

Making Neuroscience Fun



A Brain Awareness Program for All Ages
It's SPECtacular!

Story General Information

What is Your Face Doing? (🧠 An Emotional Health Story) (Pre-Kindergarten – 4-5 yrs.)

This story talks about emotions and how the brain and face allow emotions to be shared with others.

- 🧠 You “feel” different things depending on what is going on inside and outside of your body. These “feelings” are emotions.
- 🧠 All animals have some emotions – and people are animals. Animals share these emotions with their faces.
- 🧠 The reason our faces show how we are feeling is so others know how we are feeling. Sometimes that is important for the survival of animals.
- 🧠 Our brain lets us “show” how we feel by automatically making our faces change the way it looks.

The facilitator begins by introducing themselves, neuroscience, and the program: Brain Health: It's SPECtacular. The facilitator breaks down the meaning of SPEC for the children and discusses how the letter **E** represents Emotional Health. Emotional Health is an important part of keeping the brain healthy and happy. In this story, the children learn about keeping their brain healthy through identifying how the body shows emotions and understanding those emotions.

First, the facilitator poses the two overarching questions: “How and why does your face show emotions that you are feeling?” Through answering questions and identifying different feelings and emotions, the children practice inferencing and reasoning skills.

The facilitator defines “emotions” and “feelings.” They discuss the importance of the body showing emotions on the face. If the face never shows emotions, others would have no idea how someone feels.

Throughout this story, the facilitator shares different visual images. The children describe what they see and how that person or animal might be feeling. The images portray six major emotions (happy, sad, angry, disgusted, afraid, surprised). The children identify specific cues that signify a particular emotion, such as a smile means happy and crying means sad. Together, they brainstorm what might cause a person or animal to feel these emotions. This allows the children to practice describing cause and effect relationships and to personally connect to the emotions being discussed.

To conclude the story, the facilitator shares that the brain allows the body to show emotions automatically. The body reacts naturally and instinctively when an emotion is felt. If someone loves puppies and sees a whole basket of them, they will automatically smile. If someone sees a snake on their front porch, their eyes might get wide and their mouth drop open in fear.

Showing emotions on a face is communicating without talking. It allows people and animals to identify feelings of others around them. Emotions are an important part of being healthy. Feeling emotions is even more important to a healthy brain!

Story Objectives:

- Students will define emotions and feelings in simple terms.
- Students will use facial clues to determine and identify six common emotions (happy, sad, angry, disgust, scared, surprise).
- Students will describe scenarios that trigger a certain emotion in animals, others, and themselves.
- Students will identify the brain tells the face what emotion to show (automatic).