

MINOT INFANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

Young children experience emotions with their **whole bodies**. Often, before they have the words to explain what's happening inside. When big feelings show up, children **rely on the adults around them to help make sense of those moments**. This month, we're focusing on how everyday interactions help children learn that feelings are manageable & that they're not alone as they navigate them.

Understanding Emotions

Children's ability to understand & manage emotions develops *gradually*:

- **0 to 12 months:** Babies experience emotions but can't regulate them alone... they need your calm presence
- **12 to 24 months:** Toddlers begin to recognize emotions in others & may try to comfort someone sad
- **24 to 36 months:** Children start to name their own feelings or use words like "mad" or "happy" with your support

Big feelings can be overwhelming at this age. Your patient, consistent responses teach children that emotions are manageable & that you're there to help. *If your child isn't where they're "supposed" to be yet, that's okay.*



Try This At Home

During daily routines, **pause** to label emotions you notice – both your child's & your own.

Use **simple** language: "I see you're feeling sad that playtime is over" or "I feel tired right now."

Acknowledge the feeling **before** offering solutions: "You're really angry. It's hard when we can't have what we want."

Model your own emotions: "I'm feeling frustrated that I spilled the milk. I'm going to take a deep breath."

REMEMBER: All feelings are okay, even the uncomfortable ones. It's what we do with those feelings that matters.

Pyramid Model Spotlight

The Pyramid Model emphasizes teaching social-emotional skills in **everyday moments**.

When we help young children identify emotions & give them words for what they're feeling, we're building a strong foundation for **regulation, communication, & positive relationships**.

OPTIONAL RESOURCE: The Pyramid Model [website](#) has "[Feeling Faces](#)" cards you can use at home.

Tip of the Month: Name Feelings as They Happen

Statements like "You look frustrated" or "That made you feel happy" give them words for what they are experiencing.

The more often children hear feelings named in the moment, the better they become at recognizing them in themselves & others.

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Feelings Check-Ins

Build emotion awareness into transitions throughout your day until they feel natural:

Morning: "How are you feeling this morning? I'm feeling sleepy but happy to see you!"

Before meals: "Are you feeling hungry? Your tummy might feel empty."

After play: "You're smiling so big! That was fun, wasn't it?"

Bedtime: "You look calm & cozy. Is your body feeling ready for sleep?"

These small check-ins teach children to notice their internal states & help you understand their needs better.

Book Ideas for Feelings

[Making Faces](#) by Abrams Appleseed

[How Do You Feel](#) by Lizzy Rockwell

[My First Book of Emotions](#) by Orlena Kerek

[Duck & Goose: How Are You Feeling?](#) by Tad Hills

[The Color Monster](#) by Anna Llenas

[Baby Happy Baby Sad](#) by Leslie Patricelli

[Calm Down Time](#) by Elizabeth Verdick

[Little Monkey Calms Down](#) by Michael Dahl

[No More Tantrums](#) by Maria van Lieshout

[When Sophie Gets Angry, Really Really Angry](#) by Molly Bang

Resource Corner

The "[Anger Iceberg](#)" handout helps us understand that anger often covers other emotions like fear, sadness, or frustration.

This [handout](#) from [challengingbehavior.org](#) has some great activities to teach your child about emotions.

The [Feeling Wheel](#) assists children with understanding their feelings and the feelings of others.

