

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES FOR THE BOOK **WIPED OUT** © 2010



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The book **WIPED OUT**, about Nellie, is a fun way to look at challenging issues that kids (and adults) face during the growing up years. Nellie deals with the situation, but she is also learning to deal with emotions. Adults can help children identify, display, and express their emotions effectively. Here are four ideas that Nellie and other kids her age can use to practice self expression.

1. PHOTO FEELINGS

Happy. Sad. Mad. At a young age, children can learn to identify these most basic expressions. Learning to perceive more subtle emotions is a helpful life skill. Let your child take a look at the pictures of Nellie in this book. What is Nellie thinking or feeling? In addition to happy, sad and mad, practice thinking of other words to describe Nellie's expressions. How about silly, frustrated, proud, or confident?

Pictures are everywhere. The next time your child is in the waiting room for an appointment, riding in the car, or bored at home, try picking up a magazine or picture book for a guessing game. Find a picture that expresses an emotion. It could be a person, a cartoon or even a puppy. What does that character seem to be saying? Is the character looking surprised? Happy? Excited? Look at the nose, the mouth, the eyes and the body language. What if one thing was different? Would that difference change the expression?

2. MIRROR MIRROR

Most kids, even Nellie, like looking at pictures of themselves. Most kids also like looking in the mirror. Have fun together looking in the mirror or mirroring each other. Try to make faces for a certain emotion or expression. Take turns. “Here’s my look for scared. Now let me see *your* scared face.” “Nellie, can you make your face look annoyed?” Surprised is always fun to try. Excited? Try to copy each other. This is a fun time to exaggerate and be dramatic.

Playing is a powerful way for kids to learn. Make this *your* game- dream up ways to make it unique and individualized. Think of all the words you know that mean something similar. Practice pronouncing them. HAPPY- joyful, delighted, ecstatic,(or for those inclined to other languages feliz, heureux, glücklich) Make noises to go with the faces; “boo-hoo”, “yahoo”, “grrrr”. The only rule is HAVE FUN!

3. USE YOUR WORDS

As mentioned above, young children can have fun identifying expressions and “acting out” emotions. They can also practice learning to effectively express themselves with words. Even when adults know that pointing and squealing at the mustard means, “I want some of that on my hamburger”, adults can say, “**use your words** - please pass the mustard”. Reward an effort of, “mease” (please) or “musser” (mustard) by passing the mustard and helping them aim for the bun.

When a child screams and kicks the chair at nap time, help them discover an alternate option. “Nellie, if you can say, ‘book please’, we can read a book before taking a nap.” “Do you want to go straight to a nap, or read a book first?” “**Use your words.**” Kids like to know they have attention. If the attention is for yelling and kicking, they quickly learn the power of a tantrum. If the child gains attention from using words, they will discover the power of asking politely. Everyone likes to feel like they have a little control--this is a great way to practice feeling in control.

Adults can help a child redirect emotions. When a child stomps in with a mad face, adults can say, “Nellie, I see you have your mad face on. **Use**

your words - what are you mad about?" "Okay, I understand." "Hey - let me see your crazy face." "Awesome. How about your happy face?" "That's great! **Use your words**, Nellie - what are you happy about?"

4. MODEL IT

Kids love to imitate what they see. When dad is stuck in traffic and reacts with yells, hitting the steering wheel, and honking the horn - a child learns one way to respond to frustration. They might also learn, "when dad is mad, don't say a word."

If dad says, "I get so frustrated when we get stuck in traffic. Next time, let's take the other route. Let's make a hurry-up plan for when we arrive late." Dad has just modeled expressing his emotions, using his words. Making a plan for dealing with a tough situation is another skill that kids can learn from seeing it modeled.

"Nellie, can feel proud of yourself for being so patient having to sit in the car this long. You haven't complained once. Not many kids your age could do that!" Sometimes kids do handle frustrating (or other emotional) situations well. Give them lots of attention for a job well done.