



Children love mirrors! These beautifully crafted beechwood mirrors are perfect for small hands and faces to explore feelings and how facial expressions change. They make the ideal base to explore reflections and shapes.

Research shows that sensory play in the early years builds nerve connections in the brain's pathways. This beautifully crafted resource has been thoughtfully developed to maximize this special time in a child's development.



## Let's talk about emotions

When we are emotionally healthy, our full range of feelings gives us valuable information about ourselves. For example, we feel angry if we think we are on the receiving end of injustice, or if our boundaries have been violated. We feel sad if we are bereaved of someone we love or have another kind of loss. Envy tells us what we want in life. Fear alerts us to danger. Feelings really are essential for our survival and our sense of self; they tell us the kind of people we are. They motivate us to take action. All feelings are valid, rather than good or bad, but there's no getting away from it, some are more pleasant to experience than others!

The healthy person who experiences a range of feelings will be able to express and think about them, and in this way will not get stuck in them. They will:

- Feel the emotion
- Be moved to communicate it
- Reflect on their experience and the meaning of the feeling
- Take appropriate action in the world.

## How can we support children's emotional wellbeing?

Family relationships are crucial, but children spend many of their waking hours in daycare, preschool or school, so these relationships are absolutely key in developing good mental health. There are many things we can do. We can give children a language to talk about the world of emotions. We can help children recognize and name their feelings.



Feelings are a normal and healthy part of life experienced by us all. The most important thing we can do to support the emotional development of children is to be accepting, empathic, warm and playful so that children are not alone with their experiences.

# Pass the feeling

- Sit in a circle together with the children. Make a happy face into the mirror and then give it to the child on your right. Ask this child to make a happy face into the mirror and pass it on to the next child.
- Talk about what a happy face looks like. How does it affect your mouth, eyes and cheeks? Are we all the same?
- When you have all made a happy face, change the emotion to sad, anxious etc. You might just choose a couple of emotions that feel relevant to the group. Maybe if a child has been worrying or another is excited, you can choose those feelings to explore.
- With older children you can each share something that makes you feel happy, sad etc.
- Now choose an emotion and make a face into the mirror but don't say what the emotion is. Can the group guess what you are feeling?



## Mindful moments of calm

Create an invitation for quiet creativity using a selection of Little Looking Mirrors and some special treasures like sparkly beads, little pebbles, seashells or petals. These can be presented in a variety of interesting containers, such as bags, tins, bowls. Let children sit and create their own reflective transient art. This should be done in a comfortable, quiet space.



## Take time to reflect

Place several mirrors on the table together with a selection of natural objects like a flower, a pinecone, a twig etc. Let children explore the reflections made by placing an object on a flat mirror or standing a mirror alongside the object. What if you place several mirrors alongside – can you see the multiple reflections?

# Sensory play

Create a sensory treasure basket using Little Looking Mirrors, soft fabric, plush toys, chiffon, rattles, etc., and give children the chance to explore the textures, colors, sounds and reflections in their own time.

## *Get talking – useful words*

Reflection, shape, square, circle, triangle, rectangle, feelings, emotions, expression, recognize, understand, compare.



# Books about mirrors/feelings

*Hey! Look at You!* by Sandra Boynton

*My First I See You* by Eric Carle

*When I Feel Happy/Sad/Angry* by Sharie Coombes

*My Big Shouting Day* by Rebecca Patterson