

How to create a happiness bucket with your children

Encourage the children in your care to become more aware of their emotions and what makes them feel happy by implementing a happiness bucket with this guide.

Learning aims

- Become aware of their emotions and what makes them feel happy
- Begin to understand what makes them feel relaxed and what being relaxed feels like in their bodies
- Promote awareness of others' feelings and begin to build empathy by supporting other children to fill up their happiness bucket.



Resources

- Bucket
- Camera
- Resources/images/photos
- Music
- Cushions/blankets
- Books
- Mirrors.

Activity outline

1. Talk to the children about different emotions
2. Ask them to show you different faces (use mirrors so the children can see themselves)
3. Share images/stories that reinforce this. There are some 'fill a bucket' stories available online too
4. Choose a story that includes a character that is really happy about something
5. Ask the children what makes them happy
6. Either provide each child with a bucket/container, have one big bucket for the room or ask the children to have an imaginary bucket, and ask them to fill this with all the things that make them happy
7. If you use a 'real' bucket or container encourage the children to find resources or take photos of what makes them happy and smile
8. Explain to them that they could also add imaginary items to the bucket. For example, blow a kiss, send a hug, smile, be kind, help one another and look after things. These are things that often make people feel happy – that's why an imaginary bucket may work better
9. Ask them how it feels when they see their friends/family smiling – does it make them smile too? If someone feels sad ask them how they could cheer them up? Would the items in their bucket/container help to cheer them up? Why? What could they add to each other's buckets to make them feel happy? How would they feel if someone's bucket was empty? How could they help them to fill it up?
10. Play some music, either the children's favourite songs or something relaxing and observe what the children do. Talk about how it makes them feel and what happens to their bodies.

Extending the activity

- Share babies' and younger children's happy and joyful experiences by joining in with their excitement. Acknowledging and naming emotions will help them to understand them. Reinforce using mirrors and stories
- Ask the children and their parents to create their own happiness bucket at home and share photos of what they have included.