



The Moodsters' Guidelines For Grown-ups™:

Give children the gift of emotional
well-being

THE
Moodsters
..... Children's Foundation

The Moodsters' Guidelines For Grown-ups™:

Give children the gift of emotional well-being.

Emotions are the cornerstone of children's well-being. And today, when the lives of young children have been upended—by the pandemic, social media and bullying, grief, loneliness, learning loss and anxiety—children need age-appropriate emotional coping skills more than ever.

The Moodsters Children's Foundation has been providing accessible science-based content on emotions for young children, their caregivers, and educators for more than 35 years.

This brochure is for the grown-ups who love and care for children from preschool up to second grade.

It offers a look at how the evidence-based Moodsters characters can help children learn to identify, understand, and manage such big emotions as sadness, loneliness, fear, and anxiety, utilizing simple strategies that can help put them on a path toward emotional well-being.



The Moodsters: rooted in science, created for kids

Denise Daniels, RN, MS created the award-winning Moodsters in order to meet the emotional needs of young children growing up in a complex world.



The Moodsters are six engaging characters who represent children’s primary emotions: happiness, sadness, fear, love, anger, and calm.

The Moodsters’ expressions, colors, tonality, and gestures are informed by research and testing across socioeconomic backgrounds at the **Yale Child Study Center**—where they received a whopping 92% efficacy rating.

The Moodsters’ proprietary curriculum was developed with **Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence** directors Marc Brackett, PhD, and Robin Stern, PhD, and aligns closely with Dr. Brackett’s RULER Method—in which kids learn to **R**ecognize, **U**nderstand, **L**abel, **E**xpress, and **R**egulate their emotions.

The Moodsters’ advisor, the late renowned neuroscientist Candace Pert, PhD, noted that “The Moodsters can teach children to control their own brain chemistries.” In other words, children can learn to be the boss of their own emotions!

Denise and The Moodsters have traveled the world—to Sri Lanka after the tsunami, to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, to New York after 9/11— to help children work through grief and loss. When the pandemic upended lives across the globe, The Moodsters and Scholastic published a kid-friendly workbook to help children cope.

Young children have serious emotions, too

When we talk about topics like anxiety, fear, sadness, loneliness and grief, we usually think in terms of adults or teenagers. But children as young as preschoolers are vulnerable to these emotions, too—particularly in unsettled times. The statistics* are staggering.

- Mental health is the number-one issue facing American children today.
- Self-harm among children is up 333%
- Nearly 10% of children ages 0 to 17 have anxiety (a 29% increase since 2016).
- ER visits for mental-health related issues skyrocketed: up to 24% for 5-11-year olds
- The key to addressing and treating anxiety is to catch it as soon as possible. If your child has fears and worries that interfere with school, home, or play, please seek help from a mental health professional.

*SOURCES: Centers for Disease Control, American Psychological Association, JAMA Pediatrics





“How can I tell what my child is going through?”

Children can't always articulate what they're feeling—often, they don't know themselves. Here are some behaviors to look for that can alert you to any worries, sadness, anxiety, or fear they may be experiencing:

- Loss of appetite
- Separation anxiety
- Regressive behavior (reverting to the behaviors of a toddler or even a baby)
- Loss of interest in their usual activities
- Development of new fears, such as separation from parents or going to school
- Expressing worries that bad things are going to happen
- Irritability or lashing out in anger
- Physical symptoms may include a rapid heartrate, rapid breathing, stomach aches, headaches

How parents can help

- Be a role model for expressing emotions.
- Teach children a vocabulary for their emotions so they can identify the feelings they are experiencing.
- Read together and talk about what the characters in the story might be feeling.
- Create a safe, non-judgmental environment where kids can share thoughts and feelings.
- Validate those feelings and empathize. Don't minimize their emotions or tell them how they should feel.
- Allow them to worry. Reassure them that worries are normal and can even help protect them from danger.
- Identify the triggers that are causing them to worry.
- Together make a checklist of things they can do to calm down when they feel anxious, such as:
 - Use belly breathing
 - Express emotions through conversation and play, music, movement, and drawing pictures.
 - Use role play to explore how they can respond in different situations.
 - Meditate (you can teach them how).
 - Build confidence!



How the Moodsters can help

Each Moodster character represents a key emotion such as sadness or happiness, but they are all capable of feeling a range of emotions—just like us.

In this way, the characters demonstrate to young children that we all have a variety of emotions, and that it's perfectly normal to feel upset, sad, lonely, angry at times.

We'll focus on the three Moodsters who represent the powerful emotions that are of most concern to us in these challenging times: sadness, fear, and anger.

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Snorf



The tenderhearted, melancholy Moodster can often be found in a puddle of tears. But Snorf knows that all feelings are important—and that managing emotions helps you tackle any challenges.

What to do when you're sad: Cry (that's a healthy thing to do)! Read a book or watch a video that makes you laugh. Do something nice for someone else—that makes you feel good, too!

Quigly



Quigly is afraid of his own shadow—and everyone else's! But he tells himself, "When things go wrong and you tremble with fear, tell yourself to be brave and your courage will appear!"

What to do when you're scared: Snuggle up with a loved one (this could even be a stuffed animal). Picture yourself in a place where you feel strong and happy.

Talk to yourself: "I'm brave!"

Razzy



This little red dynamo is also a fierce and ferocious friend. Her emotions run hot, but sharing her frustrations with the other Moodsters helps her calm down.

What to do when you're mad: Take deep breaths. Count to 10 slowly. Run around outside to let out that energy!

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For more information

Visit **themoodsterschildrensfoundation.com** for a variety of helpful resources, downloadable for free!

The Moodsters give children the emotional building blocks to help them be successful at home, in school, on the playground, and in life!

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