



The Emotions Parking Lot Explained

 Video Capsule 	Rationale: The EMOTIONS PARKING LOT was created as an invitation to PLAY WITH EMOTIONS. Most children have a limited language of emotions. Although they are driven by their emotions, they have little understanding of them and struggle to name and express what they are feeling. It is most often what they do when they are filled with their big emotions that gets them into trouble. The main message we want to convey is that having different emotions is perfectly normal. We often feel more than 1 at a time. It's WHAT WE DO when we are filled with emotions that we want to address. The objective is to help the emotional energy to come out, without getting into trouble. Also, different types of activities help us get our energy out. We need to try different things to see what works best for us! This is a game that is best 'left out' on display as it provides an invitation to approach and engage with.	
Benefits: • Providing a fun and engaging way to explore emotions • Normalizing emotions • Offering a variety of outlets to release pent-up energy • Exploring which outlet works best for the child	Resources: • How to make • Emotion card En • Emotion cards Fr • Tools to help EN • Tools to help FR	This game requires: • a board game which simulates cars parked in a parking lot • emotion cards with labels identifying each emotion • activity cards to help prime ideas and discussion when asking "in which way would you like to get some of this emotional energy out?" • miniature cars
Caution: For some children – naming and relating to emotions will be a fairly new experience. They will feel differing levels of vulnerability. It will be key for the adult to read the signs of exceeding what the child is able to tolerate when naming and talking about emotions. Proceeding slowly and in small increments is often the safest route on an emotional level. Pushing too quickly will most often lead to triggering their defenses and having children come to an immediate halt, refusal to continue or even walking away from the game. It will be essential for the adult to tread slowly, calmly and be very respectful of what the child is able to tolerate on an emotional level. The adult can include their own examples to help prime the game and help transmit the desired energy for the flow of the game. Please note that the use of technology is specifically NOT represented as we want children to tune in to their bodies, to be in contact with others. We know that children most often use technology on a daily basis, however this is not our venue of intervention in the NSCs.		



Emotion cards:

A wide range of EMOTION CARDS are provided in this game. As each card is labeled, this provides a support to children who are readers.

Children may find that some photographs can also represent a different emotion – please make space and show openness for their interpretation as it is possible to read facial emotional cues differently.

Photographs with children of different ages, gender and nationality have been included in hope that each child can feel a sense of familiarity amongst the different cards.



Activity cards:

A wide range of ACTIVITY CARDS are provided in this game. You will notice that there are different categories of activity cards: sensory, tactile, auditory, visual. Certain cards are individual quiet activities. Some are physical exercises and others are creative art or outdoor activities.

Some of the cards will require that you have certain materials available within you NSC:

- Bubble wrap to stomp on or to pop bubbles.
- Cardboard to tear.
- Large drawing paper, markers to draw with.
- Coloring sheets, mandalas, Search'N find activity sheets.
- Puzzle to assemble.
- Fine-motor craft materials to create small crafts.
- Gym mat with physical action cards. Etc.

They are examples and ideas. However, they are by no means meant to be exhaustive. Encourage children to try new activities and experiences. Solicit their feedback on how this has been helpful, or not, for them. Would they like to do “x” again?

If a child shares that they benefit from doing something else, please create this new card and add it to your game. Children sometimes make wonderful additions that we the adults had not thought of!

Playing tips:

This is a game that is best ‘left out’ on display as it provides an invitation to approach and engage with. When STARTING TO PLAY with the Emotions Parking Lot, begin with laying out the emotion cards, pointing to and naming different cards. Provide examples of ‘WHAT you felt’ when ‘X happened’. Encourage them to repeat this step with the same cards or to select other cards that speak to them.

Model by speaking to the energy felt in your own body when experiencing a certain emotion and reflect this back to the child’s emotional experience – ex. stomping energy when very frustrated, needing to be quiet when feeling sad.

Bring the discussion to different activities that help the child get their energy out. Work through the charge of energy in their body. For example:

- When feeling nervous about a task – physical activity to help get the “jitters” out.
- When frustrated and upset with a peer (feeling tension in the upper body) – physical activity to get this energy out without getting oneself into trouble.
- When missing a parent and feeling lonely – writing a note to their parent, drawing a picture for them, looking at vacation photos.

As you end the game, model with the child how you wish for the clean-up to unfold. Thank them for sharing with you and express that you have appreciated getting to know them better.