

# Ohio Registry of Effective Practices

## Mr. Emotions & Friends

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**School District:** Norwood City School District

**Partnering Agencies:** Family and Children First Council, Live It Like You Mean It

**Contact Person and Contact Information:**

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**Available for Program Consultation:** Yes

**Available for Presentations/Workshops:** Yes

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## General Program Overview:



Mr. Emotions & Friends is a series of ten interactive 45-minute workshops designed for children in Pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade (children 4-9 years old). The purpose of the Mr. Emotions & Friends program is to teach children appropriate positive coping skills, social skills, empathy skills, and non-violent life skills to handle their day-to-day challenges, in addition to providing them with the opportunity to practice their newly learned skills. During the workshops, the children enjoy a puppet demonstration, song, and activity related to the key social/coping/empathy/life skill concept of that day. Some specific examples of what the students

learn is that every individual is important, how to use words to solve problems instead of using physical means (e.g., hitting), how to wait, stop and think about the potential results of their actions before making a choice, and that each person is a leader of themselves and in charge of their actions. During the program, the topic of high school graduation is discussed. The children learn that as a good leader of themselves, it is important that they graduate from high school. Additionally, children learn to celebrate that each person is different and that everyone is part of the world's family.

**The seven key concepts that are taught during the ten workshops are:**

**ONE: I AM IMPORTANT**

This concept helps children build a greater sense of self-worth and self-esteem.

## **TWO: I USE WORDS THAT HELP**

This concept teaches children to use their words (how to effectively communicate verbally) when faced with difficulties instead of using their hands (for hitting or pushing).

## **THREE: WAIT! STOP TO THINK**

This concept teaches children about self-control.

## **FOUR: I CAN MAKE GOOD CHOICES**

This concept teaches children about the impact their decisions have on their own experiences, and how good decisions will lead to good outcomes and bad decisions will lead to less positive outcomes.

## **FIVE: I AM A LEADER OF ME**

This builds upon the concept I CAN MAKE GOOD CHOICES to show children that they are in charge of their actions and decisions.

## **SIX: BE KIND. WE ARE IN THE WORLD'S FAMILY**

This concept teaches children that we all have feelings and want to be treated with kindness. Therefore, it is best to treat others with kindness, the way we would like to be treated.

## **SEVEN: I AM IN CHARGE OF MY LIFE STORY**

This concept teaches children that, ultimately, they have the biggest impact on their overall life experience with the short term and long term choices they make.

The program uses a wide range of activities to teach these skills. Some lessons are taught through books and movies while others are taught in a lecture format. These lessons are then reinforced using educational games like ICAN DO Bingo and Jeopardy. The program also utilizes role plays, which allow the children to brainstorm and then act out different ways to solve different problems. No matter what the lesson, active participation and discussion are a major part of getting the children involved and excited about learning how to solve problems.

## **Student Data:**



At the beginning of the first Mr. Emotions & Friends workshop, students are given a pre-test questionnaire. Pre-literate students are given a set of four pictures, and are asked to circle which picture they think is the best choice. Students who can read are given a sentence (non-picture) version of the pre-test which involves choosing the best word from the word bank to complete each sentence. At the conclusion of the workshop series, the students are given an identical post-test questionnaire.

Currently, results from the first four years of implementing the Mr. Emotions & Friends program are available. On the pre-test, students identified the correct answers 62% of the time. After receiving the program, students identified the correct answers 97% of the time, with 91% receiving perfect scores on the post-test. Results from each individual year can be viewed below.

Chart 1

<i>YEAR</i>	<i># KIDS</i>	<i>Pre-test %</i>	<i>Post-test %</i>	<i>% Perfect Score (post-test)</i>
2006	99 (2 classes)	54%	98%	94%
2007	244 (9 classes)	66%	97%	90%
2008	294 (12 classes)	69%	97%	93%
2009	96 (5 classes)	60%	98%	89%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>733 (28 classes)</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>91%</b>

Summaries of each classroom's results, outlining student improvement on the questionnaires and observations of significant events that may have occurred during the workshop series (e.g., Johnny stopped pushing during group because he said he tries to wait, stop and think now; or Sara said "I'm using my words, please move," rather than shoving another student off the carpet reading area) are provided to the person who requested the Mr. Emotions & Friends program.

Before the school year begins, a target goal is set for each classroom to achieve. Setting a target outcome goal is not only a goal of the Mr. Emotions & Friends creators, but also a requirement set by our largest client (Family and Children First Council). The target outcome for each classroom has been set for 75% of the students to achieve 100% of the correct answers on the post-test. This goal is met the majority of the time. When the goal is not met, LILYMI instructors evaluate the possible causes and address each situation as necessary. For example, over time we have modified various parts of the curriculum to ensure that it is being taught in a logical order that best facilitates learning. In addition to measuring the percent of students achieving 100% on the post-test, the comparison of the pre-test to the post-test results are also tracked. The average pre-test score is 65%. The average post-test score is 97%, which indicates that students do successfully learn and understand the key concepts taught.

In 2009, we implemented a modified and expanded pre-/post- questionnaire for students with six questions that correlate with newly developed teacher and parent surveys that also consist of six questions. The six questions for students, teachers, and parents were carefully chosen to help identify whether behavior changes have taken place in the students as it relates to the key concepts taught in the Mr. Emotions & Friends curriculum. Specifically, the questions are centered on the child's ability to: 1) use words to solve challenges, 2) help others, 3) make good decisions, 4) demonstrate self-confidence, 5) use self-control, and 6) show realization that they are responsible for their actions.

The following are quotes from some of the children who have participated in Mr. Emotions & Friends workshops:

- Mr. Emotions & Friends is handsome and he says don't say mean words like ugly. I love you. Kera, age 7, grade 1.
- I like the three puppets. Asia, age 8, grade 1.
- I like being kind and singing. Tiaire, age 8, grade 2.
- I love to wait, stop and think. Dallis, age 6, grade 1.
- I like to make a good choice and to make good friends. Lia, age 6, kindergarten.
- I like Mr. Emotions because he teaches us sharing and saying nice things to other people. Lakiyon, age 7, grade 2.

### Teacher Data:

In 2009, a teacher survey was developed to increase understanding of the impact of the Mr. Emotions & Friends program from the teacher perspective. To date, four teachers have completed pre- and post-test surveys with a total of 66 students. At the conclusion of the program, teachers reported significant improvement in all six key areas assessed: 1) 34% improvement in communication skills, 2) 23% improvement in empathy skills, 3) 21% improvement in decision-making skills, 4) 19%

improvement in self-confidence, 5) 29% improvement in self-control, and 6) a 25% improvement in ability to recognize personal responsibility.

**Chart 2**

Able to verbally communicate that s/he is mad, frustrated or sad instead of acting out?		Able to demonstrate acts of kindness toward other students (such as helping others without being asked, or not calling someone names)?		Able to demonstrate good decision-making skills and abide by the rules of the classroom?		Displays self-confidence?		Able to control their behaviors [e.g. getting in line in an orderly manner instead of pushing and shoving to try to be first]?		Realizes that s/he is responsible for her/his actions?	
PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
2.52	1.67	2.15	1.65	2.23	1.77	2.32	1.88	2.45	1.75	2.45	1.83
34% improvement		23% improvement		21% improvement		19% improvement		29% improvement		25% improvement	

**ANSWER KEY:** 1 = most of the time, 2 = some of the time, 3 = neither yes or no, 4 = not much, 5 = never

The following quotes are from some of the teachers who have hosted these workshops in their classrooms:

- I love your program because it is real for our students.
- They adore the puppets and songs.
- The children easily relate to the stories you convey.
- I hear the children positively reinforce the key concepts you teach for days after you've visited us with a workshop.
- Diana Morgan, a kindergarten teacher at Sharpsburg Elementary in Norwood, Ohio.

We feel that Mr. E & F contributes to the improvement because of the modeling, vocabulary, and lessons. We feel that the improvement is also due to the reinforcement of the goals and values you teach. Sara Singler, a kindergarten teacher at Sharpsburg Elementary in Norwood, Ohio.

**Parent Data:**

In 2009, a parent survey was developed to increase understanding of the impact of the Mr. Emotions & Friends program from the parental perspective. To date, nineteen parents have completed pre- and post-test surveys. Overwhelming, the parents reported that their children had positive social and coping skills, even at the pre-test. At the conclusion of the program, parents reported significant improvement in four of the six key areas assessed: 1) 14% improvement in empathy skills, 2) 20% improvement in decision-making skills, 3) 11% improvement in self-confidence, and 4) a 34% improvement in ability to recognize personal responsibility. Although two areas (communication skills and self-control) declined, the post-test results still indicated that the students demonstrated these skills "some" or "almost all" of the time.

Chart 3

Is your child able to use words to communicate that they are mad, frustrated or sad, instead of acting out?		Is your child able to demonstrate acts of kindness toward other people (such as helping others without being asked, or not calling someone names?)		Is your child able to demonstrate good decision-making skills and abide by the rules of the household?		Is your child confident in her/himself?		Is your child able to control her/his behaviors (e.g. getting in line in an orderly manner instead of pushing and shoving trying to be first?)		Does your child realize that he/she is responsible for her/his actions?	
PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
1.39	1.68	1.39	1.20	1.61	1.29	1.80	1.61	1.21	1.31	1.42	1.42
21% decline		14% improvement		20% improvement		11% improvement		9% decline		34% improvement	

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## Fidelity:

Mr. Emotions & Friends has a small group of instructors that receive training before each school year. To maintain fidelity, a Mr. Emotions & Friends creator (Glenna or Karen) stops in to observe classrooms throughout the year to ensure the quality of delivered workshop matches how the instructor was trained. Glenna and Karen stay in close contact with instructors throughout the year to review delivery and discuss results from each workshop. In addition, each instructor is given a Leader Checklist tool to keep throughout the year and track their correct implementation of the program. LILYMI keeps a copy of the Leader Checklist. Additionally, all instructors, new or experienced, attend recurrent training at the beginning of each school year.

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## Capacity and Resources:

The idea to develop the program was born on April 25, 2006 after a meeting with Hamilton County Family and Children First Council (FCFC) coordinators where they told Live It Like You Mean It (LILYMI) staff that their schools were lacking quality social and coping skills programs in their Pre-K through 3rd grade classrooms. LILYMI began researching, writing, and preparing the program for the next five months. By October 2006, Mr. Emotions & Friends was being implemented in Kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade classrooms, serving many low-income students. Historically, school staff members or Family and Children First Council (FCFC) coordinators have requested the Mr. Emotions & Friends program, and a trained LILYMI instructor has implemented the Mr. Emotions & Friends program in the classroom.

The standard process is that teachers, counselors, or administrators will inform a coordinator in the school that a social and coping skills program would be beneficial for a group of students (preK-3). The coordinator will seek funds (often grant money) and contact LILYMI about the Mr. Emotions & Friends program. LILYMI utilizes a LILYMI Needs Assessment form to ask the coordinator questions for the purpose of learning more about the school and the classroom(s) needs. LILYMI provides a proposal or outline of the Mr. Emotions & Friends program to the coordinator. If implementation is agreed upon, then LILYMI assigns a trained workshop instructor and the school coordinator sets up workshop times with the teachers for LILYMI to visit the classroom. LILYMI provides information about

the school and classroom(s) with the assigned workshop instructor. LILYMI utilizes a Leader Checklist Tool with the instructor to ensure correct implementation. The Leader Checklist is reviewed at the beginning, middle, and end of the workshop series. LILYMI provides the workshop instructor all the materials necessary for implementation of the program (copies, questionnaires, handouts, puppets, music, and other materials).

LILYMI has recently published the curriculum for Mr. Emotions & Friends and it is now available (at Amazon.com) for purchase for any educator to implement. Educators may purchase a workbook of the 10 Mr. Emotions & Friends workshops and they may request a free copy of the Mr. Emotions & Friends music CD from LILYMI. Teachers may use the information as a resource for activities or they may contact LILYMI to learn how LILYMI implements the program. For schools who request assistance, LILYMI will come to the school and train staff on how to deliver the program.

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## Family Partnerships:

Parents have noted that their children sing the Mr. Emotions & Friends songs at home as well as at school. Overall, parents reported improvements in their children in empathy skills, decision-making skills, self confidence, and an ability to recognize personal responsibility following the Mr. Emotions & Friends workshops.

Mr. Emotions & Friends has received high praise from school teachers, counselors, principals, and Family and Children First Council coordinators. The program has received quotes from school teachers such as: Emotions is an excellent resource for elementary teachers, counselors, and social workers. The lessons are concise and easily delivered. They are simply constructed to meet the developmental needs of students in kindergarten through third grade. Students in our classrooms were able to state the learning concepts months after the program had been initiated. Deb Robison, Family and Children First Coordinator in Norwood, Ohio. Tom Muenchen, a counselor, and Scott Counts, a principal, from Allison Elementary told us that referrals to the office from the classrooms we visited were reduced after students experienced our program.

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## Community Partnerships:

Hamilton County Family and Children First Council played a large role by expressing a need for this type of program and by contracting with Mr. Emotions & Friends once the program was created.

Teachers at Allison Elementary, Sharpsburg Elementary, Frost Elementary, Greener Elementary, Schwab Elementary, Midway Elementary, Rothenberg Preparatory Academy, Rockdale Elementary, and South Avondale Elementary welcomed the program also. From the first workshop forward, many of the teachers mentioned to the instructors that the content was exactly what their students needed. When asked if they wanted Mr. Emotions & Friends to come back the following school year(s), the teachers welcomed the program back. Other agencies that have partnered with Mr. Emotions & Friends include the Urban League, Anderson Preschool, and Cincy After School.

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## Sustainability Plan:

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### Sustainability Plan:

The Mr. Emotions & Friends' plan for sustainability involves several avenues of making the program more accessible to a larger audience of students.

Currently, the first ten workshops of Mr. Emotions & Friends have been published and are available in English worldwide. LILYMI would like to offer annual training for other people (i.e. classroom teachers, mental health staff) who would like to deliver this program at their schools and/or agencies. As curriculum is updated or expanded, the continuous quality improvement is documented and will be reflected in future editions of the curriculum.

Workshop instructors will continue to be required to attend initial (new instructor) and annual recurrent (experienced instructor) training to ensure consistency of program implementation. Many grants require that the programs purchased with grant funds are listed on an effective practice registry. With Mr. Emotions & Friends listed on the Ohio Quality and Effective Practice Registry, more schools and preK-3rd grade students have the opportunity to benefit from the Mr. Emotions & Friends workshops.

We contact new schools on a regular basis to attempt to gain new partners. This year, we have begun new contracts with 4 schools.

LILYMI is considering the addition of a measurement tool for teachers to assess both our instructors and student responses to the key concepts in the classroom. LILYMI is also considering a tool that would track if the students who participate in Mr. Emotions & Friends workshops in preK-3 continue their education and graduate from High School. To increase parent and teacher knowledge and involvement in the program, LILYMI is considering a communication form for new parents and teachers in the program. After the first workshop, parents and teachers may choose to fill out the form with how they would like to be contacted about the progress of the curriculum (e-mail, text, phone). Parents and teachers may choose to be in a parent information exchange group to discuss social & coping skills strategies for young school age children.

LILYMI is committed to the continuing growth of the program in order to help students with their non-academic barriers. With improved coping and social skills, students have an improved opportunity to do well in school. One of the strategies discussed with the students is the importance of graduating

from high school, believing that it is valuable to place that idea in a child's mind at a young age. Mr. Emotions & Friends is determined to help students learn that they can lead their life in a positive direction, [Center for School-Based Mental Health Programs](#).

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