# Feelings yes, limits too: Holiday get-togethers without the battles

An activity to recognize what I feel and discover what I can do with it

Beatriz Fuentetaja de la Mata, Montessori teacher and guide,
in collaboration with Cleo & Cuquin





## For the grown-ups:

Your little one doesn't need to be happy all the time. You can welcome their emotion and, at the same time, set a clear limit if their behavior hurts someone. Be there for them without expecting perfect answers.

# What is an emotion?



1. Something happens to us
2. What we feel inside (the emotion)
3. What we do (how we react)



# What might I feel at family parties?

Use the Cleo & Cuquin pictures you'll find further on. Cut them out and let your child choose the one that best shows how they feel in each situation.

- When I see relatives I haven't seen in a long time.
- When I get a present I love.
- When I get a present I don't like.
- When there's a lot of noise or lots of people.
- When people who know me want to say hello or give me a kiss.

Older kids can also draw their own emotions.



# What can I do when my feelings are really big?

Adapt the activity with pretend play: use dolls or stuffed animals to act out situations and practice different responses. You can also swap roles and let your child play the grown-up! Here are some ideas you can practice:



Ask for a hug if I want one.

Go to a quiet place with a grown-up.

Breathe slowly, like smelling a flower and blowing out a candle.

Say: “I need a break.”

Tell what's happening with words, gestures or drawings.

Wave hello or give a high five.



# Feeling is okay, hurting is not. What can I say or do?

Get two pieces of card stock ready:

- **Green:** safe ways to express what we feel.
- **Red:** actions that hurt us or hurt others.

Describe the situation, read both answers and let your child hold up the card they choose.

### 1 I don't want to give a kiss.

What can I do?

- **A** Wave hello
- **B** Push whoever comes close



### 2 I don't like my present and I'm angry.

What can I do?

- **A** Throw the present on the floor
- **B** Ask for help

### 3 I want a toy another kid has.

What can I do?

- **A** Ask for it
- **B** Grab it from their hands

### 4 I'm really angry.

What can I do?

- **A** Hit someone
- **B** Find a grown-up



## Tips:

**If they choose a safe option**: show the green card and praise their choice: “You can be angry and ask for help.”

**If they choose an action that hurts**: show the red card and calmly explain: “Hitting hurts. Let's find another way.” Help them find an alternative.

**Avoid judging their answer**: the goal isn't to get it right, but to learn, little by little, to express emotions and act without hurting anyone, always with your support.



# Our plan for a family or friends get-together

Before getting together with family or friends, it's a good idea to talk with your children and prepare for what might happen. To help, we've put together the following questions:



What can help me if I feel shy or get tired?



Who can I be with if I need a break?



How do I like to say hello to my family?

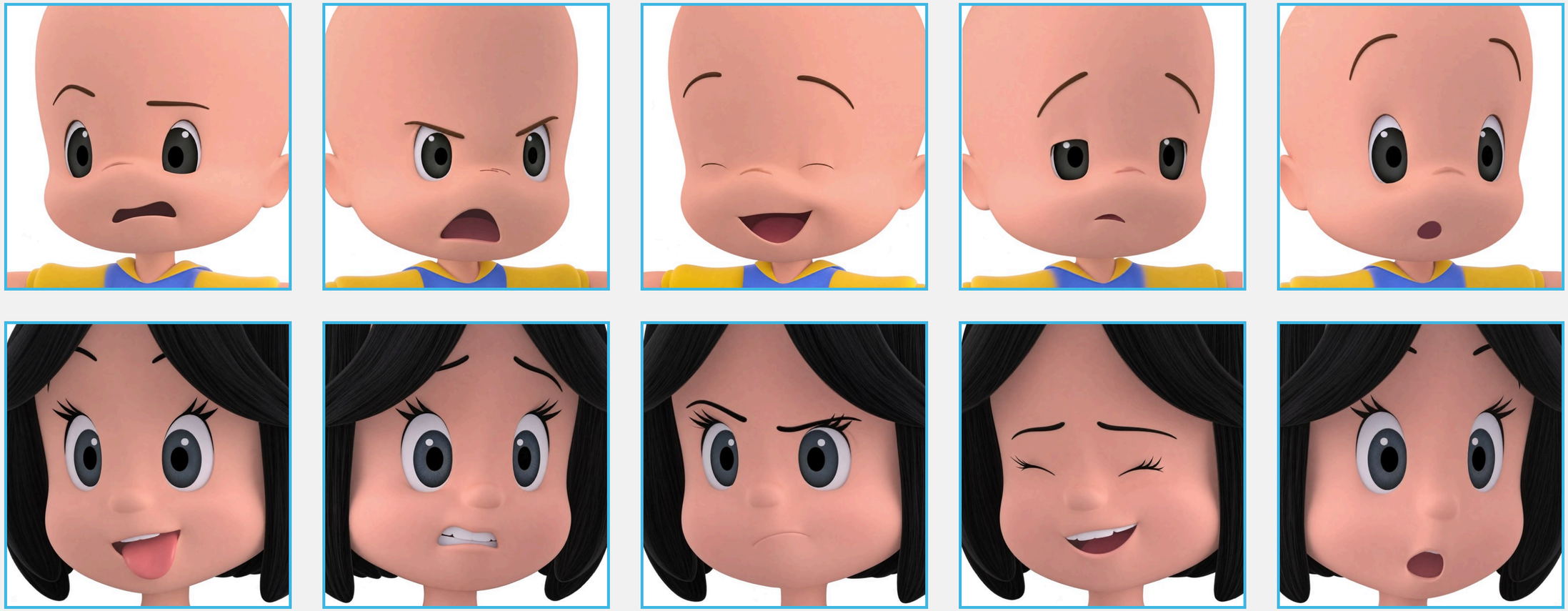
## Remember

**All emotions can be expressed, but not all behaviors are safe.**

We grown-ups set the limit and help the child find another way to act.

Safety and calm first; then, conversation.

# Resources



# Resources



# Resources

