

CLAY™

TEACHER RESOURCE PACK



**MANAGING CHALLENGING
BEHAVIORS IN THE CLASSROOM**

WHY CLAY IS A POWERFUL BENEFIT FOR YOUR SCHOOL



MEET CLAY

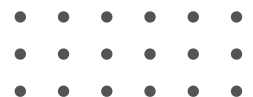
- ✔ Improve classroom behavior
- ✔ Monitor teacher burnout
- ✔ Upskill your educators
- ✔ Improve teacher retention



At Clay, we understand that managing disruptive behaviors can lead to teacher burnout, particularly for less experienced teachers. That's why we focus on upskilling teachers with effective tools and strategies, reducing their reliance on directors to handle challenging situations. By empowering teachers to better navigate the behavioral issues in their classroom, Clay reduces teacher burnout and helps create a confident and capable teaching workforce that benefits both teachers and students.

Transform your classroom with Clay, which includes:

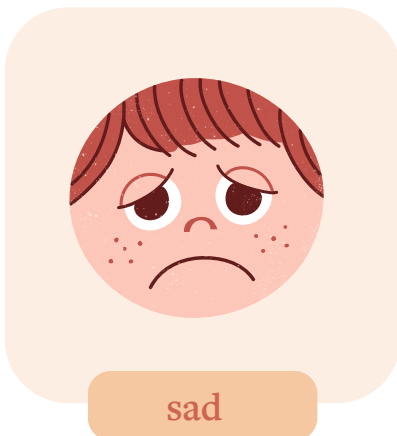
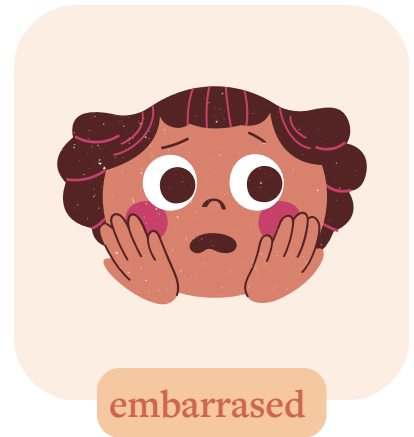
- **A digital behavioral expert** that provides real-time support to teachers, helping them successfully manage disruptive behaviors and reducing their reliance on directors for support
- **Virtual professional development** for less experienced teachers that improves their confidence and competence in managing behaviors in their classroom
- **Easy-to-implement resources** for directors to help prevent teacher burnout and improve teacher well-being, so they show up energized at work
- **Foster better collaboration between teachers & parents** to help families understand how they can support their child's behavior and development.



TODAY I FEEL

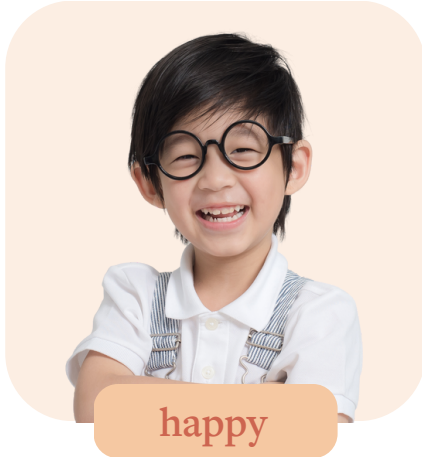
This feelings chart supports social-emotional learning in young children. Display it in an accessible place either at home or in the classroom. Throughout the day, schedule predictable check-in times to help children learn how to identify, understand, and regulate feelings.

Inspired by www.TheLovedChild.net



TODAY I FEEL

This feelings chart supports social-emotional learning in young children. Display it in an accessible place either at home or in the classroom. Throughout the day, schedule predictable check-in times to help children learn how to identify, understand, and regulate feelings.



happy



excited



silly



surprised



shy



embarrassed



sad



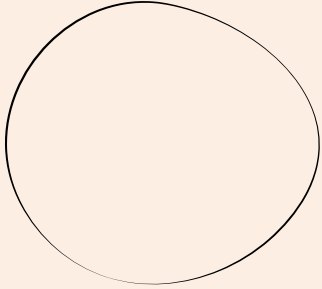
worried



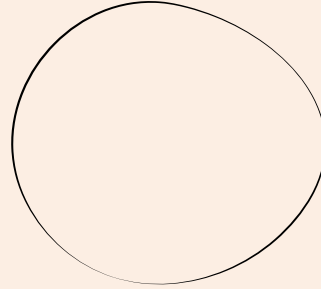
angry

TODAY I FEEL

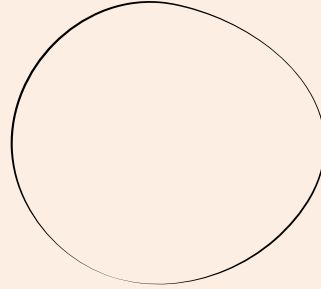
This feelings chart supports social-emotional learning in young children. Together with your child, encourage them to draw faces to match each feeling below. Take turns sharing when and why you experienced each feeling. This fun activity will help your child recognize, label, and regulate big feelings!



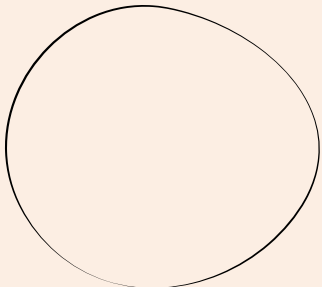
happy



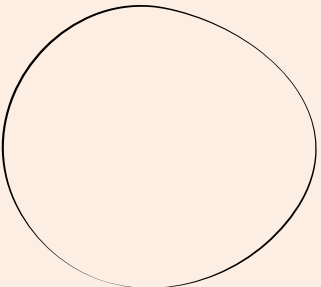
excited



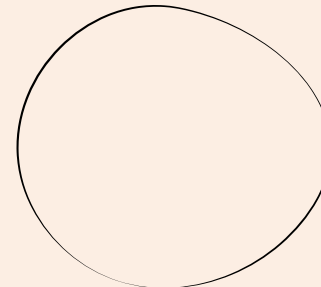
silly



surprised



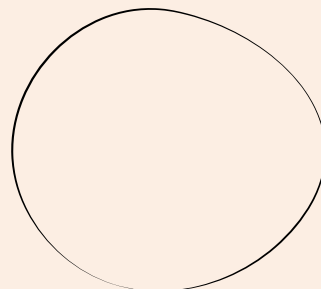
shy



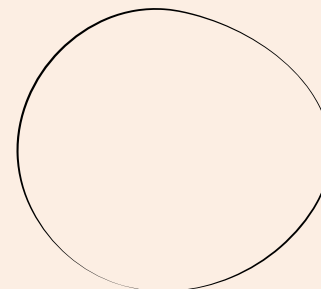
embarrassed



sad



worried



angry

BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION ICEBERG

All children's behaviors have meaning. The behavior we see is a form of communication letting us know what the child may be actually experiencing and/or feeling underneath the surface.



WHAT YOU SEE

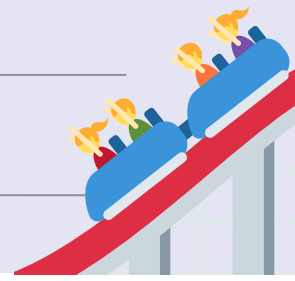
- Crying
- Aggressive behavior
- Tantrums
- Withdrawal
- Not listening
- Sleep issues
- Inflexible
- Few friends
- Rigid play
- Whining
- Body Complaints
- Fidgety/Hyperactive

WHAT MAY BE CAUSING IT

- Tired/Hungry
- Social Anxiety
- Overstimulated
- Stressors at home
- Trauma
- Need for connection
- Overscheduled
- Separation Anxiety
- Developmental milestone delay
- Lack ability to express big feelings
- Learning differences
- Lack of self-regulation skills



ROLLER COASTER BREATHING



Deep breathing helps a child regulate and calm down their brain. First practice this exercise with the child during calm and connected moments, then it can be used during times of dysregulation.

In this exercise your pointer finger is a rollercoaster riding up and down the tracks around your other hand!

Breathe in as the coaster rides up each finger.

Breathe out as you ride down each finger.



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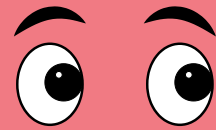
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SENSORY GROUNDING EXERCISE

When a child is overwhelmed by big feelings this sensory grounding exercise can be used to help them regulate.

Help the child name each of the below.

5 THINGS YOU CAN SEE



4 THINGS YOU CAN FEEL



3 THINGS YOU CAN HEAR



2 THINGS YOU CAN SMELL



1 THING YOU CAN TASTE

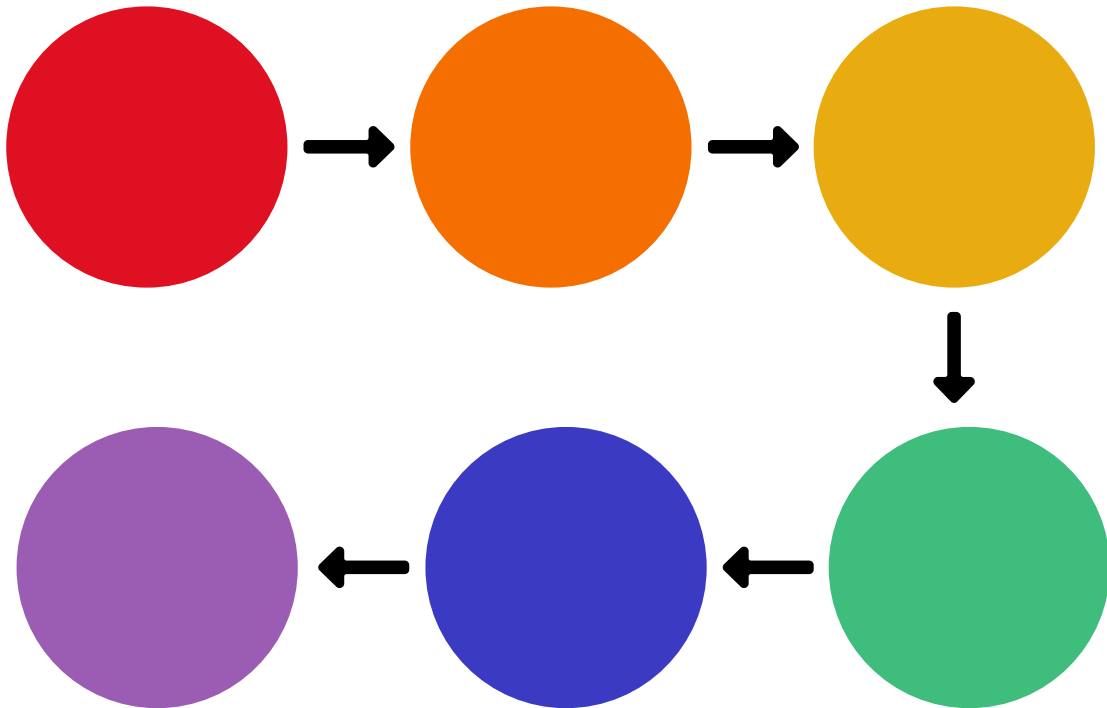


RAINBOW GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

When a child is overwhelmed by big feelings the rainbow grounding technique can be used to help them regulate. Help the child look around their environment and find items that are each color below.



Look around you and try to find the colors of the rainbow in order.



B E H A V I O R L O G

Behavior to observe: _____

When did it happen? (at bedtime, lunch)	Where? (school, home)	What was s/he doing before the behavior?	Describe the behavior (had a tantrum, hit etc.)	What did you (or other adult) do next? (yelled, comforted them)	What did child do next? (calmed down, continued to tantrum etc.)

AVOIDING POWER STRUGGLES

An important developmental task for children is to try to be more independent and learn to make decisions. This means that they naturally begin to want some control and power, which leads to power struggles. All of the suggestions below take a lot of patience, preparation, self-regulation, and experimentation.

STRATEGIES

EXAMPLES

MAKE IT A GAME

"Let's see how long it takes you to ..."
"Let's pretend we are ballerinas and twirl while we clean up"
"There's no way you can put your toys away yourself!"

COACH

"You can do it"
"Wow, what a good helper!"
"Please use your soft hands and quiet voice"

2 CHOICES

"You can pick up the Legos or the blocks"
"You can put your coat on by yourself or I can do it for you"
"You can have the red cup or the blue cup for snack"

USE HUMOR

"Whatever you do don't smile..."
"Let's pretend we're frogs while we clean up and hop"
Use a funny voice every time they do what you ask

NO WITH A YES

"No you can't throw the blocks but you can throw the soft balls."
"No you can't bring the big stick inside, but you can go find a special magic pebble to bring in with you."

CREATE A HELPER

Choose snack for the day
Choose the book for circle time
Have a classroom job

CATCH GOOD BEHAVIOR

"Great job cleaning up! You're a great helper"
"I love how you used soft hands and a kind voice with your friend"
"I love how you listened the first time"

DISTRACTION

"Hey, can you help me with this? I really need your help."
"Woah look there's a squirrel outside, let's count how many we see"

PROBLEM SOLVE

Does this problem happen every day, and how can we avoid it tomorrow? Are they hungry, tired, during a transition?

CO-REGULATION SKILLS

Co-regulation is crucial in developing a child's ability to manage their big feelings and cope with difficult situations. In this handout, we'll discuss helpful and not helpful things to say to a child when co-regulating with them.

Not Helpful

"Don't worry."

"You are fine."

"You are okay."

"Stop worrying, nothing bad is going to happen."

"You need to calm down."

Relax this isn't a big deal."

"If you don't stop crying, you can't go outside."

"Go over there until you can get yourself together"

"Be a big boy/girl."

"Nobody likes a crier."

Helpful:

(get to eye level and say)

"You are scared. I get it. I am here."

"It's okay to be sad and cry, I will stay with you until you feel better."

"You are really mad they took your toy, I believe you."

"Do you want some ideas to feel better or do you just want some time to feel sad?"

"Let's take some deep breaths together and find something in your calm down box to play with."

"I get feel mad too sometimes, what helps me is when I pretend my hands are rollercoasters and I take deep breaths.
Let me show you."

CO-REGULATION SKILLS

Co-regulation is an important part of helping a child develop the skills they need to manage their emotions and cope with difficult situations on their own. Kids with big feelings need help co-regulating so that in the future they can self-regulate.

Co-regulating looks like:

Getting eye level with the child
(We should have holes in the knees of our pants from being eye level so often)

Showing the child ways to handle big feelings

Roller coaster breathing, pizza breathing, grounding exercise, calm down corner etc.

Labeling their feelings

"You are mad"

Telling the child you understand them

"I believe you" or "I get it"

Sitting with the feeling without trying to immediately fix it

"It's okay to feel sad, I will stay next to you while you get your feelings out."

Validating the feeling

"That felt really scary to you, it makes sense you feel scared."

BITING: WHAT TO DO & WHAT TO SAY

Young children often bite when they feel overwhelmed and do not yet have the skills to express their big feelings like frustration and anger.

- ♡ **Pause:** Take a few deep belly breaths to calm yourself before helping the children.
- ♡ **Safety comes first.** Separate the kids. Keep the child who bit away from the child who was bitten.
- ♡ **Check-in** first with the child who was bitten and model compassionate language: Get down at eye level and say, “Are you okay? Biting hurts! It isn’t okay your friend hurt you. Remember, you can say STOP!”
- ♡ **Now talk to the child** who bit, label their feelings, and set a clear limit with a *no* and a *yes* - the behavior you want to see: Get down on eye level and say, “Wow, you were angry! Biting hurts and it isn’t okay to hurt our friends. What you can do when you feel angry is say, “I’m angry!”
- ♡ **Offer mouthing toys:** Have a basket of mouthing toys accessible for children who tend to bite. When setting a limit, offer a mouthing toy in place of biting. Say, “it’s not okay to bite friends but you can bite your biter necklace.
- ♡ **Screen for developmental delays:** Children with developmental concerns such as a language delays are more likely to use their bodies to communicate their big feelings.

Share these recommendations with parents so they do and say the same thing at home.

HURTING BEHAVIORS WHAT TO DO & WHAT TO SAY

Hurting behaviors such as hitting, pushing, kicking, biting, and tackling are common challenging behaviors. Young children don't yet have the self-control or communication skills to express their big feelings and needs.

- ♡ **First**, pause and take a deep belly breath to self calm.
- ♡ **Get at eye level**, with a gentle hand on the child's body, label their BIG feelings, and then set a limit calmly with a "NO" and a "YES" (the behavior you want to see).
- ♡ **Repeat this response consistently.** It could be helpful to add a statement such as "I will not let you hurt your friend - I need to help your body - my job is to keep everyone safe."
- ♡ **During your daily one-on-one special time**, through play with stuffed animals or exploring picture books, revisit past challenging moments. Practice using words to express BIG feelings and self-calming tools like rollercoaster breathing.
- ♡ **Post a Feeling Chart** and schedule predictable times to check-in to help children learn how to recognize, label, and regulate feelings.
- ♡ **Be sure to catch positive behaviors!** Praise positive behavior with a whisper in the ear, wink, gentle touch, or big thumbs up.

Share these recommendations with parents so they do and say the same thing at home.

TANTRUMS: WHAT TO DO & WHAT TO SAY

Young children have tantrums because they are still learning how to communicate and regulate their big feelings.

- ♥ **Pause.** Calm your body before you respond to the child. It is important for you to remain calm and understanding.
- ♥ **Get on the child's eye level** and acknowledge their feelings by saying, "You are frustrated right now. I get it. I am here for you."
- ♥ **During the tantrum**, quietly remain close by until the tantrum passes. Refrain from problem solving during the tantrum.
- ♥ **Use positive reinforcement:** When the child communicates their emotions well, praise them for it. Say "I'm proud of you for calming down" or "Great job using your words!".
- ♥ **During moments of connection**, through pretend play or while exploring picture books about big feelings, model how to recognize and label emotions. Also practice self-calming skills like rollercoaster breathing or sensory grounding exercises.
- ♥ **Create a cozy place with pillows**, fidget toys, board books, and post a Feelings Chart to practice labeling and regulating big feelings.
- ♥ **Every child is unique!** Consider using a behavior log to examine triggers and helpful solutions.

Share these recommendations with parents so they do and say the same thing at home.

POWER OF CONNECTION: 2X2X2

Prioritizing connection before correction is essential for building strong relationships with preschoolers and promoting positive behavior. One way to do this is by increasing "special time" with each member of your class.

Here's a simple formula to try: 2 x 2 x 2

2 Minutes

2 Times a day

2 Weeks

2 minutes, 2 times a day, for 2 weeks of one-on-one time with a child, focused solely on their interests and needs to talk, play, and listen.

Children feel special and important when given this time, and it helps them feel better about themselves. When children feel more connected to their teacher, they feel safe and secure, which can make them less likely to act out.

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