

Fun with Feelings: A Rollout Guide



The Pre-K Thrive *Fun with Feelings* cards are a playful way for families to help children learn about feelings and support social emotional skill-building at home. Supporting children's social and emotional development at school and at home increases children's chances of success in kindergarten and beyond.

Fun with Feelings supports foundational skills of the Social and Emotional Development domain in the [New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core](#) by helping children identify feelings in themselves and others, and express and manage feelings appropriately. By providing this tool to families, Pre-K for All programs are building capacity to support social and emotional development, or social emotional learning (SEL), at home, in alignment with the [Pre-K For All Program Quality Standards \(PQS 3.1\)](#).

All families with a child enrolled in a Pre-K for All program at the time of the tool's release will receive *Fun with Feelings* cards. All Pre-K for All programs will receive 1 set of *Fun with Feelings* cards to keep in each Pre-K for All classroom. *Fun with Feelings* cards and letters will be distributed to families by their child's Pre-K for All program.



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This Rollout Guide aims to support you and your program in making the most of *Fun with Feelings* to enhance your ongoing efforts to engage families in meaningful ways. As experts on your programs and families, you and your team will decide which pieces of this guide are most relevant to your program's unique goals and needs. Please feel free to consult your DECE Social Worker for guidance and support as you plan.



Ideas for Activities with Families

What are the benefits of hosting a *Fun with Feelings* activity for families?

- Introducing *Fun with Feelings* in person can increase the chances that families experience the cards as relevant and useful.
- Practicing can help families use the tool effectively and flexibly to support children's learning (for example, as they transition to kindergarten).
- Engaging with teachers or other staff, and other families, can enhance families' understanding of the importance of SEL and the link between SEL and school success.

Note about Distribution:

If you host a family activity, you may choose to give *Fun with Feelings* directly to each family so they can practice with them at the event and then take them home. Use a sign-in sheet to track which families received their cards; for remaining families, send the cards home in backpacks.



Ideas for Instructional Activities

What are the benefits of using *Fun with Feelings* instructional activities?

- Incorporating *Fun with Feelings* instructional activities in the classroom provides new stimuli to support children's skill-building in the PKFCC Social and Emotional Development domain, with extensions in other domains as well.
- Introducing children to *Fun with Feelings* in the classroom increases the chances that children will show interest in and/or ask their families to engage with the cards at home.
- Integrating *Fun with Feelings* into the classroom promotes alignment in the ways children are learning to express and manage their feelings across school and home contexts.



Ideas to Boost Your Rollout Efforts

What are boost ideas?

- Boosts are suggestions to optimize your children's experiences with the *Fun with Feelings* cards.
- These ideas highlight ways in which *Fun with Feelings* rollout can be used as an opportunity to enhance program quality in several different areas, including fostering a shared vision for family engagement and promoting two-way communication.
- Boosts can be added to any of the Ideas for Activities with Families.



Ideas for Activities with Families



1 Classroom activity with children and families

This option may be for you if...

- You would like to welcome families into your classroom.
- You would like to provide families with an opportunity to practice using the *Fun with Feelings* cards with their children.
- You would like your children to see their teachers and families working together.

Suggested Structure

Note: this event could be hosted during the school day, during designated Family Engagement time, or at another time.

Total Approximate Time: 40-45 mins

ADVANCE PLANNING:

- Send invitation to families 1-2 weeks prior to the activity.
[Click here for an editable invitation in all 10 DOE languages.](#)
- Consider the need for interpreters.
- Make a plan for children whose families do not attend.

SET-UP:

- Have a station for family name tags and sign-in.
- If children will already be in the room, seat them to allow space for their family member(s) to join them. Ideally, there will be room for at least two families per table. Invite families to use the floor space if they are comfortable doing so.

AGENDA:

1. Welcome (3-5 mins)

- Greet families warmly. Have a plan to welcome latecomers and transition them smoothly into the current activity.

2. Relationship-building (5-10 mins)

- Invite families to build with the *Fun with Feelings* cards however they choose. Demonstrate how to line up the slits in the cards.
- Encourage families (adults and children) to play with other families.
- Use narration or specific praise to reinforce children's creativity, effort and SEL skills (e.g., sharing, taking turns). Consider using the examples from the *Fun with Feelings* cards.

For example, you might say:

- You're building a skyscraper! I'm proud of you for trying again. You're not giving up!
- Wow, you're flying the card like an airplane! You are using your imagination!





3. Introduce SEL and the *Fun with Feelings* cards (10 mins)

- Give a child-friendly explanation of SEL and why it's important for school success.

For example, you might say:

- *To children:* We all have strong feelings. Sometimes we feel happy, excited or proud. Sometimes we feel angry, sad or scared. We may feel frustrated sometimes when we're learning to do something new.
 - One of the important things you're learning in pre-K is to notice when you have a strong feeling in your body. You can tell a grown-up or a friend how you're feeling. "I'm so excited I want to jump up and down!" Or, "I'm frustrated. I need help."
 - *To adults:* Understanding and managing strong feelings are important skills that young children develop over time. These skills help children get along with friends and family, keep trying even when a task is difficult, succeed in school and grow up healthy and strong. Adults can help children learn these skills.
 - These are skills your child has been learning in pre-K this year. The *Fun with Feelings* cards are a way to continue that learning at home.
- Share a couple of examples of how children have learned about feelings in pre-K (e.g., lessons, songs, activities or books that you've shared throughout the year).
 - Model a few feeling faces and invite children to call out the feeling.
 - Show the two types of cards: orange "I feel" cards show different feelings, purple "I can" cards show different actions you can take to express the feeling, calm down or feel better.
 - Show the three sets of instruction cards for some ideas for how to get started: *Build, Play, Teach*.

4. Invite families to continue to explore the *Fun with Feelings* cards (15 mins)

- Suggest that families choose one of the ideas on the *Play* instruction card first. Hold up the card and read instructions aloud.

For example, you might say:


- Let's look at card #3 and play Make a Face!
- Circulate and check understanding.
 - Support families who are struggling to engage their children. It may be especially useful for you to model how to engage children in meaningful interactions by using strategies that you have found particularly effective with a given child.
 - Encourage families to move ahead to *Teach* card #5 and #6 when they are ready.



**5. Share ideas (5 mins)**

- Invite families to share about their favorite part and/or any ideas they had about other creative ways to use the cards.

6. Closing (2-5 mins)

- Thank families for attendance and participation.
 - Direct children to next activity, if relevant.
 - If possible, plan for the next activity to be led by another member of your teaching team, so that you are available for brief one-on-one interactions with families as they're leaving.
-  If you are using a feedback survey, hand it out now. (For suggested questions, please see Ideas to Boost Your Rollout Efforts at the end of this Guide.)

**Notes for Planning**

Ideas for Activities with Families



2 Family workshop without children

This option may be for you if...

- You have a staff member (e.g., on-site mental health professional, family service worker or DECE social worker) who can skillfully facilitate a workshop for families.
- You would like to provide an opportunity for families to learn about SEL and set SEL goals for their children.
- You would like to see families strengthen and/or build relationships with one another and the staff member who is facilitating.

Suggested Structure

Total Approximate Time: 60 mins

ADVANCE PLANNING:

- Send invitation to families 1-2 weeks prior to the activity.
[Click here for an editable invitation in all 10 DOE languages.](#)
- Consider the need for interpreters.

SET-UP:

- Have a station for family name tags and sign-in.
- Choose a room where chairs can be arranged in a circle so that families can interact with each other.
- If possible, provide light refreshments and child care (if your workshop is not held during school hours).

AGENDA:

1. Welcome (3-5 mins)

- Greet families warmly. Have a plan to welcome latecomers and transition them smoothly into the current activity.

2. Relationship-building (10 mins)

- Use an icebreaker to help families get to know one another. For example, ask families to stand up and move around the room to introduce themselves. Offer a choice of 2-3 questions to answer in their interactions with each other.

For example, you might say:

- If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go? Why?
- What is the story behind your (or your child's) name?
- What hidden talent do you have?
- What is a value that was instilled in you from a young age?
- What's a great piece of advice you've received?





3. Introduce SEL (15 mins)

- Give a family-friendly explanation of SEL and why it's important for school success.

For example, you might say:

- **Young children at this age are just learning about feelings.** It is common for them to yell and shout when they are happy or to hit and throw things when they are angry.
- **There is very strong evidence that learning to deal with feelings matters,** from studies that start when children are very young and follow their progress all the way through high school.
 - Children who learn to manage their feelings:
 - Get along better with family and friends.
 - Have higher self-esteem.
 - Keep trying even when a task is difficult.
 - Are better able to stay focused and engaged in learning.
 - Children who have not yet learned to manage their feelings are more likely to:
 - Throw tantrums, hit, or withdraw from others.
 - Get teased, get into fights, get in trouble at school.
 - Have problems with alcohol or drugs as teenagers.
- **Pre-K helps children learn how to manage their feelings.** This means:
 - Learning simple feeling words, such as happy, angry and scared.
 - Recognizing strong feelings in their minds and bodies.
 - Expressing feelings appropriately.
 - Finding ways to calm down or feel better.
- As children learn how to understand and manage their own feelings, they are also learning how to understand how others are feeling.

- Invite families to share other ideas of why they believe SEL is important.
- Share a couple of examples of how children have learned about feelings in pre-K (e.g., lessons, songs, activities or books that you've shared throughout the year).
- Explain that SEL is part of the Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core.

For example, you might say:

- Social and Emotional Development is one of the major domains in New York State's Prekindergarten Foundations for the Common Core, in recognition that learning about feelings is an essential part of building a foundation for children to succeed as they move up to kindergarten and beyond.

4. Introduce the *Fun with Feelings* cards (5 mins)

- Show the two types of cards: orange "I feel" cards, purple "I can" cards.
- Show the three sets of instruction cards for some ideas for how to get started: *Build, Play, Teach*. Convey that the cards are designed for families and children to use however they choose.
- Invite families to ask questions and share their candid initial reactions to the cards.





5. Give families a chance to explore the *Fun with Feelings* cards (15 mins)

- Ask families to divide up into 3 small groups.
- Ask each group to focus on one set of instructions: *Build, Play, Teach*.
- Ask for a volunteer in each group to read the instructions aloud, and then practice using the cards together.
- Once families are familiar with the cards, consider encouraging them to role play with one person playing the role of a child and the rest of the group as adults. It can be helpful for parents to pretend to be their own child so they can anticipate how their child may engage with the cards.
- Circulate to answer questions and check understanding. Acknowledge participation!
- Invite families to share about their favorite part and/or any ideas they had about other creative ways to use the cards.

6. Setting goals and making a plan (10 mins)

- Refer back to the examples of specific SEL skills shared above, and ask families to name 1 skill their child needs to strengthen.

For example, you might say:

- Think about what behaviors you see now and the behaviors you want to see instead. For example, my daughter gets so frustrated when she's drawing. She rips her paper. I want her to keep trying and feel proud of what she can do. That is my goal.

- Facilitate families sharing ideas about using the *Fun with Feelings* cards as part of a plan to help their child learn this skill or reach this goal. You might add particular ideas from the instruction cards and/or brainstorm together new ways to use the cards for particular goals.

7. Closing (5 mins)

- Thank families for attendance and participation.
- If the facilitator is not the teacher of these families' children, encourage families to share the goal they set with their child's teacher and to report back on how it goes when they try the cards at home.

- ⊕ If you are using a feedback survey, hand it out now. (For suggested questions, please see Ideas to Boost Your Rollout Efforts at the end of this Guide.)



Notes for Planning



Ideas for Activities with Families



3 Booth or table at another event in your building

This option may be for you if...

- Your program already has a separate event scheduled that pre-K families are likely to attend.
- Your program's drop-off/pick-up procedures allow for meaningful, albeit brief, interactions about *Fun with Feelings*.

Suggested Structure

Total Approximate Time: 7-10 mins

ADVANCE PLANNING:

- Consider the need for interpreters.

SET-UP:

- Create colorful, child-friendly signs welcoming families to the booth.
- Display the *Fun with Feelings* cards in fun and interesting ways (e.g., a tower or an airplane).
- If possible, staff the table with 2 people so that 1 person can engage with children, while the other engages briefly with adults about the cards' purposes and uses.

AGENDA:

1. Welcome (1 min)

- Greet families warmly whenever they arrive.

2. Show families the *Fun with Feelings* cards in the bag (2 mins)

- Explain that every pre-K family gets their own cards to help children learn about feelings.
- Give a 1-2 sentence explanation of why learning about feelings is important for school success.

For example, you might say:

- Understanding and managing strong feelings are important skills that young children develop over time. These skills help children get along with friends and family, keep trying even when a task is difficult, succeed in school and grow up healthy and strong. Adults can help children learn these skills.
 - These are skills your child has been learning in pre-K this year. The cards are a way to continue that learning at home.
- Model a few feeling faces and invite children to call out the feeling.





3. Introduce the *Fun with Feelings* cards and Play (5 mins)

- Show the two types of cards: orange “I feel” cards, purple “I can” cards.
- Show the three sets of instruction cards for some ideas for how to get started: *Build, Play, Teach*. Convey that the cards are designed for families and children to use however they choose.

4. Explore the cards (*as long as time allows*)

- Invite children to build with the cards.
- Show card #3 and read aloud “Make a face!”

5. Closing (2 mins)

- Offer to continue talking if families wish and answer any questions families have.
- Encourage families to follow up with their child’s teacher or family support staff.



Notes for Planning



Ideas for Instructional Activities



There are a variety of ways to use the *Fun with Feelings* cards in the classroom. Consider introducing the cards during a large or small group activity and then placing them for children's use in one or more areas of the classroom. Feel free to place the cards in areas of the room not listed here as needed and consult the *Fun with Feelings: Build, Play, Teach* cards for additional ideas.

Please note that the PKFCC standards are referenced for each activity. You may address additional standards during each activity. Keep in mind that there are multiple ways to use and combine the cards.

Small or Large Group Introduction

Divide the orange "I feel" cards and purple "I can" cards in advance. Tell children that you are going to show them some new materials that they will be able to use.

1. Show a few "I feel" cards and ask them what they think the child is feeling. Ask the children to pretend they are having that feeling and show it with their faces.
2. Then, show them the "I can" cards. These cards show ways to express a feeling, calm down or feel better. Explain a few of the actions and have them act out the actions.
3. Show the children at least one example of how the cards can go together. For example, "When I feel worried, I can ask for help," or, "When I feel proud, I can dance." Invite children to act out the feeling and the action.
4. Preview how the children will be able to use the cards independently. For example, if you place the cards in a specific area during Center Time, let the children know where they will be and how they can use them.

PK.SED.2: Regulates his/her responses to needs, feelings and events.

Critical thinking questions/statements for using *Fun with Feelings* during Center Time

These are questions and prompts that you can use while interacting with children who are using the *Fun with Feelings* cards.

For example, you might say:

- What feeling is this person having? How can you tell?
- Which "I feel" card do you want to talk about/draw about/play with?
- Why do you think you (or another person or character) might feel that way?
- Which "I can" card would you like to try the next time you feel that way?
Tell me about a time when you had that feeling.





Library or Cozy Corner

Place the cards in a basket (or divided into two baskets) in the library or cozy corner. Invite children to look through the cards on their own, mix and match them or use the cards to communicate their feelings to you or their peers throughout the day. Invite children to discuss the feelings shown on cards as they read.

PK.SED.1: Recognizes himself/herself as a unique individual having his/her own abilities, characteristics, feelings and interests.

Art Area

Assist children in choosing a few cards to display in the art area. These can be “I feel” cards, “I can” cards or pairs of cards. Invite children to paint, draw or use another medium to express their responses to the cards.

PK.CKW.1 (Visual Arts): Expresses oneself and represents what he/she knows, thinks, believes and feels through visual arts.

Writing Area

Place the “I feel” cards in one basket and the “I can” cards in another. Encourage children to choose one card from each basket and use the two cards to write/draw a story. As children are ready, prompt them to imagine more details.

For example, you might say:

- What happened to make the character feel that way? How did the other person/character feel? What happened after the person did the action on the “I can” card? What does that look like?

As additional feelings or actions come up, add the new words and pictures to the appropriate blank cards.

PK.CLL.3 (Writing): With prompting and support, use a combination of drawing, dictating, or writing to narrate a single event and provide a reaction to what happened.





Block/Construction Area or Math/Manipulatives

Place the cards in a basket (or divided into two baskets) in the block/construction area or math/manipulatives area. Demonstrate how to build with the cards to make structures. As children use the cards, describe their actions and the cards as appropriate.

For example, you might say:

- You are putting this orange card together with this purple card. I notice that the girl on this card looks excited.

PK.PDH.5: Demonstrates eye-hand coordination and dexterity needed to manipulate objects.



Notes for Planning



Ideas to Boost Your Rollout Efforts



Foster a Shared Vision

Provide time for teachers and program staff to collaboratively discuss their vision for a *Fun with Feelings* event, choose the option that fits best for your program, and prep for the event.

- Consider inviting some families to partner in planning the event.
- Consider requesting staff input on what they need to make the event successful (e.g., collective and independent prep time, materials, administrative support).
- Encourage teachers or program staff to put their own personal touches on the invitation or facilitate a classroom activity in which children draw pictures or address the invitation to their families.
- Recognize teachers and program staff who are involved with *Fun with Feelings* rollout in faculty meetings or other venues to acknowledge this extra effort in alignment with your program's vision for family engagement.

PQS 12a: Leaders foster a shared vision with and among program staff and families.

Promote Two-way Communication

Use *Fun with Feelings* to enhance two-way communication during or after the event.

- For example, encourage families to share (e.g., in person, by phone or text) how they're using the cards at home, goals they have set related to their children's SEL skills or any questions that may have come up for them while using the cards at home.
- Encourage program staff to follow up with families (e.g., in person, by phone or text) about their experiences with the cards at home and express their willingness to answer families' questions and provide additional support. Consider asking what additional time staff might need to do this.
- Ask teachers to share feedback with families regarding children's SEL skills from their authentic assessment system, including observed strengths and opportunities for growth. Where relevant, encourage teachers and families to use the *Fun with Feelings* cards to support skill building.

PQS 2d: Teachers and staff frequently provide families with positive and constructive feedback.





Create Opportunities for Feedback from Families

Use a survey to invite families to share feedback about the event or ask for additional support (with the option to share responses verbally and privately). You can use these surveys to improve similar events in the future.

Questions/items on the survey can include:

- Today's event was interesting/fun/helpful.
- My comments and opinions were welcomed and respected today.
- I am ready to try the *Fun with Feelings* cards at home with my child.
- I would like my child's teacher [family support staff] to follow up with me on the material that was shared today.
- What did you enjoy most/least about today's event?
- Please share any comments or questions you have about today's event.

PQS 3.2a: The program creates effective opportunities for families to provide feedback on various aspects of program quality.



Notes for Planning

FOOTNOTE

For staff or families who are interested in learning more about the impact of social emotional learning, refer to the following resources:

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning www.casel.org

Emotional Intelligence in the First Five Years of Life. [*Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development* \(2011\).](#)

Social and Emotional Learning in Schools: From Programs to Strategies. [*Society for Research in Child Development, Social Policy Report* \(2012\).](#)

