

# Parent/Teacher Guide

## INTRODUCING THE TOOLS - USING THE FEELINGS THERMOMETER AND FEELINGS TRACKER

### For Young children (for ages 4-7)

A simple way to introduce the **Feelings Thermometer** and **Feelings Tracker** at home is to print them out and place them somewhere visible, such as on the fridge, kitchen bench or coffee table. When your child notices them, you can explain that it helps us become more aware of our feelings. At school these tools can be used to have students 'spot check' their feelings intermittently.

With younger children, you might look at the **Feelings Tracker** together and take turns sharing how you feel. This can naturally open up a conversation about why they might be feeling that way (see the 'Explore Feelings' page). For more ideas on how to support children's feelings, you can purchase the **Empowered Parenting Support Booklet**.

### For Older children (for ages 8-13)

Engaging older children, particularly tweens, can sometimes be more challenging. As children move into early adolescence, they naturally begin sharing less with adults and more with their peers. An alternative approach is to talk while driving in the car. Being in a shared space without direct eye contact can make it easier for children to open up.

Using a Feelings Tracker in the classroom to conduct brief "spot checks" can be incredibly useful. When teaching at university, I used a Feelings Tracker to encourage young adults to pause and check in with their emotions. Students engaged readily with the exercise, and over the course of the semester they became more skilled at recognising and naming their feelings. This regular practice supported the development of greater self-awareness and strengthened their emotional intelligence.

You can also use simple **Feelings Thermometer phrases**, such as *feeling great, just okay, struggling a bit, or pretty bad*, to talk about their day. For example, on the way home from school you might ask, "How was your day?" If the response is brief or general, you could follow up with: "Would you say your day was good, a bit of a struggle, or pretty bad?"

You can then explore further by asking questions such as:

- "What made it good?"
- "What happened to make it a struggle?"
- "Why do you think it felt pretty bad?"

You can then use the 'Explore Feelings' ideas (on next page) and Feelings Tracker (for ages 8-13) to deepen the conversation.

## EXPLORING FEELINGS

You may get a wide range of responses when using the Feeling Thermometer, depending on a child's age, development, and personality. If a child rates themselves at 1 or 2, this is usually a good sign. However, if they say 3, 4, or 5, it's important to explore further. The purpose of the Feeling Thermometer is to understand a child's current emotional state. From there, we can help them identify and express the specific feeling that may be contributing to that state. You can do this by asking a few simple questions. Use your own wording and only ask what feels helpful in the moment—you don't need to ask every question. Below are some examples of questions you might ask when a child shares a rating of 3, 4, or 5:

1. **Help them identify the feeling.** *A feeling chart can be useful here (see our free downloadable **Feeling Wheels**.)*

**You might ask one of these questions:**

- Looking at this wheel, which feeling seems the strongest right now?
- If this feeling had a name, what would you call it?
- What does *[state]* feel like? (e.g. What does struggling feel like?)

2. **Help them notice where they feel it in their body.** *Developing body awareness helps children recognise feelings earlier and learn ways to release them. For example, if they clench their fists when they're angry, they can shake the anger out, or if they feel tightness in their chest when anxious, slow deep breaths may help to ease it.*

**You might ask one of these questions:**

- Point to where that feeling is in your body,
- Where in your body can you feel that feeling the most?
- What's your body telling you? Do you notice any sensations?

3. **Find out when the feeling started and how long it has been present.** *It may have begun within the last hour or possibly building over the last few weeks. The longer the feeling has been present, the more support a child may need.*

**You might ask one of these questions:**

- When did this feeling start?
- How long have you been feeling this way?
- Is this something you're feeling just today or has it been hanging around for a while?

4. **Explore what might be contributing to the feeling.** *Children may not always recognise what is causing their emotions, so gentle questions can help them connect their feelings to events or thoughts.*

**You might ask:**

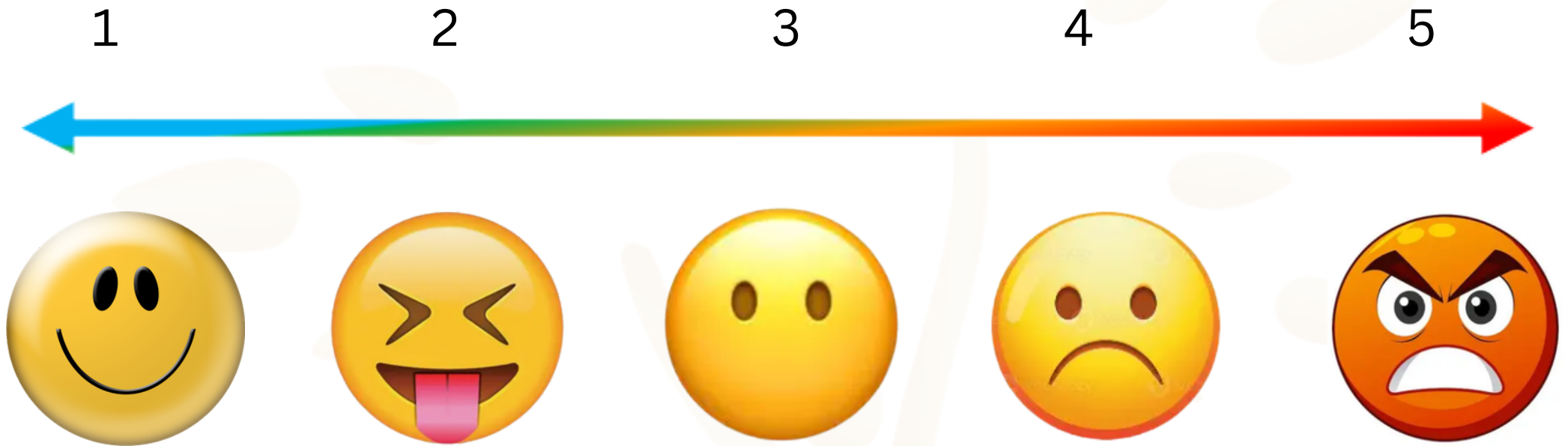
- Tell me what's been happening that might be causing this feeling? (listen out for any unhelpful thoughts)
- Would you like some help to work through it or find a way to feel a little better?

**If you would like more ideas to support a child's emotional wellbeing then feel free to join a webinar or purchase our 'Empowered Parenting Support Booklet.'**

# Feeling Thermometer

For ages 4-7

“How are you feeling?”



# Feelings Tracker

For ages 4-7



# Feeling Thermometer

For ages 8-12

**“Where are you on the thermometer right now?”**



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# Feelings Tracker

For ages 8-13

