

## Have You Ever Felt That Way? Parents Asking Questions about Feelings and Emotions

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### ABSTRACT

Being able to express and label emotions is critical for children as this helps with self-regulation. The ability to self-regulate helps children to make friends, solve problems and be mindful. Mindfulness is taught by parents and varies across families and cultures (Erwin & Robinson, 2016). When children are mindful they learn to be aware of others and be sensible which develops into empathy skills. Empathy is the ability to understand the feelings of others (Decety, Meidenbauer & Cowell, 2018). Parents play an important role in the development of empathy as they teach children to identify their own feelings and emotions when taking others' perspectives. As such, parent-child interactions have a critical role in the development of social skills (Gadaire, Henrich & Finn-Stevenson, 2016) particularly when discussing feelings and emotions. This study used Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as a framework to analyze how adults guide children to identify feelings and emotions. Data was collected at a children's museum in a major city in south central Texas. Ninety parents and their 3-5-year-olds participated in a 10-minute prompt. Each session was videotaped and later coded. The prompt included PowerPoint slides with photos depicting feelings and emotions. Parents were asked to use the questions on each slide or to ask their own questions. Findings indicate that emotion, description, expression, inquiry, and elaboration are important to elicit children's elaboration regarding their own feelings during parent-child interactions. Findings also show the importance of parents using appropriate vocabulary to identify feelings and emotions when interacting with children.

**Keywords:** mindfulness; empathy; social skills; parent-child interactions; self-regulation

## Introduction

Social competence is the ability that we have as humans to know about social skills and emotions. It is important to have social competence as this provides us with the opportunity to participate successfully in our society. Children learn social competence from their families, more specifically from their parents. Families guide their children in the socioemotional skills that are pertinent and valued in their culture. Learning and teaching about emotions occurs in different settings such as their home, a relative's home, the store, school, and many others. Parents take the opportunity to teach about emotions depending on the setting. Of great importance is the ability of parents to provide their children with interactions that guide the child to understand emotions.

The ability to identify emotions can help children develop social competence since it teaches children about self-regulation, mindfulness, and empathy. In addition, when children are aware of their emotions they can be better prepared to understand the emotions of others. As such, parent-child interactions regarding emotions become an important part of daily routines. For educators knowing how parents interact with their children when explaining emotions is important as they can implement some of the strategies so that children can have a sense of continuity between home and school.

This study used Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as a framework to analyze how adults guide children to identify feelings and emotions. The research question included: how do parents of 3- to 5-year-olds interact with their children when presented with empathy related pictures using an iPad?

## Review of the Literature

Young children learn social competence from their families, their parents in particular. Parents expect their children to display certain behaviors and emotions that are valued in their culture. As guidance is communicated between parent and child through different types of interactions it is important to understand how parents interact with their children. In order for children to develop social competence significant adults in their lives must provide positive interactions through modeling, conversation, expression, descriptions, inquiry and elaborations. Such parent-child interactions will lay the foundation needed by children to be able to be socially successful and competent in school.

### 1 Parent - Child Interactions

Parent-child interactions develop from the relationship that parents have with their children. Positive relationships lead to positive interactions. Positive interactions allow parents to guide

their children in many areas of development but more specifically in socioemotional development.

Healthy socioemotional development has been linked to positive academic experiences for children (Thierry, Bryant, Speegle Nobles, & Norris, 2016). For young children social skills may be confusing at times and it takes an adult to guide them through this process. This is in essence the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) regarding social competence. When parents interact with children there are two very important relational aspects to consider: attachment and language.

The first aspect is the attachment between the parent and the child. According to Roskam, Meunier, and Stievenart (2011), the four types of attachment can be seen by the age of one. Children with strong attachment have secure relationships with their parents (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Well, 1978). Through interactions parents and children develop attachment, and through attachment parents and children learn to trust in one another. Furthermore, parents' behaviors help to guide young children's autonomy which leads to secure attachment (Coyl, Newland, & Freeman, 2008). Autonomy in children allows them to practice social skills such as empathy and problem solving. The secure attachment allows children to know that they can go back to their secure base when in doubt. Secure attachments give parent and children the opportunity to interact in different situations such as challenging ones.

The second aspect to consider is the language that the parents use with their children. Through language parents teach expectations, values, and beliefs from their cultural background in particular, this can be accomplished in different ways. For example, using terms of endearment such as a special nickname for the child in different situations emphasizes different signals. Some parents use a child's full name when wanting to catch their attention to something they have done that is not appropriate. Other parents may use terms that in their native language have special meaning such as buddy or son in English or mijo (my son) or mija (my daughter) in Spanish. In addition, parents use different type of language to engage in inquiry with their children. Some parents may use open ended questions such as "what do you think it's happening?" or more closed questions such as "what is the boy doing?" In some cultures, it is not unusual to discuss feelings and emotions while in others it is not pertinent for all situations.

Parent-child interactions are important as they become a tool to build relationships with children. Through relationships parents and children can develop stronger attachments which will lead to attaining more adequate social skills which will lead to social competence.

## **2 Empathy and Mindfulness**

Empathy is the ability to see issues from another's perspective (Palmer, 2018). There are many definitions but for the purpose of children's socioemotional development the definition regarding

the ability to take others' perspective is more relevant. For children taking other's perspectives is not easy. Young children learn to practice empathy skills through play as they communicate each other's perspectives (Veiga, Neto, Rieffe, 2016). When such perspectives are not considered, the play scenario stops and children cannot continue to play. Parents also have an important role when teaching children empathy skills as children play by providing guidance when conflict arise and by allowing children to solve problems on their own.

When children develop empathy, they are beginning to understand mindfulness. Mindfulness is the ability to being open minded and see the situations without judgement (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Practicing being mindful with young children helps to lay the foundation for self-regulation. Although at times self-regulation may be difficult for young children, with the appropriate guidance from significant adults, it can be accomplished. Erwin and Robinson (2016) conducted a systematic review of the literature regarding mindfulness in early childhood and they found that it is a growing area of interest globally but an area of needed research. Their findings showed strategies or approaches to mindfulness with young children including yoga, meditation, and breathing techniques, among others. Furthermore, other studies have shown that mindfulness-based interventions or MBI have shown to have some positive effect on executive functioning or EF for young children (Wood, Roach, Kearney, & Zabek, 2018) but perhaps further study is needed to know how cultural differences may affect the intervention outcomes (Thierry, Bryant, Speegle Nobles, & Norris, 2016).

The importance of parents and other significant adults in the lives of children cannot be underestimated. However, parents and other adults such as teachers must be shown some strategies that can help them know how to promote mindfulness in their children (Edwards, 2017). This of course needs to be developed through cultural and linguistic appropriate practices to ensure its success. Mindfulness should be practiced daily with children in all different contexts and through adult-child interactions that build relationships (Biringen, Closson, Derr-Moore, Pratt, Pybus, Saunders, Warren, Lucas-Thompson, Harman, & Neu, 2015). Similarly, empathy can emerge through powerful interactions between parent and child in safe contexts such as play (John, Halliburton, & Humphrey, 2012). In summary, parent-child interactions are significant in the development of socioemotional skills.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Two theoretical approaches that most heavily influence literature pertaining to parent-child interaction are the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) and socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978). The core of the ecological systems theory supports that children develop and grow within the context of critical interrelated relationship systems. Parents are the closest and most significant influence on children. The interactions between the parent and child occur at the microsystem level, and it directly impacts healthy growth and development.

The consistency and quality of these supportive, nurturing relationships are extremely important in the first three years in a child's life (Epstein, 2011). These interactions are not only the foundation for brain development, but they are essential in the development of cognitive, emotional, and social skills. The beliefs and behaviours of parent's act as a model that guides children in learning which actions are appropriate and which are not. Positive interactions are necessary to help children develop to their fullest potential and achieve success in life.

Socio-cultural theory also supports the notion that learning and development take place best through social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). The role of language then becomes a critical tool for children in accomplishing tasks and solving problems. When children are unable to perform a task or do not know how to do something, they seek help from a more knowledgeable other (MKO). For example, a parent. In order to nurture learning, parents must present children with tasks that are just beyond their ability and put them in social situations where they create the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Every development practice occurs first at the social or interpersonal level and moves to intrapersonal knowledge at the individual level. If children are presented with tasks that are too easy for them, learning will not take place due to the lack of a challenge. Learning will also not occur if children are presented with tasks that are too difficult as they will withdraw. The co-construction of knowledge is a critical aspect of learning and it allows for children to advance in their developmental stage. Over time, the ZPD shrinks and children will be able to complete tasks independently no longer requiring others to scaffold learning (Frost, Wortham, & Reifel, 2012). These newly acquired skills influence new interactions and shape the environment around them.

## **Methodology**

This descriptive qualitative study focused on the interactions that occurred between parent and child in a lab-like classroom with large windows at a children's museum called "The DoSeum" located in a metropolitan city in south central Texas. The DoSeum focuses on STEM, Arts, and Literacy related learning and works together to enhance the experiences of all children from schools and the community. An important aspect of The DoSeum is working with families of young children. Exhibits such as "Little Town" are offered where very young children are able to engage in higher thinking through the power of play and discovery.

### **1 Participants**

Visiting families of children between 3-5 years old were recruited by the researchers to participate in the study after playing in an exhibited called "Little Town." We, as researchers, provided explanation of the study giving the parents a choice in participating. As we recruited families and explained the study we showed the PowerPoint photos on the iPad to see if there was an interest.

Many families were willing to participate although at times children were hesitant as they wanted to explore The DoSeum but parents would encourage the children because they wanted to help us as researchers. However, if their child completely refused we encouraged them to continue their visit at The DoSeum and perhaps return at a later time. The participants were mainly from the city where The DoSeum is located but there were others who were tourists from across the state and the US. In addition, there were families who chose to participate and were visiting from Mexico, India, and France. The socioeconomic background of the participants varied. Some parents who participated attended the Free Family night at The DoSeum.

## **2 Data Collection**

The study took place from February to April. We visited The DoSeum once a week for two hours. Ninety parents and their 3-5-year-olds participated in a 10-minute prompt. Each session was videotaped and later coded. The prompt included PowerPoint slides with photos depicting feelings and emotions. Parents were asked to use the questions on each slide or to ask their own questions. Most parents chose to use the questions on the PowerPoint slides. About 90% of the video recordings were useful, the other 10% were not. Some of the reasons included the children not answering or answering by shaking or nodding their head. In such case we decided not to include as there was limited to no parent child interactions.

## **3 Data Analysis**

Our unit of analysis for the data was parent-child interactions. We wanted to examine if during those interactions any indication of empathy or mindfulness occurred. We used three levels of coding for data analysis (Patton, 2002). As the study developed, we asked our graduate assistant assigned to the study to find patterns in the data by watching the videos focusing on the parent-child interactions and keeping in mind empathy or mindfulness. The second author used axial coding to identify themes in the video transcriptions. During the third level, the first author used selective coding based on the themes identified by the second author. The themes found in the in-depth analysis conducted included expression, elaboration and inquiry.

## **Findings**

This descriptive study focused on the parent-child interactions that occurred during a prompt given in a PowerPoint slides that depicted different feelings and emotions. The study followed Ecological Systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) and Sociocultural theory framework (Vygotsky, 1978) as parents are the most significant adults in children's lives. Our analysis presents positive aspects of parent-child interactions that add to the importance of adults in children's socioemotional development. The themes discussed include expression, elaboration, and inquiry. Each theme will be discussed below separately but often different themes occurred during the same excerpt. Excerpts are presented as examples from different participants.

## 1 Expression

Some parents interacted with the children using different expressions to catch children's attention and to keep them on task. We noted this when parents accentuated a phrase, changed their tone of voice, or showed some type of excitement. The following excerpts shows an example of a mother trying to catch her child's attention. She is moving through the photos as the child does not want to be in the room. The mother changes the sound of her voice particularly when the child does not appear to be interested.

MOTHER: What about these kiddos? How do they feel?

GIRL: Fine

MOTHER: Fine. But what emotion do you think they feel?!!!! (with excitement)

GIRL: I already listened to this.

MOTHER: Yes, but what emotion might somebody feel when they go (Mother demonstrates surprise emotion) Girls looks at mother puzzled (surprised)

The mother caught the child's attention when the child did not want to participate by changing the tone of her voice and using excitement in her voice. The child was surprised or puzzled to hear her mother changed her expression in her tone of voice. Although the child did not elaborate on what the mother was asking her, she responded positively by looking at her mother feeling surprised. The mother persisted on getting the young girl to answer her questions. This in itself is an interesting finding because she wants the daughter to complete the task and within her questions you can see her funds of knowledge persisting to finish task and using caring words like "kiddo" to entice the daughter to finish and also holding her tight because she wants her daughter to respond to her command.

In another example there is a mother and her son, he has a baby sister but did not participate in the questions as she was too young. When the mother asked the question about the emotion of love, the mother was able to relate the emotions personally by providing examples relatable to her son. This particular mother not only used expression but she also used elaboration and inquiry. She scaffolded (Vygotsky, 1978) her son's knowledge with questions which allowed him to explain his understanding about the emotion.

MOTHER: So what is this picture of?

BOY: A heart

MOTHER: A heart, what is holding the heart?

BOY: A bear

MOTHER: What do you think love is? [voice expresses emotion]

MOTHER: What is the heart there for?

BOY: Valentine's Day

MOTHER: Valentine's Day! What you do in Valentine's Day? [with emotion]

BOY: Buy cards

MOTHER: Buy cards, what else, you write nice things on the cards? [with emotion] The boy whispers to his mom.

MOTHER: What do you think she would write on the card?

MOTHER: You say I love you!

MOTHER: How do you feel when you say I love you?

MOTHER: What do you feel when mammy says “I love you too”?

BOY: Happy

MOTHER: Happy

It was interesting that the son identified love with Valentine’s Day. It is not unusual as most children in the US are exposed to varied sociocultural practices including commercial holidays. What was significant in this excerpt is that the mother was able to explain the meaning of love through writing Valentine’s Cards. She asked her son what he thought should be written on the Valentine’s Cards and the son said “I love you.” The mother continued inquiring by asking open-ended questions such as “What do you think...” and “How do you feel...” both questions help children engage in reflection even at a young age. In this case when the mother asked “How do you feel when mommy says I love you?” The boy responded “happy.” Through the process of inquiry, the son was able to identify his emotion. Throughout the excerpt the mother asks not only open-ended questions but higher order thinking, reflective questions. She was enthusiastic about asking the questions and would change her tone trying to entice her son to answer.

## 2 Elaboration

We found the theme of elaboration to occur when the parents were trying to provide an explanation about one of the pictures to their children. Some parents would provide more questions and others would use different vocabulary. This segment shows a father asking the questions to his son. The boy in the PowerPoint photo is sitting on Santa’s lap and crying. The photo depicts an emotion that many young children feel very often when presented with Santa, fear. The father guided his son to identify the emotion that was depicted on the photo and he did this through elaboration.

FATHER: Oh, what is going on in this picture?

BOY: He is crying.

FATHER: Crying. How does this make him feel?

BOY: Crying.

FATHER: What is it? [meaning emotion]

BOY: He is crying.

FATHER: He is crying.

BOY: He is crying. What is he doing?

FATHER: He is seeing Santa.

FATHER: Have you ever felt like that before?

BOY: No.

FATHER: Have you ever felt sad like him?

BOY: I love Santa.

FATHER: Oh, you love Santa, pretty cool! [with emotion]

The father asked his son first what was going on in the picture. The question was open-ended. The picture was of a young boy sitting on Santa's lap and crying, an emotion that many children go through when faced with Santa Clause in person, although most (who celebrate Christmas) like the idea of Santa Clause because of the presents received. Interestingly, the boy responded right away that the "boy was crying" he did not focus on Santa Clause but on the emotion of the boy in the photo. He was also curious as to why the boy was crying when he asked "What is he doing?" perhaps somewhat confused. The father told him that the boy was seeing Santa and continued to ask his son if he felt that way, the boy responded "no" but when the father identified the emotion "sad" the boy gave a more elaborate answer as to why he doesn't feel sad like the boy when seeing Santa, he said, "I love Santa," which is another emotion. This excerpt shows that when a parent first acknowledges the emotion and then elaborates a more descriptive answer can be elicited from children.

Another participant, also a father, asked the same question about Santa, but his children indicated that "Santa was being mean." Being mean is not an emotion or feeling, one feels bad or sad when someone is mean but being mean is a behaviour. The father did not elaborate by naming the feeling or emotion but he made a gesture and an expressive "Ha!" his son immediately responded with a complete sentence describing the emotion felt by the boy on the picture, "He is crying because he is scared of Santa." The father elaborated by asking, "Have you ever felt like that boy? His son responded no but his daughter indicated that she had felt that way before by saying "Yeah!" and the father did acknowledge her response by saying "Santa is mean to you." This event was also elaboration because there was interaction occurring rather than just answering the questions.

Another example of elaboration occurred in the following excerpt when a mother used different vocabulary to identify the emotion. The mother also uses questions to help her daughter identify the emotion.

MOTHER: What is going on in the picture? [The girl indicates that she doesn't know]

MOTHER: What do you think? What is she doing with her hands? [The girl trying to do the same as the picture]

MOTHER: What is that?

MOTHER: Silly, mad, angry?

GIRL: Silly.

MOTHER: How do they feel?

GIRL: Silly.

MOTHER: Have you ever felt like this?

GIRL: Yeah

The importance of this excerpt is that the mother provides several possible emotions and this allows for the daughter to select the particular emotion “silliness” (although the participants used the word “silly”). This is significant because it shows that more than likely the mother knows that the words that the emotions identified have been named before in another context. This shows the ability of her daughter to transfer that knowledge to a more restrictive setting. The mother uses the same strategy when she asks about another picture “Are they happy, surprised, mad?” The daughter is able to identify the word “surprised.” Vocabulary helps parents to elaborate in their interactions with children and this in turn helps children to expand their vocabulary.

In this scenario a father and son are interacting. The father explains to his son that they are going to look at some pictures “really fast.” He does this to entice his son to participate. The first picture is of a teddy bear holding a heart. This picture is of a difficult feeling to explain because it is very abstract and that is love. The child answers the questions according to what the father asks him but the father tries to provide an explanation about love through elaboration.

FATHER: Let us look at some pictures really fast. Ok.

FAHTER: What is that picture of?

BOY: A teddy bear.

FATHER: What’s he holding?

BOY: A heart.

FATHER: Do you know what a heart is?

BOY: Ahh ...It is red.

FATHER: Red.

FATHER: Do you know what love means?

FATHER: Like when I say I love you, do you know what that means?

BOY: A heart

FATHER: It means a heart. Yeah, the heart is symbol for love.

The interaction between father and son involves an elaboration through questioning when the father says, “like when I say I love you, do you know what that means?” This is something that may be simple but it is not. As parents we often tell our children we love them but that is an emotion of feeling difficult to explain. The father eloquently says “the heart is a symbol for love.” His elaboration provides a concrete way of explaining love. This is important because now his son can make more connections regarding the interpretation of using hearts to symbolize love. In another excerpt the father uses the appropriate vocabulary rather than asking his son what is happening in the picture he decides to select between the two emotions by saying, “How do you think this girl feels happy or sad?” By providing a choice the father can assess if the child is able to identify the emotion. The use of inquiry is also important because it allows the child to think and reflect about the emotion. On another excerpt the same father elaborates on the emotion the picture was about children feeling surprised and he used another vocabulary term “shocked” providing further understanding for his son.

Similarly, in another example a mother elaborates on the picture regarding love by telling her daughter that love can be expressed to mommy with “hearts and kisses.” This type of elaborate allows the child to connect the symbol of the heart with love. When explaining the picture where the children are teasing or bullying others the mother asks her daughter how the girl in the picture would be feeling but the daughter says she doesn’t know.

MOTHER: Oh, what’s going on in that picture? Do you know what they’re doing?

MOTHER: What’re they doing?

GIRL: No.

MOTHER: They’re being mean to her!! [with emotion]

GIRL: Yeah.

MOTHER: Yeah!!!!

MOTHER: How do they feel? How does she feel?

MOTHER: You don’t know. She feels sad! [The girl nodded her head.]

MOTHER: Have you ever felt sad? [The girl nodded]

MOTHER: When someone is picking on you. [The girl nodded]

MOTHER: Are they picking on her? [The girl nodded]

The mother elaborates on the response by indicating that other children are “being mean.” Other parents used different vocabulary to describe the children’s bully-like behaviour. The mother continues to elaborate on her explanation regarding the feeling stating how the girl in the picture feels, “she feels sad.” The mother also acknowledges that the daughter may not know the feeling perhaps because of the context. The mother continues elaborating by asking if the girl is sad because “they are picking on her”. The term that the mother uses the term “picking on” meaning being “teased” this is important to note because perhaps the term that is used in the family is “picking on” rather than teased. The excerpt continues with the mother acknowledging the daughter’s feelings and emotions but the daughter does not elaborate.

### 3 Inquiry

In our study we identified the theme of inquiry as the process of asking different types of questions particularly those that promoted higher level thinking. We had several grandparents as participants in the study. The ones that participated were also caregivers meaning that they took care of their grandchildren while the parents worked. As such, the grandparent becomes a significant adult in a child’s life. The grandmother in the following excerpt uses open-ended questions to get his granddaughter to elaborate on her responses. The picture is a girl that is reading a book. The granddaughter brings in her other family members like the papa or the grandfather into the interaction.

GRANDMA: ...OK let’s go head. What’s about that. What’s going on in that picture?

GIRL: His Papa is reading him a book.

GRANDMA: Yeah, how do they feel?

GIRL: Happy.

GRANDMA: Have you ever felt happy?  
GIRL: Yes.  
GRANDMA: When you read book, you feel happy.  
GIRL: Yes.  
GRANDMA: Why?  
GIRL: Because I like reading.  
GRANDMA: All right!

This participant acknowledges her granddaughter's responses by saying "All right!" perhaps it's a term that she often uses to reaffirm her granddaughter, which is important. She also asks her granddaughter if she has ever felt happy and the girl is able to elaborate as to what makes her happy, in this case, reading. Reaffirmation on responses provides children with the positive feedback that what they are feeling is acknowledged, in this case it was a positive feeling but there are times where children will respond with a different type of emotion. The grandmother furthers her questioning by asking her "why," simple yet open ended. Sometimes children are able to answer and sometimes they are not, but practice is helpful.

Using appropriate vocabulary can help children identify emotions correctly and also participate in inquiry. The following excerpt shows the grandmother trying to guide the child to use the appropriate term for the emotion with success but when the correct term is used then the interaction stops.

GRANDMA: Oh, what is going on in that picture?  
GIRL: She was scary.  
GRANDMA: Yeah, how do think they feel?  
GIRL: Scary.  
GRANDMA: Scary! Do you ever feel scary?  
GIRL: Yeah.  
GRANDMA: Do you, I think she looks mad.  
GIRL: No, I don't.  
GRANDMA: You don't think she feels mad.

The girl looks away and not answering.

The emotion on this excerpt should be "mad," but the girl uses "scary." The grandmother doesn't immediately correct her but with her expression "scary!" and the follow up question she is giving her granddaughter the opportunity to retract the emotion. The inquiry opportunity is shown by the grandmother by saying "do you think she looks mad?" The grandmother scaffolds the child by saying "you don't think she feels mad." Using the word "feels" allows the grandmother to help her grandchild to identify the correct emotion "mad." The girl is very firm in her answer and the grandmother continues to probe but the interaction stops as the girl looks away without answering. Of interest is the grandmother's ability to scaffold her grandchild's thinking by using different strategies within their interaction.

In this excerpt the participants are a mother, father and twin daughters. The mother and father alternate between interactions. The inquiry questions focus on recalling an event. The picture is about being scared the parents try to help the girls remember an episode when they felt “scared.”

MOTHER: Have you ever felt like that? (to girl 2)

FATHER: Have you ever felt scared?

FATHER: Do you remember last time when you were scared, earlier outside when we were going on the slide, remember?

GIRL: Yeah.

The mother does not use the vocabulary but the father does, he uses the word “scared.” He also tries for the daughter to recall a time at The DoSeum when she felt scared and that was when she went down the slide outside, he presses on saying, “remember?” In another picture the mother is the one that identifies the feeling by saying, “what do you think he is feeling?” However, when the picture about “teasing” comes up the daughters are not sure how to respond even when the parents use different types of questions. Perhaps in this case the daughters did not know the meaning of the word or the emotion. Yet in another example the father uses the word “expression” to have his daughters identify the emotion. By looking at the expression on the faces in the picture the girls should be able to identify the emotion and they do.

FATHER: What is his face showing?

GIRL: I don't know [again went to lie down on the ground].

FATHER: Oh, what happened here?

MOTHER: Oh, what kind of expression that?

GIRL2: Surprise!

At the beginning of the interaction the father asks “what is his face showing?” Although he did not use the word emotion, this is a way to teach his daughters that we can show our emotions through our physical gestures. The mother elaborated on the interaction by asking “What kind of expression is that?” In another example regarding the picture with the Santa the daughter indicated that the “boy was crying because he was scared of Santa” she was able to read the child's face in determining the correct emotion. When the mother asked her if she has ever felt her answer undeniably shows that she was not scared.

MOTHER: Have you been scared of Santa like that?

[The girl shakes her head to disapprove]

MOTHER: No, how come?

GIRL: Because, I didn't cry remember? I didn't cry!!

MOTHER: Santa is a nice guy; he is a helper.

The daughter's answers are more elaborate in explaining why she is not scared of Santa and reminds the mother that she did not cry probably when she visited Santa. The mother provides a reassuring answer by saying “Santa is a nice guy; he is a helper.” This is an example of how the

family views some of the characters that are represented in holidays like Christmas but most importantly she elaborates on her daughter's answer by describing Santa. In another excerpt the daughter does not use the term "sad" but she says "they make her go cry." The mother only affirms. The girl does seem to know the term "sad" because in another photo she acknowledges that she has felt sad the mother affirms but elaborates when she says "You have mom and dad holding you when you're sad." The girl interestingly shakes her head no and the mother is surprised at that.

## Limitations/Conclusion

The results of the study cannot be generalized as we were not able to interview the parents or observe them with their child in other settings. However, although it was difficult for some parents to get their children to tend to the PowerPoints slides, the majority of them did try to engage in interactions with their children. It is important to note that this study provides a glimpse of how some parents may interact with their children regarding feelings and emotions. The majority of the parents were willing to motivate their children through expression, elaborate or inquiry in answering the questions about feelings and emotions. This is an important finding because parents are significant adults in the lives of children that provide guidance regarding socioemotional development. It is important to understand that children's development will occur throughout a period of time and it varies within cultural groups. However, guiding children to understand feelings and emotions can help them develop understanding about empathy and mindfulness which in turn will help them be more socially competent in their society.

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