

# STRONG START

**Grades  
K-2**



## **A Social & Emotional Learning Curriculum**

by

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2  
minutes

## Review

To activate prior knowledge, review and discuss previous topics and main ideas. Make sure to provide feedback and refer to the steps of the Stop, Count, In, Out strategy.

### Sample Script

*During our last meeting, we discussed feeling angry. Raise your hand if you can tell me Ways that Help you feel better when you are angry. How about a Way that Hurts?*

2  
minutes

## Introduction

Communicate the lesson's purpose and objectives clearly.

### Sample Script

*Today, we will talk about feeling happy. Everyone feels happy sometimes. It is a good feeling. Today, we will talk about what our bodies and minds feel like when we are happy, and we will also talk about times that made us feel happy. We will think about how we can make ourselves feel happy when we are mad or sad.*

10  
minutes

## Read a Book from the Literature List

Read a book from the following list of examples or choose your own book to share with students.



- *Super Completely and Totally the Messiest* by Judith Viorst
- *I Like Me!* by Nancy Carlson
- *The Secret Remedy Book: A Story of Comfort and Love* by Karin Cates
- *Fun is a Feeling* by Chara M. Curtis
- *Today I Feel Silly & Other Moods That Make My Day* by Jamie Lee Curtis
- *A Bad, Bad Day* by Kirsten Hall

Be sure to point out all of the actions or ways in which the characters behave when they are acting on their feelings. Use the following questions to guide your discussion:

- Which character was happy?
- Do you think it was a good or not good feeling?
- What did the character look like when he or she was happy?
- What did the character do when he or she was happy?

15  
minutes

## Show and Define Happiness



- Use Supplement 5.1 to show children different examples of happy faces.

### Sample Script

*This is happy. Happy is a good feeling. What does happy look like in this picture? Raise your hand if you've ever felt happy. What did your body look or feel like?*

- Have students describe what their bodies felt like when they were happy. Examples include felt comfortable, felt relaxed, and felt energetic.
- Engage in a Think/Pair/Share activity. Have students think about a time when they felt happy. Then, have them turn to their neighbors and share their ideas.
- Reconvene and have two students who are willing share their ideas with the whole group.
- Using a blank overhead transparency or chart paper, have students help you generate a list of synonyms or words that make them think of happiness. Examples include *glad, excited, pleased, joyful, cheerful, content, and delighted*.

15  
minutes

## Positive Thinking

Introduce the concept of Positive Thinking. Consider replacing the term *Positive Thinking* with *Happy Thinking* for younger children who may not understand the concept. As the concept of Positive or Happy Thinking requires a higher level of cognitive thought, it might be helpful to emphasize examples given through animated delivery and movement.

### Sample Script

*Today, we are also going to talk about Positive Thinking. We will learn what this is and how it can help us to feel better when we are sad or mad. Remember, it is always okay to have not good feelings like anger or sadness, but when we use Positive Thinking, we have the feeling that everything is going to be okay. Positive Thinking also helps us to feel better if we are experiencing feelings that are not good. Positive Thinking is like jogging or playing because the more we do it, the healthier we are. We are strong on the inside just as we are strong on the outside. When we don't use Positive Thinking, we might get stuck feeling sad or mad.*

*For example, Henry was not picked to be his teacher's special helper. This gave him feelings that were not good. He thought he'd never be able to be the helper. He was not using Positive Thinking. Instead, if Henry was using Positive Thinking, he would have made himself feel better by remembering that all of the students in the class get to take turns being the teacher's special helper and his turn would come soon.*



Introduce the ABCs of Positive Thinking using Supplement 5.2 as a helpful tool to remember how to achieve positive thinking.



A	A problem	Whenever there's a problem . . .
B	Bad feelings	that gives you a not good feeling . . .
C	Comfort yourself	comfort yourself by thinking about it in a way that makes you feel better.

Use the following examples to assess children's understanding of the concept of Positive Thinking.

<b>Problem</b>	<b>What Henry does</b>	<b>Is it Positive Thinking or Not Positive Thinking?</b>	<b>How can Henry use Positive Thinking?</b>
Henry's older brother wanted to play with his toys by himself for a while.	Henry thought, "I hate my brother. I'll never be able to play with his toys ever."	It's Not Positive Thinking.	Henry found something else to do and realized he could play with his brother's toys another time.
Henry's pencil broke when he was doing his homework.	Henry thought, "I'll never get my homework done."	It's Not Positive Thinking.	Henry knew he could sharpen his pencil or find another one that worked.
Henry missed his favorite TV show.	Henry said, "I'll see it next week."	It's Positive Thinking.	
Henry's favorite baseball team lost the game by one run.	Henry knew they could win the next time.	It's Positive Thinking.	
Henry spilled red juice on his white T-shirt.	Henry began to cry and thought that he'd never wear the shirt again.	It's Not Positive Thinking.	Henry thought he could ask his mom to wash his shirt.
Henry didn't get to be his friend Robbie's partner in math class.	Henry thought, "That's okay. Maybe next time."	It's Positive Thinking.	

5  
minutes

## Activity

Have students draw a picture of a time when they had a problem and thought about it in a way that made them feel better or have younger children color a *happy badge* to remind them to think positively when they have problems.

1  
minute

## Closure

Gather your students together, and review the lesson objectives.

### **Sample Script**

*Today, we learned about feeling happy and Positive Thinking. Everyone feels happy. It is a good feeling. If we use Positive Thinking, we can make ourselves feel happy even if we are having not good feelings.*

## Applying What We Learned

### **Anticipate**

Encourage your students to use the ABCs of Positive Thinking when they are feeling badly. This may be particularly helpful before events that may cause negative feelings, such as partner activities, recess, and competitions.

### **Remind**

If you find a student who is not using Positive Thinking, remind him or her to use the ABCs of Positive Thinking. The student may need help in determining ways to comfort (letter *C*) him- or herself.

### **Acknowledge**

If you are able to observe students using Positive Thinking, be sure to applaud their application of this complex skill.



# I'm Happy!





# The ABCs of Positive Thinking

A	A problem	Whenever there's a problem . . .
B	Bad feelings	that gives you a not good feeling . . .
C	Comfort yourself	comfort yourself by thinking about it in a way that makes you feel better.



# Strong Start Bulletin

Dear Family,

This week, our **Strong Start** lesson focused on teaching students about **happiness**. We discussed how our bodies feel when we are happy and what actions or situations make us feel happy. We also listed synonyms for the word **happy**. In this lesson, Henry helped us understand **positive thinking**. We talked about how positive thinking can make us feel better when we are sad or mad. The **ABCs of Positive Thinking** is one strategy for positive thinking.

### The ABCs of Positive Thinking

A	A problem	Whenever there's a problem . . .
B	Bad feelings	that gives you a not good feeling . . .
C	Comfort yourself	comfort yourself by thinking about it in a way that makes you feel better.

To better understand happiness, we read

**Following are great examples of relevant stories that you may want to read at home:**

- *Super Completely and Totally the Messiest* by Judith Viorst
- *Fun is a Feeling* by Chara M. Curtis
- *Today I Feel Silly & Other Moods That Make My Day* by Jamie Lee Curtis

When your child becomes sad or mad at home, remind him or her to remember the ABCs of Positive Thinking noted above. The “comfort yourself” part can be hard, and your child might need your help to think about a problem in a better way. For example, if your child loses a baseball game, an example of Positive Thinking might be, “That’s okay. I’ll try again next game,” rather than “I’ll never win.”

Thanks for all of your support in helping your child to be a positive thinker!

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