



## FACT SHEET

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### Teaching Body Language

We communicate a lot of information about our feelings through our body language: our facial expression, the way we position ourselves, distance from others, and gestures. We receive this information primarily through our vision. The child with deafblindness does not get this information from others. They also are not aware of how others see them. These children must have help to learn to express their feelings through appropriate body language. If their feelings and body language do not match, their communication may be misunderstood, and the child may become frustrated.

*Disclaimer: Do what feels comfortable for you and the child.*

You can help the child in the following ways:

1. *As a parent*, you can have the child **feel your face** while you say or sign the name of the feeling expressed. Have them feel the tension in your muscles when you are angry, relaxed muscles when you're happy, or a frown when you're unhappy. *At school*, you can have them *touch your hands and say/sign your name*.
2. Also have him **feel your shoulders and hands** to learn about body position related to the different feelings. An upright body frequently shows a positive attitude and confidence. A slumped body sometimes signals sadness or fatigue.
3. If you feel comfortable allowing the child to **feel your heart rate**, this will also give a lot of information. You can have a young child feel your heart. An older child can feel your neck or wrist. Your heart rate will show when you're angry, happy, excited, etc.
4. Have the **child feel their own face, posture, and heart rate** to become aware of how he appears to others.

Adapted from Sternberg-White, S., Chen, D., & Watts, J. (1992). Developing Social-Emotional Skills. INSITE, Utah State University, Logan, Utah