

Lacks Confidence in Their Own Abilities

(The Powerful Positive Attitude)

Children who lack confidence in their own abilities need to be encouraged to have a positive attitude toward themselves, others, and school. It is vital that they are taught the necessity of having a positive attitude in order to succeed. Having a positive attitude is sometimes difficult, but it is important to have one to be a successful student. Individuals can develop a positive attitude by implementing positive talk, positive body language, and positive actions.

1. Positive Talk

Explain euphemisms. A *euphemism* is a less-direct word or phrase for one considered offensive. In other words, it is changing the negative to the positive. By using euphemisms, your child will learn that a positive side exists in all situations. Discuss with your child why they prefer bread that is “fresh from yesterday” over “day old.” With your child, complete the following worksheet.

✎ **Using Euphemisms:** Rewrite the negative sentences in a more positive way.

1. My sister is a pest.

2. I don't like practicing the piano.

3. My room is an ugly color.

4. I'm so stupid. I'll never get the grades my brother does.

5. I had a horrible day because I got yelled at.

6. My friend Sally hates me because she wouldn't come over.

7. Math is my worst subject. I won't ever understand it.

Read *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. Have your child identify positive things that happened to Alexander and write them down. (Suggestions: If Mrs. Gibson's car got broadsided, he would most likely suffer fewer injuries than Becky and Audrey, or Alexander's lunch is lower in fat than his friends' lunches.) This will help your child learn to identify positive experiences in his own life.

2. Positive Body Language

Explain that we can usually tell how people are feeling by looking at their body language. The way that people sit, walk, hold their heads, and make facial expressions shows how they are feeling and thinking.

Have your child complete the "How Do I Feel Today?" worksheet. This will help your child realize that facial expressions are a powerful tool in conveying attitudes.

Explain to your child that how he communicates with his body affects the way others (including friends, family, and teachers) respect him.

Communication with others is about 58 percent nonverbal, 35 percent verbal, and 7 percent content (the meaning of words). Discuss with your child the importance of body language and then review the following information together.

How Do I Feel Today?

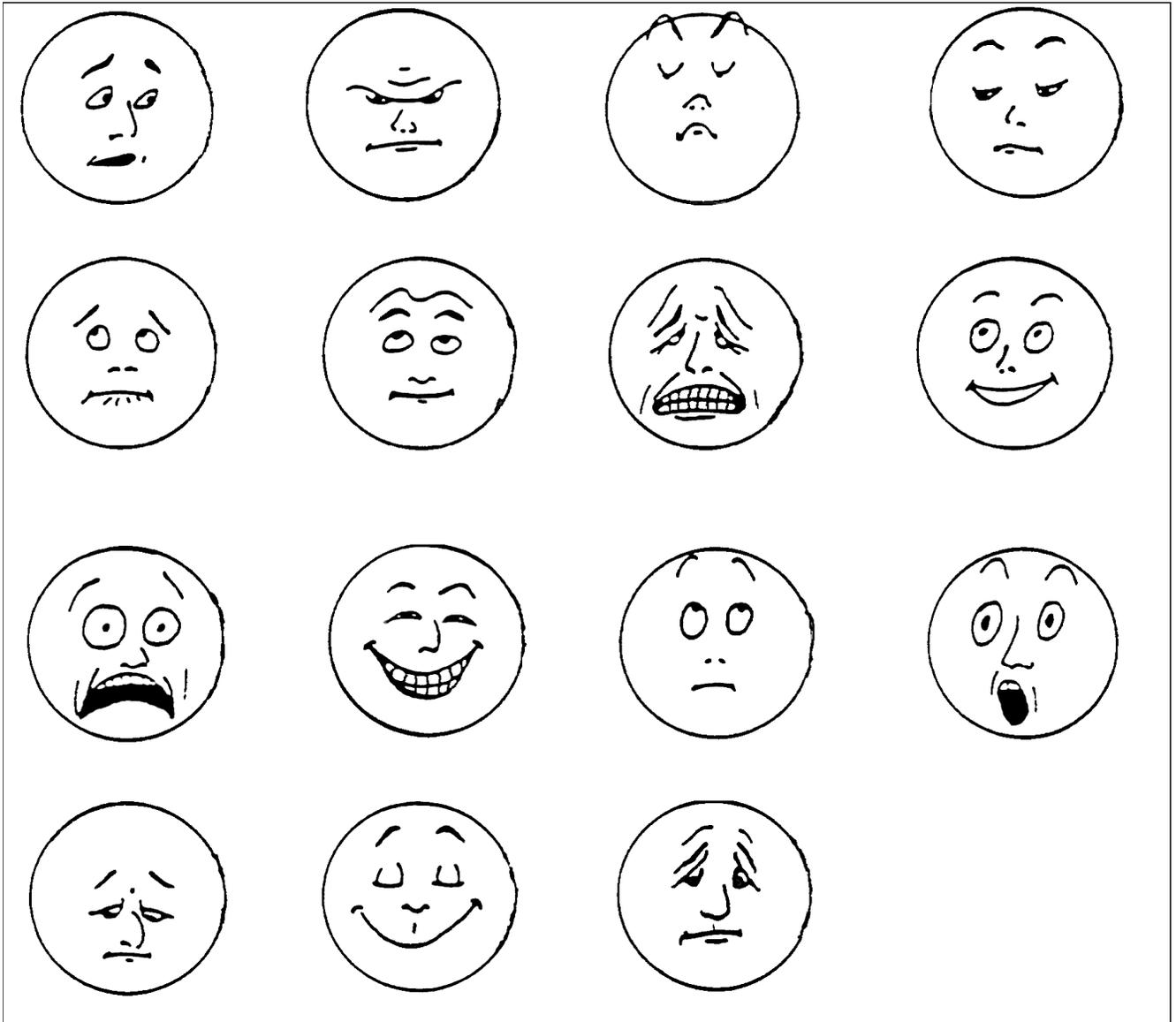
My facial expression tells others how I feel. Find the correct emotion for each face and write it on the line below each face.

surprised
ecstatic
anxious
confident

sympathetic
innocent
guilty
thoughtful

negative
curious
optimistic
lonely

frightened
arrogant
agonized



☞ **Nonverbal and Verbal Communication**

When you communicate, it is important that your verbal and nonverbal messages match. You can develop greater communication skills by observing your own behavior when you deal with others. You can look for:

☞ **Eye Contact**

Looking directly at the person when you are speaking is an effective way to say that you are sincere.

☞ **Body Posture**

The “weight” behind what you are saying to others will increase if you face the person directly, stand or sit at an appropriate distance, lean toward the person, and hold your head erect.

☞ **Gestures**

You can emphasize your message with gestures, letting people know it is important that they understand what you are trying to say.

☞ **Facial Expression**

When you are sharing good news, smile! When you are angry, your face shows genuine emotion. It is important that your facial expressions match the message.

☞ **Voice Tone, Inflection, Volume**

If you are sharing a secret, whisper. If you are speaking to an audience, speak loud enough for them to hear you. If you are asking a favor, do not shout or speak curtly, or that person may become defensive. The sound of your voice is just as important as the words you are saying.

☞ **Content**

What you say is obviously important. How you say it, however, may be more important. You do not have to put someone down to express your feelings.

☞ **“Body Talk” Gam**

Play the body talk game together. Pass out pieces of paper with “attitudes” on them (i.e., bored, excited, shy, annoyed, eager, etc.). Have your child act out his or her attitude while you guess and then change roles. This will reinforce the fact that attitudes are communicated through body language.

3. Positive Actions

Explain that getting along with teachers (as well as others) is as important as getting along with friends; therefore, it is critical that students take responsibility for their classroom attitude. If children show they are interested in learning, their teachers will appreciate their positive attitude and recognize their desire to be successful students.

Give your child the following ten suggestions to help him get along with his teachers.

1. Keep eye contact.
2. Sit up straight.
3. Ignore distractions around you.
4. Take good notes.
5. Ask questions.
6. Smile once in a while.
7. Say good-bye as you leave class.
8. Come to class a few minutes early each day.
9. Go to extra study and review sessions.
10. Get a front row seat.

Positive Actions

Numbered below are some of the friendship skills you display to let your friends know you are interested in them and what they have to say. Also listed below (by letter) are things you can do in your classroom to let your teachers know you are paying attention and that what they have to say is important to you. Read through each list and match the skills you could use with your friends to the similar skills you could use with your teachers by placing the correct letter next to the numbered skill.

Things I do for my friends...

- ___ 1. I sit near my friends in class.

___ 2. When Billy is talking to me, I look at him so he knows I'm paying attention.

___ 3. My friend always has the best stories to tell, but sometimes I don't understand what she's saying and I have to ask her what she means.

___ 4. When my friends have birthday parties or want to go to the movies, I like to go so they know they are my friends and I like to be with them.

___ 5. My friends and I have math class together every day, but I come a little early so we can talk.

___ 6. Tom and I always say "See ya later alligator" when we have to go home.

___ 7. My friends help me to be happy most of the time, so when I'm near them I smile so they can see that I'm glad when they're here.

___ 8. Beth is my funniest friend. She makes jokes all the time. I write down the ones I like so I won't forget them.

___ 9. When Josh and I talk, he says he knows I'm paying attention when I sit up instead of putting my head on my desk.

___ 10. While I'm talking to Ashley on the phone, I don't watch television.

Things I can do for my teachers...

- A. Get a front row seat.
- B. Ask questions.
- C. Come to class a few minutes early each day.
- D. Sit up straight.
- E. Go to extra study and review sessions.
- F. Keep eye contact.
- G. Take good notes.
- H. Say goodbye as you leave class.
- I. Smile once in a while.
- J. Ignore distractions around you.

Ten Ways to Succeed in the Classroom

You must be able to distinguish between actions that will help you succeed and actions that will hinder your performance. Positive actions are the only actions that will help you. Without looking back at the list on the previous page, list the ten positive actions you just learned.

Ask your child to practice being positive for one week. Suggest that she use euphemisms and positive metaphors, work on body language, or choose one area where she can change her classroom attitude. Have her use the following chart to record her progress.

Being Positive

Choose an area to be positive in for five school days. You may use euphemisms, work on your body language, or choose an area in which you can improve your relationship with your teacher. Write down what you are going to do. Each day you are to keep track of the things you did to improve. Indicate at the end of each day how well you feel you met your goal of being positive in the area you chose.

Date for Day 1: _____

What I did today: _____

How I did today: _____

Date for Day 2: _____

What I did today: _____

How I did today: _____

Date for Day 3: _____

What I did today: _____

How I did today: _____

Date for Day 4: _____

What I did today: _____

How I did today: _____

Date for Day 5: _____

What I did today: _____

How I did today: _____

Taking Responsibility for Your Classroom Attitude

Taking responsibility for how you act is what this worksheet is all about. Read each situation. Each situation could be improved if you took responsibility for your attitude. Write what you think would be a better way to act.

1. Joe bothers Lavonna in class by talking to her. Lavonna doesn't answer. Mr. Sheen says, "Lavonna, see me after class." Lavonna says, "I wasn't talking. Joe

was.”

2. Dana hates French class. She sits in the last row, cleans out her purse, and often is a page or two behind in her book.

3. Matt’s English teacher has just finished a review of all the parts of speech. He did the review quickly because his class has a test tomorrow. Matt doesn’t understand prepositions. He says to his English teacher, “This is impossible. It’s just too hard.”

4. You didn’t do your homework because you went to a ball game instead. Your teacher has just asked you about it. What do you say?

5. You feel your teacher has insulted you. You are embarrassed, hurt, and angry. What can you do?

At Home

A positive attitude is also important to have outside of the classroom. When your child is discouraged or saying negative things, especially about her own abilities, encourage her to practice one or more of the skills you just discussed. Have her create euphemisms for her abilities by seeing things with a more positive outlook. Remind your child that she has the choice of what she will believe about herself and what she will tell herself about her abilities. Encourage her to continuously look for the positive in herself, in others, as well as different situations. Over time, this can become a fine-tuned skill that will serve her everywhere she goes.