

Scripted Stories

Scripted stories are a great way to help child learn and strengthen social-emotional skills.

What they are: Scripted stories are short stories that teach a specific social-emotional skill.

How to make one: While it might sound intimidating, it is very easy to make a scripted story. Once you have an idea of which skill you would like to focus on, all you need to do is write a sentence or two per page. The sentences should describe the behavior you want to see, and describe clearly what the child needs to do in order to master the skill. The best scripted stories are brief and to the point. You want to stay away from cluttering the pages with too many words. Putting a child's name or photo into the story helps make it more personal, and attracts the child's interest.

Examples of how to use a scripted story: Reviewing the scripted story multiple times helps children master the concepts presented. It is important to leave the story in a place where the child can access it. While reading the story, you can have the child rehearse the skills playfully. You might stop and role play with your child or use puppet/stuffed animals to practice the skills.

Scripted Story Example and Review: The scripted story Sometimes I feel... was created to help children learn about basic feelings and situations that might make them feel a certain way, learn that all feelings are okay, and some basic skills they could use to calm down when feeling sad or angry. Because young children live in the moment, they can become overwhelmed by "big" feelings very quickly. When a child is feeling upset, they tend to lose sight that the feeling will go away. By reading stories like, Sometimes I feel... children learn that it is normal to experience a range of emotions and there are things they could do to help their bodies feel calm again when overwhelmed by those big feelings.

While reading Sometimes I feel... with your child you can pause and practice the calming strategies. It can be fun to see if you and your child can think of any other calming strategies.

Remind your child that practicing these strategies will help him or her learn how to calm down when they are sad or angry. During daily conversations, talk about feelings that arise and highlight strategies used to cope with big feelings. Children learn by watching and copying important people in their live. Be a role model.

When children are overwhelmed by big feelings you can gently coach them to use the strategies reviewed in the story. Remember to provide your child with genuine specific praise when you see them using the strategies to calm down.

The visuals included in this story came from the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), Boardmaker®, and Google images.



Created by Jola Borto, PsyD
Early Childhood Consultant
Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP®)
Child Guidance Center of Mid-Fairfield County