## SUGGESTIONS FOR ENRICHING THE ENVIRONMENT

- Keep the mood positive, creating an environment where children and adults are happy and engaged.
- Establish a predictable daily *routine* and post a schedule that includes both pictures and words.
- Encourage children to identify, interpret, and express a wide range of feelings for themselves and others by providing books, toys, puppets and activities such as drawing, writing, creating art and movement, and open-ended pretend play.
- Set up a *Safe Place Center* in the room where children can go when they are having a difficult time. Place soft pillows or cuddly bears, and display pictures of their family members for comfort.
- Have a *Solution Center* or *Peace Talk Area* where children can talk out and verbalize their feelings and resolve conflicts by themselves or with the help of an adult if needed.
- Provide a variety of activities that will allow for success for all children.
- Provide books about characters working with others to solve problems or to recognize positive behaviors.
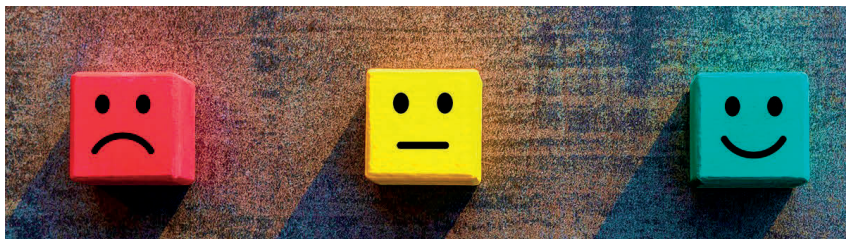
EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

- Respond to children's verbal and *nonverbal* expressions of feelings, such as signs of becoming overwhelmed. Let children know they can reach out for support as needed.
- Be patient with children. *Model* using a calm voice. Recognize that young children do not cry or act out in effort to frustrate adults. They are simply learning to communicate their wants and needs. *Responsive* adults help children learn to effectively communicate needs.
- Allow children to make choices to promote feelings of control and success. Encourage them to do things for themselves as much as possible, recognizing it may take longer and may be done in their own way.
- Recognize that expressing both positive and negative feelings is a part of healthy emotional development. Children need support to learn to express intense feelings with words and acceptable physical ways.
- Use natural situations that provide opportunities to talk and identify feelings, and how one's actions may affect the feelings of others.
- Talk with children about events or challenges that are influencing their emotions.
- Model socially appropriate ways to express unpleasant feelings and how to ask for something, using puppets or role-playing.
- Include words that describe feelings as part of children's overall language development. Model language to help children identify their emotions ("You look disappointed.").