did you enjoy most/least about today's event?
- Please share any comments or questions you have about today's event.

► MORE WAYS TO CONNECT WITH FAMILIES USING *FUN WITH FEELINGS*

Whether you invite children to participate or host an event only for adults, these ideas can help you further engage families during or after the event.



Facilitate a Discussion About Social-Emotional Skills

- Share an example of how children are learning about feelings in pre-K. Consider bringing a poem, book, puppet, or piece of art from the classroom. Explain the activity and what children learned.
- Invite families to share what they've learned or a question they still have. Encourage families to share ideas in response to each other's questions, and supplement with additional ideas from your experiences, the visual on pages 4-5, and the "Additional Information & Resources" box on page 22.



Promote Two-Way Communication

- Encourage families to share (e.g., in person, by phone or text) how they're using the cards at home, goals they have set related to their children's social-emotional skills, or any questions that may have come up for them while using the cards at home.
- Support your colleagues to find time to follow up with families (in person, phone or text) about using the cards, answer families' questions, and provide additional support.
- Share feedback with families regarding children's social-emotional skills from your authentic assessment system, including observed strengths. Where relevant, encourage families to use the *Fun with Feelings* cards to support skill-building.



What Educators are Saying: “The family event was hands on, collaborative, involved the entire classroom community, and it easily fit into the planned family activity for the day. Most importantly, all families seemed excited to receive their very own set of cards and agreed that they would continue to use them at home.”

RUBEN F. - EARLY CHILDHOOD SOCIAL WORKER, MANHATTAN



Set Up a *Fun With Feelings* Table

To offer all of your families a chance to engage with *Fun with Feelings* consider placing a table at an existing event, in your hallway during drop-off, or in another space where staff members can model and encourage families to use the cards.

Staff can introduce the *Fun with Feelings* cards, encourage families to use the cards at home and on-the-go, and use the visual on pages 4-5 as a handout to briefly explain why social-emotional skills are important.



Create an Interactive Bulletin Board

For example, post 1-3 “Play” or “Teach” cards on a bulletin board with a variety of **“I feel”** cards using Velcro so families can play together in the hall.

You might add photos from a *Fun with Feelings* event or include some blank cards families and/or children filled in while playing together. You could also add photos of children making feelings faces or building with the cards in the classroom.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & RESOURCES

- The Social and Emotional Development domain in New York State’s Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core recognizes that learning about feelings is an essential part of building a foundation for children to succeed as they move up to kindergarten and beyond.
- As children learn how to understand and manage their own feelings, they also learn how to make sense of how others are feeling. In this way, basic social-emotional skills lay the foundation for more sophisticated skills, such as empathy (taking another’s perspective), helping others, and working together to solve problems.
- **For those who are interested in learning more** about the importance of social-emotional skills, refer to the following resources:
 - Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. www.casel.org
 - Emotional Intelligence in the First Five Years of Life. Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development (2011).
 - Social and Emotional Learning in Schools: From Programs to Strategies. Society for Research in Child Development, Social Policy Report (2012).



SAMPLE FAMILY LETTER

The Family Letter is available to print in 10 languages by going to schools.nyc.gov/funwithfeelings.



Dear Pre-K Family,



We are happy to give you a set of *Fun with Feelings* cards! These cards are a playful way to help your child learn about feelings.

Understanding and managing feelings are important skills that young children develop over time in pre-K and at home. These skills help children get along with friends and family, keep trying even when a task is difficult, and succeed in school.

As your child's first and most important teacher, you have the power to help your child learn about feelings. You can support your child when they are angry, sad, or scared. You can teach your child in the moments when you're riding the subway, playing together, and even at dinner and bath time. The *Fun with Feelings* Handbook gives ideas for how to get started with the cards.

Build

Use the cards to build towers, bridges, or whatever you and your child imagine.

Play

Use the cards to play games, learn about feelings, and have fun together.

Teach

Use the cards to teach your child how to express and manage feelings.

If you have questions, please talk to your child's teacher or pre-K program leader, or email us at prekthrive@schools.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,

Division of Early Childhood Education
NYC Department of Education

CHECK OUT MORE RESOURCES ONLINE!

Please visit schools.nyc.gov/funwithfeelings for resources to support using *Fun with Feelings* in your program and at home with families.

Each resource is available in all 10 language supported by the NYC Department of Education.

The resources available include:

- **Learning About Feelings Handout:** a visual tool to explain why learning about feelings is important and how it happens in pre-K.
- **Family Event Presentations:** pre-made presentations can support you in hosting a family event and providing families with more information about the cards.
- **Family Invite:** use this customizable invitation to build excitement and promote your family event.

