

Early Childhood Mental Health FUN KIT

Engaging Activities for Children
and Caregivers



Teach and Talk About Feelings

- ✧ Infants begin to learn about feelings from the tone of their caregiver's voice and the look on their caregiver's face. [Read more about it here.](#)
- ✧ Your children learn to name, describe, and act-out their feelings very quickly. Adults can use arts and crafts to help teach children the right way to do this [here](#).
- ✧ Looking at art—in a book, at a museum, or on a screen—can give children an opportunity to think about how different images make them feel. Making art can give them the chance to show you how they feel. Here is an [activity guide](#) to get you started.
- ✧ Print one of these books so you and your child can make your own story:
 -  [My Feelings Books](#)
 -  [All About Me Book](#)

Story Time



Even little babies can benefit from reading books. [Read more about it here.](#)

There are many picture books to help adults teach children tough life lessons.

📖 Here is a [list of books](#) that can help you talk to children about death.

📖 Here is a [list of books](#) that can help you talk to children about loss and bad experiences.

Reading a book and doing a related activity with your child is a good way to teach a lesson. Here is a list of books and activities that can get you started:

📖 *Fill a Bucket: A Guide to Daily Happiness for the Young Child*
Carol Mccloud (Author), Katherine Martin (Author), David Messing (Illustrator)

📖 From Amazon: This is a version of *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* for younger children. The concept of bucket filling is an effective metaphor for encouraging kind and considerate behavior as well as teaching the benefits of positive relationships to children.

[Fill a bucket today!](#)

📖 *Heartprints*—P. K. Hallinan

From Amazon: Ages 3 to 6 years. In this delightful and warm book, the author weaves a story of children helping others and leaving heart prints all along the way. [Learn how to make a heart.](#) | [Connect the dots of a heart!](#)

📖 *The Invisible String*—Patrice Karst

Children of all ages (And yes, adults too!) feel a great sense of peace and joy realizing that we are all connected to the ones that we love (pets, friends, grandparents, cousins, and especially those that have passed on)...through the Invisible String. A string that can never be lost, cut, or torn. A string that can reach all the way to the moon or down to the ocean floor. Strings that anger, time, or bad feelings can ever make go away. Age range: 3+ [Find your Invisible String.](#)

 *The Kindness Quilt*—[Nancy Elizabeth Wallace](#)

From Amazon: Minna and her classmates have been asked by their teacher, Mrs. Bloom, to work on a Kindness Project. Mrs. Bloom wants them to do and draw and share an act of kindness. Minna and her family do lots of kind things, but Minna can't decide which one is right for her project. Then she starts writing and drawing and cutting—and an idea for a paper quilt picturing many acts of kindness begins to take shape! [Make a kindness quilt!](#)

Being scared is something we all experience, young and old. Talking with children about the things that scare them will help children understand them. Here are 2 titles to ask for at your library:

 *Jenny Is Scared: When Sad Things Happen in the World*—Carol Shuman

A comforting, coping story for children who are aware of the threats of violence and terrorism in the world. A range of fears, feelings and questions are explored. The child reader is encouraged to talk to parents, friends and other caregivers. Age range: 4+

 *Sometimes I'm Scared*—Jane Annunziata

Kids can be afraid of lots of things It's normal. But these fears can seem really big! This book outlines easy steps kids can use to overcome their everyday fears. An extensive Note to Parents gives parents additional information on why fears naturally develop and how to help their kids understand and deal with common fears. Age range: 5+

Arts and Crafts



- ✧ Make and play with Sock Puppets.
- ✧ Print a blank teddy bear face and draw fun facial expressions.
- ✧ Make a keepsake scrapbook to capture the important people and events in your life.
- ✧ Make wind chimes.
- ✧ Create a bright and cheerful tissue paper collage.
- ✧ Color in pretty flowers.
- ✧ Scribble something messy into something beautiful.

Sing, Dance, and Do Things



- ✧ Everyone can dance. [Use dance to express feelings, act out situations, or tell stories.](#)
- ✧ Singing with children gives you the chance to be a star! Here is a [printable page of song lyrics](#) that show you how to turn songs into lessons about friends, feelings, and helping.
- ✧ Try out these [baking recipes](#) to teach children how to express their feelings.
- ✧ [Use gardening to teach children](#) how little acts can lead to big changes.
- ✧ Use [classic children's games](#) to talk about feelings. Here is a printable memory game.



Be a Helper

- ✧ Helpers are people that help others. They can be professionals, like police officers or doctors and nurses. They can also be volunteers, like you and your child. Thinking about the people that help us every day can reassure your child about the safety of their world.
- ✧ Thinking about how you can help others can empower your child to make a difference in their world.
- 📖 Here is a [printable book](#) to help you talk with your child about the professional helpers they see.
- ✧ [Make a wreath](#) of the different ways your child can help.
- ✧ [Volunteering with young children](#) may seem hard to do, but it is possible and can be powerful. Here's some [advice and suggestions](#) on how to start volunteering with your kids as well as a [guide to volunteering](#) as a family and [volunteering project ideas](#).