

We
Find

Feelings Clues

I Know Happy





I Know Happy



A book about
feeling happy, excited,
and proud

Lindsay N. Giroux

Illustrated by Alicia Teba Godoy

free spirit
PUBLISHING®



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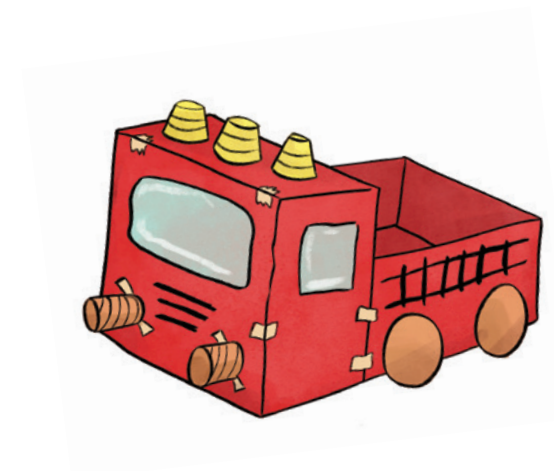
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To Olivia, Clark, and Jasper, some of my favorite littles
who would always ride the fire truck. —LNG



I'm making a feelings
detective notebook.
I'm going to draw clues
about how I feel!

I look for clues in my body. They help me
figure out what I am feeling.



Sometimes it's easy to know how I feel.



Sometimes it's hard.



My feelings change every day and all day long.

Dear Caring Adult,

Thank you for choosing to explore emotions with young children. Reading about and discussing emotions offers you an opportunity to better understand a young child, to open a dialogue about how they feel, and to help them learn how to express and cope with those feelings. Young children are just starting to connect facial expressions with emotion words. For many children, *happy* is one of the first emotion words they use to describe themselves and others.

Many emotions feel similar in our bodies. This book highlights emotions that feel a lot alike in order to help teach children a wide and complex emotion vocabulary. Rather than only focusing on happiness, this story highlights excitement and pride too. These three emotions, while feeling similar in one's body, are felt in different situations and sometimes eased by trying different coping strategies. Helping children recognize and name these emotional nuances will, in turn, help them respond to and cope with these feelings.

You can work to support children's deeper understanding of emotions in many ways. The ideas that follow are just a few of them—you'll discover more as you go!

Help children make and use their own feelings detective notebooks.

Children can build many key emotional competencies by looking for feelings clues in their own faces and bodies. Recording emotional experiences gives children a way to process emotions and provides adults with ways to discuss those feelings with children. Having a written notebook also allows children to go back and revisit emotions they have had and remember how they handled those emotions, a step that can also remind them of what could work in the future when those feelings or others arise.

Feelings detective notebooks can take several forms. A simple approach is for children to freely draw bodies and facial expressions, as the character in this book does. Children can work with adults to label the pages with emotion words. Depicting simple causes of emotions, such as a balloon popping, can help children remember the scenarios in more vivid detail. And if children wish to tell a larger story through words, adults can also support them by taking dictation and writing down what they narrate about their experiences.

Another option is for you to prepare notebooks with an outline of a body on each page. You can then support children in picking the colors that feel right to them to represent specific feelings, and coloring the parts of the body where they are feeling that emotion. For example, this could look like a child picking green for excitement and coloring in a big green smile, green hands, and green feet to represent that their excitement was most strongly felt in their face and limbs.



Here are some other ways to support children in making and using feelings detective notebooks:

- Buy or make special feelings detective notebooks and help children as they decorate them.
- Ask children about their drawings and encourage them to talk about what happened, how they felt, and what clues they noticed in their bodies.
- If children want your support, help them label their pictures or add dictations.
- Model by drawing your own feelings detective picture, labeling it with an emotion word, and sharing how you felt and what clues you noticed in your body.
- Ask children what they did to feel better or what steps they took to help their bodies regulate. If they didn't feel like they had a strategy or tool for this, you could ask what might help the next time based on how their bodies felt. For example, you might say, "If your legs felt like running, how could you safely get that energy out?"
- Comment on children's effort and their emerging skills. For instance, "Wow, you really listened to your body!" or, "You remember how your voice sounds when you are angry."

Encourage children to identify times when they feel happy.

You might ask children to share when they felt happy during the day or activities or songs that help them feel happy. You can also ask them to expand on how they know they feel happy and what body clues they recognize in themselves.

Expand children's knowledge of feeling happy by describing other comfortable or positive emotions.

Children often begin referring to all comfortable emotions as *happy*. To encourage more precise language, you can describe other comfortable or positive emotions using child-friendly words, including how those emotions relate to happiness. For example, *excited* can be described as "being really happy about something that is going to happen." *Content* can be described as "happy because you feel like you have enough of something." And *proud* can be described as "happy that you've done a good job on something."

Model how emotions are individualized and feel different for each of us.

You can share how emotions feel in your body, and help children decide if that's the same as or different from how they feel—and celebrate that same and different are both okay. For example, "You feel surprised in your face and I feel surprised in my belly. It's so neat that we feel our emotions in different ways!"

