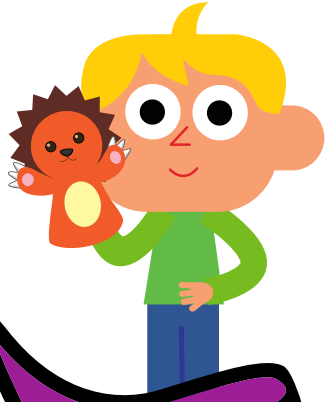


the GENIUS of
PLAY™

.....
It's more than play!



Dear Reader,

Welcome to the “Emotional Wellness Playbook”! You are about to discover a carefully curated collection of play-based activities that are designed to help kids develop emotional intelligence and learn to express their feelings in a healthy way — while having fun!

Play is one of the best ways to teach kids just about anything, and expressing emotions is no exception. From learning to cope to building resilience and practicing empathy, learning to manage emotions helps little hearts grow bigger and stronger, building the foundation for a healthy adulthood. What’s more, play is an excellent tool to promote relaxation, encourage positive emotions, and provide moments of joy to offset and relieve life’s everyday stresses — for both kids and adults!

Brought to you by The Genius of Play, the “Emotional Wellness Playbook” has been created in collaboration with Talia Filippelli, a recognized mental health expert, founder of Starr Therapy, and a Certified Holistic Health Coach. Every activity includes step-by-step instructions and a quick summary of the play benefits it provides. Depending on your child’s age, some activities may require adult help and supervision.

For more emotional wellness ideas, visit www.thegeniusofplay.org and follow [@GeniusofPlay](#) on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Enjoy the Playbook!

The Genius of Play Team

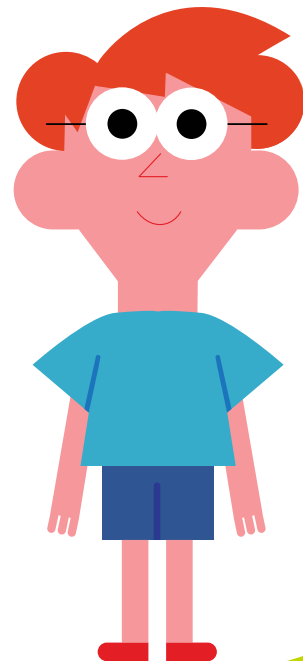
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INGREDIENTS:

- Bingo Cards
- Bingo Emojis cut out from page 5
- Scissors
- Tape
- Small container
- Cut-out discs or small items to use as bingo markers

Emoji Bingo (AGES 3+)

This game is a great twist on the classic bingo game to play at home with family and friends to help kids practice labeling and expressing emotions while having fun! The simple act of labeling emotions can help children prevent big emotional reactions and help them feel better.

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: Download pre-made bingo cards and a blank bingo card template at www.thegeniusofplay.org/bingo. If making your own template, simply take paper and pen to create a blank grid to be used as each player's bingo card.

Step 2: Print out multiple copies of page 5 for each player, plus an extra to use as the master set. This is what you'll use to create your individual bingo cards.

Step 3: Work with each player to cut out and fasten each emoji onto the blank bingo grid or the bingo card template. If you are making your own card, remind kids to place the emojis randomly on their boards. If you are using a pre-made bingo card, skip this step.

Step 4: Make sure you keep a duplicate of all the emojis as a master set. To keep them all in one place, put them in a small container, such as a jar or a basket.

Step 5: Give each player an equal number of discs or small items to mark off their emojis.



Step 6: Ask each player to take turns picking an emoji face from the jar, calling it out to the rest of the group, and acting out the emotion associated with that emoji. Players should place a marker on their board corresponding with that emoji.

Step 7: Keep playing Emoji Bingo until someone wins, getting five markers in a row horizontally, diagonally, or vertically. Then, clear the cards and start again.

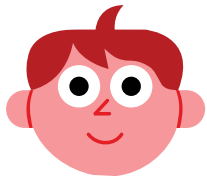
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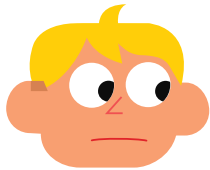


EMOJI BINGO

✂️ CARDS



Happy



Frustrated



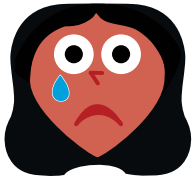
Embarrassed



Love



Shy



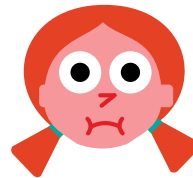
Sad



Thankful



Disappointed



Disgusted



Optimistic



Confident



Jealous



Surprised



Scared



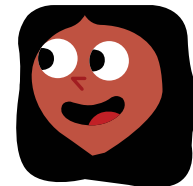
Angry



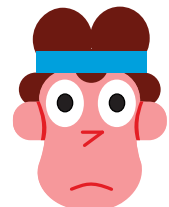
Joyful



Guilty



Excited



Worried



Nervous



Confused



Kind



Proud



Enthusiastic

www.TheGeniusofPlay.org

INGREDIENTS:

- Stuffed animals
- Birthday party accessories
- Paper
- Crayons and markers
- Tape

Stuffed Animal Birthday Party

(AGES 3+)

Playing with stuffed animals allows kids to imitate nurturing behaviors and think about others' feelings — even if those others are stuffed! Research has found that playing with plush activates brain regions that allow children to develop empathy and social information processing skills.

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: Ask play-starting questions like, “What theme would bear want to have for their party?”, “What color decorations would bear like to have?”, or “What kind of birthday cake do you think is bear’s favorite?”

Step 2: If you don't already have a birthday banner, give your child the materials to create a “happy birthday” banner out of paper and tape. Depending on your child's age and creative ability, draw outlines of each letter so your child can color them in. Or, encourage them to carefully write each letter themselves.

Step 3: Prompt them to create a guest list of other plush toys to “invite,” activities to play, and a menu of food options that every animal will enjoy.

Step 4: Let your child choose toys that the birthday animal would enjoy. Let them wrap toys as “gifts” with leftover wrapping paper from the holidays, newspaper, or even pillowcases.



Step 5: Don't have paper or plastic toy dishes for the party? No problem! Children can draw place settings on pieces of notebook or printer paper.

Step 6: Before the party starts, let your child choose their favorite outfit from their wardrobe, or a fun pick from the dress-up box.

Step 7: Give each guest its own seat at the table and enjoy the party!

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 plain wooden blocks or index cards
- Colored markers, crayons, or pencils

Emotional Animals (AGES 3+)

This activity is a simple and fun way to explore a variety of emotions, actions, and animals. Silly behavior and laughing with others help children bond with others, strengthen social skills, and experience the mood-enhancing and stress-reducing benefits of laughter.

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: If you are using blocks, write a different emotion on each side of the block. If you are using index cards, write one emotion on each card. Suggestions to include a variety of emotions include mad, happy, scared, sad, silly, and angry.

Step 2: On the other block, write a type of animal on each side. If you are using index cards, write one animal on each card. Suggestions include cat, dog, mouse, lion, bird, and monkey.

Step 3: Each child takes a turn rolling both dice or picking two random cards. (Depending upon the age of the child, a parent or an older child may have to read the selected animal and emotion.)

Step 4: Kids must act out the two words that they choose. For example, if “sad” and “monkey” are chosen, the child would act out how they think a sad monkey would act.

Step 4: Incorporate questions to get your child thinking about emotions. What are some good ways to handle sadness? What could make the monkey act happy?

Watch how to play Emotional Animals by clicking below



INGREDIENTS:

- Open space
- Yoga mat or large towel

Simon Says Do a Yoga Pose (AGES 3+)

It's important to maintain an exercise routine. Yoga provides a low-impact way of strengthening our bodies, which makes it a great practice for people of all ages — especially kids! The ability to grow and develop can also help kids develop feelings of accomplishment and pride.

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: Find a comfortable place with enough space to move around.

Step 2: Create a sequence of poses from our suggested list or from your own yoga online search. The more your children practice their poses, the more familiar their body will become with the movements and the easier they will be to perform.

Step 3: Depending upon the age of the children playing, either a parent can be “Simon” or choose one child to be “Simon.”

Step 4: Simon will begin to call out yoga poses, giving instructions by saying, “Simon says...” telling the kids to perform a specific pose. Use the descriptions provided with each pose as a guide adding new poses as you progress. Each child must get into the yoga pose. If Simon leaves out “Simon says” before giving instruction, anyone who did the pose is out!

Step 5: The players should follow Simon's directions and stay in the game for as long as possible! The last player standing wins and becomes the next Simon.

YOGA POSES: These kid-friendly yoga exercises can help your little ones develop important concentration skills and expand their ability to focus. It's also a great way to teach control and self-discipline.



TREE POSE: Standing on one leg, bend the opposite knee and place the sole of your foot on your inner ankle or thigh (never on your knee).



WARRIOR POSE: Extend your left leg behind you and your right leg out in front of you. Bending the right knee, extend your right arm straight out over the right leg and the left arm straight back over the left leg.



BUTTERFLY POSE: From a sitting position, bend your legs together so that the soles of your feet touch together. Gently flutter your legs.



FROG POSE: Squat on the floors, balancing on the floor, knees spread wide, hands on the floor or out in front of you.



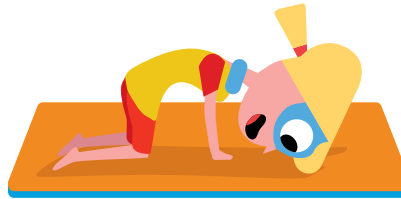
DOWNWARD FACING DOG POSE: Starting on your hands and knees, press your hands into the ground and straighten your legs as you lift your hips into the air. Relax your head and neck.



CHILD'S POSE: From a kneeling position, sit back on your heels and gently drop your forehead down to rest.



HAPPY BABY POSE: Lie on your back and hug your knees into your chest. Grab the outer part of your feet with both hands and rock like a happy baby.



CAT POSE: Kneel on all fours, with your hands positioned under your shoulders and your knees under your hips. Round your back towards the ceiling while keeping your eyes on the floor.



TABLETOP POSE: Rest comfortably on your hands and knees, with your arms under your shoulders and your knees under your hips.



BOAT POSE: Sit down and lean back slightly. Stretch your arms out directly in front of you. Lift your legs out in front of you while keeping your belly tight. Try to keep your balance as your body maintains a v-shape position.

Puppet Play (AGES 5+)

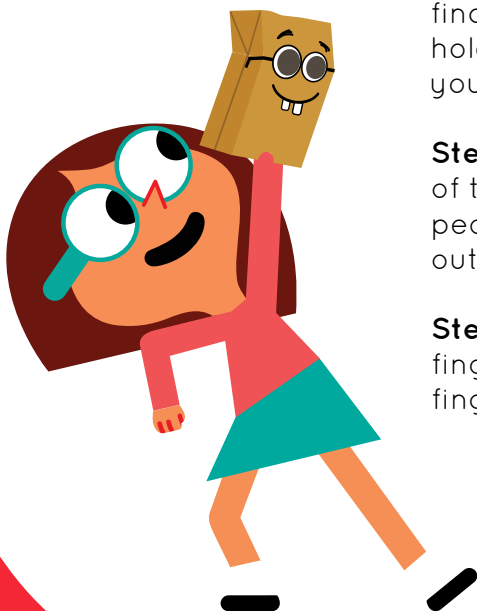
Puppet play gives children the opportunity to express their inner emotions while gaining an understanding of others as they act out various scenarios in a safe, playful environment. Putting on a puppet show and speaking in front of others helps children practice storytelling and develop self-confidence. Playing with puppets also improves fine motor skills, creativity, social awareness, and more.

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: Keep the bottom flap of the paper bag face up. Point the opening toward you.

Step 2: Draw the upper lip on the flap, along its lower edge. Then draw the lower lip on the body of the bag, where the edge of the flap meets it. Use the entire width of the flap to create an exaggerated mouth if desired, or a smaller one in proportion to the other facial features.

Step 3: Use pencils, pens, crayons, and/or markers to draw outlines for the facial features (nose, eyes, eyebrows, and ears, as well as hair if desired). Then, color them in.



Step 4: Open the flap. Be careful not to smooth out any creases. Draw the tongue below the crease that you find under the flap. Alternately, you can cut out a small hole here wide enough for your finger and use that as your tongue.

Step 5: Excluding the flap, use the lower three-quarters of the bag's body to design your puppet's body. For people, outline clothes and color them in. For animals, outline their color pattern and then color in.

Step 6: Slide your hand into the opening. Curl your fingers up and under the flap. Extend and curl your fingers to make your puppet "talk."

INGREDIENTS:

- Paper bag
- Crayons, markers, pencils, and paint
- Safety scissors
- Glue
- Construction paper
- Googly eyes and pom poms
- Colored material or fabric



MODIFICATION: Use craft materials to make your puppet pop.

Step 1: Outline your puppet's design in pencil on the bag. Color in the areas either by painting them or by gluing cutouts of colored construction paper to the bag.

Step 2: Glue googly eyes or colored pom poms to the bag for added features.

Step 3: Use a sheet of white construction paper to make a cutout of upper and bottom teeth.

Step 4: Glue colored yarn to make long or short hair, mustaches, beards, or animal fur. Play with pipe cleaners for spiky or crazy hair and whiskers.

Step 5: Glue fabric swatches onto the bag.



INGREDIENTS:

- Blank index cards
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Headbands
- Tape or paper clips
- Timer

Guess My Emotions (AGES 4+)

This game helps kids learn and practice different emotions while also developing their deductive reasoning and critical thinking skills. Additionally, when a child loses their turn, it creates an opportunity to practice overcoming difficult emotions like frustration and disappointment.

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: Take the time to make a list of approximately 20-25 different emotions with your child. Depending on their age, you will either have to make suggestions or let your child make the list on their own.

Step 2: Once you have a list of emotions, ask your child to take their time to draw each emotion on an index card and write the name of the emotion below the image. For example, show them how to draw “surprised” like this: 😲 or “happy” like this: 😊

Step 3: When all the emotion cards have been completed, start the game by placing the cards face down in the center of the playing area.

Step 4: Each player takes a headband and adjusts it around his/her head. Make sure the headband sits above the eyebrows and centered on the forehead.

Step 5: Deal one card face down to each player. Without looking at the picture side of the card, help your child tape their card or use a paper clip to secure the card onto the front of their headband so all the other players can see the picture. Make sure they cannot see their emotion card!



Step 6: Determine the length of the round and start. Instruct your child to ask each of the other players a “yes or no” question that will help them identify the emotion picture taped to their headband. Suggested questions: Do I feel this emotion in the summertime? Do I feel this emotion at school?

Step 7: Continue questions until time runs out. If the player guesses the picture before time is up, take another card and put it on the headband. If time has run out and your child has asked all the other players a question and hasn’t guessed their emotion, move on to the next player.

Step 8: Guess correctly and get a point. Guess incorrectly and lose the turn. The first player to earn three points wins!

DIY Calming Bottle (AGES 3+)

Calming bottles are an excellent tool for children that promote relaxation, encourage positive emotions, and provide moments of enjoyment to relieve tension. Good opportunities to use a calming bottle can be after periods of stress, such as a long car trip, arriving home tired from daycare or school, or even before bedtime.

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: Clean your bottle or jar.

Step 2: Fill the bottle about three-quarters of the way with hot water. If you plan to add items in addition to glitter, add less water.

Step 3: Add clear glue to the bottle within an inch or so of the top. Leave a little more room if you will be adding additional items.

Step 4: Add glitter! Allow your child to choose their favorite color or use multiple colors for added sparkle.

Step 5: Shake the bottle well to test how long it takes for the glitter to settle to the bottom of the bottle. If you want the glitter to fall more slowly, add more glue. If you want it to fall more quickly, add more water.

Step 6: Add extra details! Glow-in-the-dark pieces can make it a night light and small toy figurines can personalize the experience! Once you have the result you want, super glue or hot glue the lid shut.

INGREDIENTS:

- Clear bottle or jar with a lid that will shut tight (empty water bottles work well)
- Hot water
- Bottle of clear glue (do not use white glue)
- Glitter
- Super glue or hot glue

OPTIONAL: food coloring, glow-in-the-dark pieces, small building blocks, small toy figurines, or anything else that will hold up in water



Make a Vision Board (AGES 5+)

Putting goals on paper helps to build self-confidence. Setting goals teaches children to take responsibility for themselves and kids will learn that their actions can determine whether they fail or succeed. When children reach their goals, they learn to believe in their abilities and are more likely to set new goals for themselves in the future.

RECIPE FOR FUN:

Step 1: Introduce the concept of vision boards to your child and give them a few examples, such as images of animals if your child has a goal to be a veterinarian or images of a soccer field if they want to score a goal in their next game.

Step 2: Before picking photos to make the actual vision board, it's important to make a list of goals that your kids would want to represent on it. Guide your child with vision board prompts to help them think of focused goals and what they want to aim toward. It's okay to have multiple goals spanning different areas like learning, travel, activities, and more. Start out with easy prompts/questions and then move into goal-focused ones, such as:

- What are your favorite things to do?
- What do you want to learn in school?
- What is a goal that you want to accomplish this year?
- What is your dream job when you grow up?
- In your perfect vacation, which places would you like to travel to?

INGREDIENTS:

- A foam board, pinboard, or poster paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Magazines (to cut out relevant images from)
- Printed images (search online using affirmations and power words)
- Markers
- Stickers
- Colorful papers or sticky notes (to make your own drawing or write quotes/affirmations)





Step 3: In addition to photos, ask your child to think of affirmation statements or power words and write them on a piece of paper to add to the board. Let your child choose as little or as many as they want.

Affirmation suggestions:

- I can be anything I want to be.
- I am brave.
- I am smart.
- I am proud of myself.
- I am important.

Power word suggestions:

- Creative
- Happy
- Family
- Friendship
- Strong

Step 4: Now that you have your goals, photos, and supplies, it's time to put it all together! Lay down all the photos, words, affirmations, stickers, drawings, etc., and try out different placements. Add or remove items depending on how it looks. Once your child is happy with it, start gluing or pinning all the items on the board together.

Step 5: Finally, hang the board up in your child's bedroom so that they can see it every day. You can encourage a habit of looking at the board every day in the morning with focus before they go to school and keep reminding them of their immense capability.



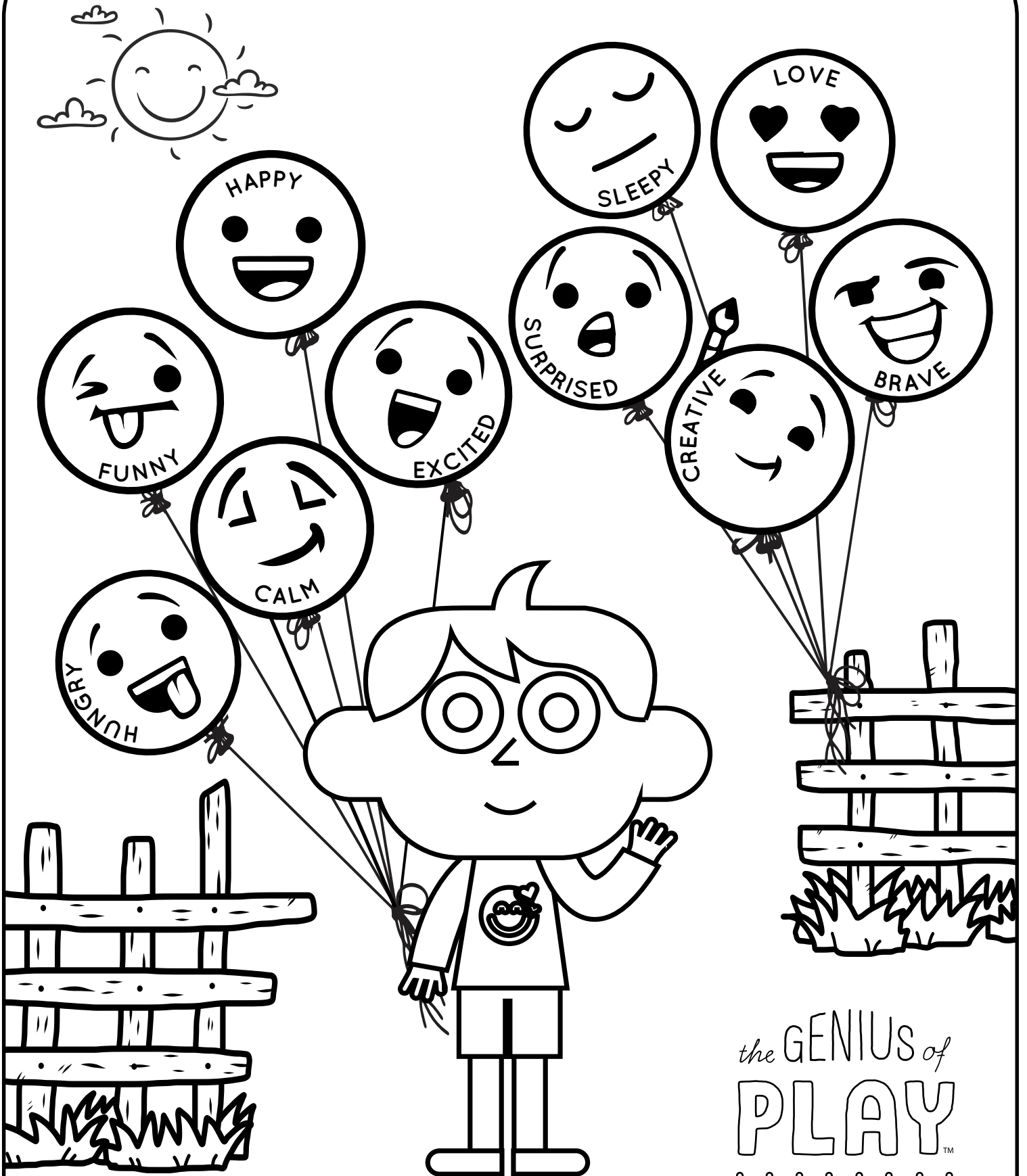
EMOTIONS WORD MIX

Use the mixed-up letters to create
the real emotion related words!

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Mixed-Up Letters	Real Word Answers
1. PHAYP	1.
2. EUFCNSOD	2.
3. GANYR	3.
4. DRPEI	4.
5. ENYLLO	5.
6. ASD	6.
7. ISUSRPDER	7.
8. EYVN	8.
9. SAEMH	9.
10. TEEICDX	10.
11. EFRA	11.
12. SLEJOAU	12.
13. OYJ	13.
14. VLEO	14.
15. HSY	15.
16. HDIRPISNFE	16.
17. GARCNI	17.
18. SIKENSDN	18.
19. MOBRDOE	19.
20. YMAHPTE	20.

COLOR YOUR FAVORITE FEELING

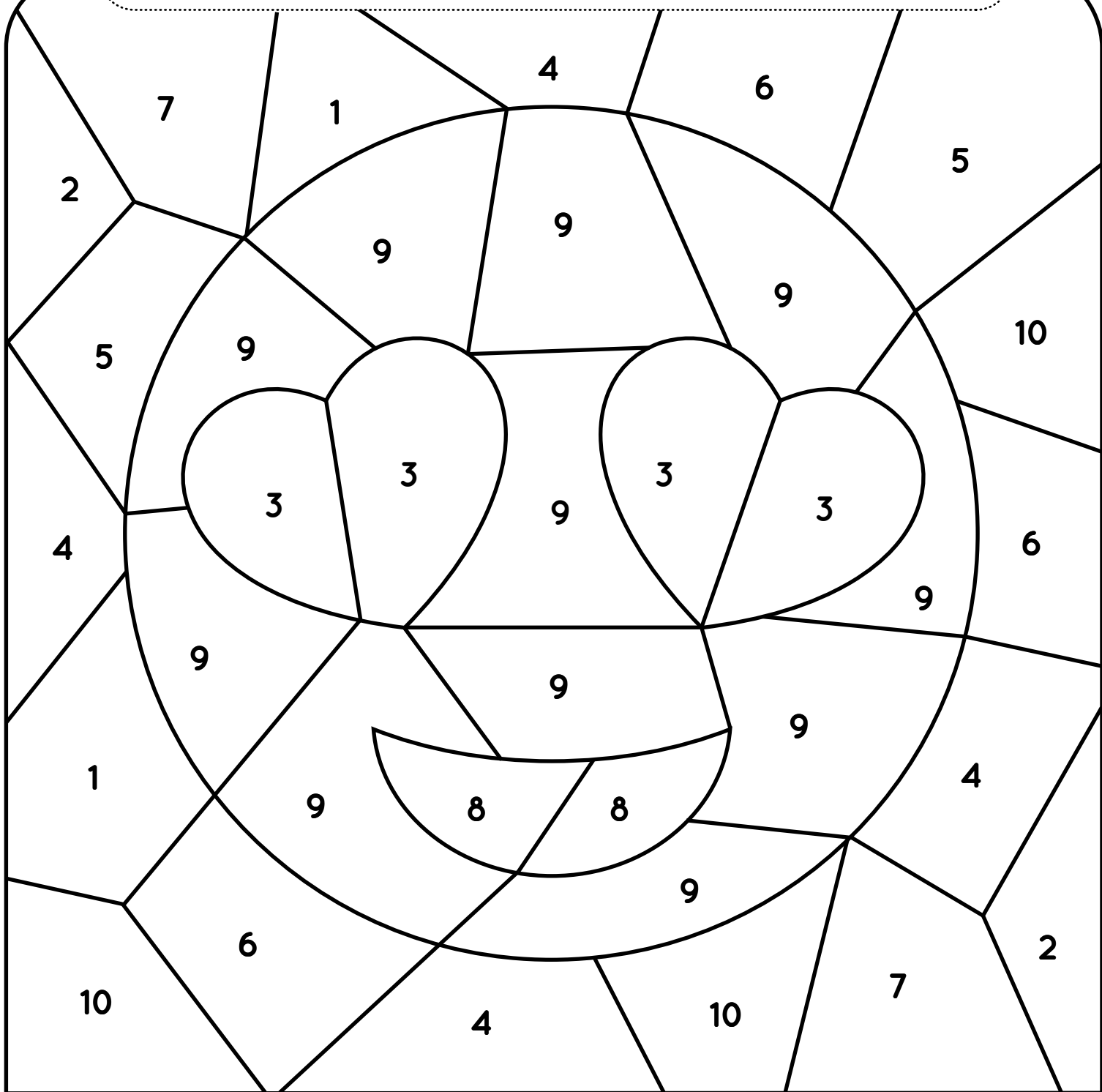


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EMOJI COLOR BY NUMBER



1 = Light Blue
2 = Pink
3 = Red
4 = Orange

5 = Green
6 = Purple
7 = Dark Blue

8 = Black
9 = Yellow
10 = Silver

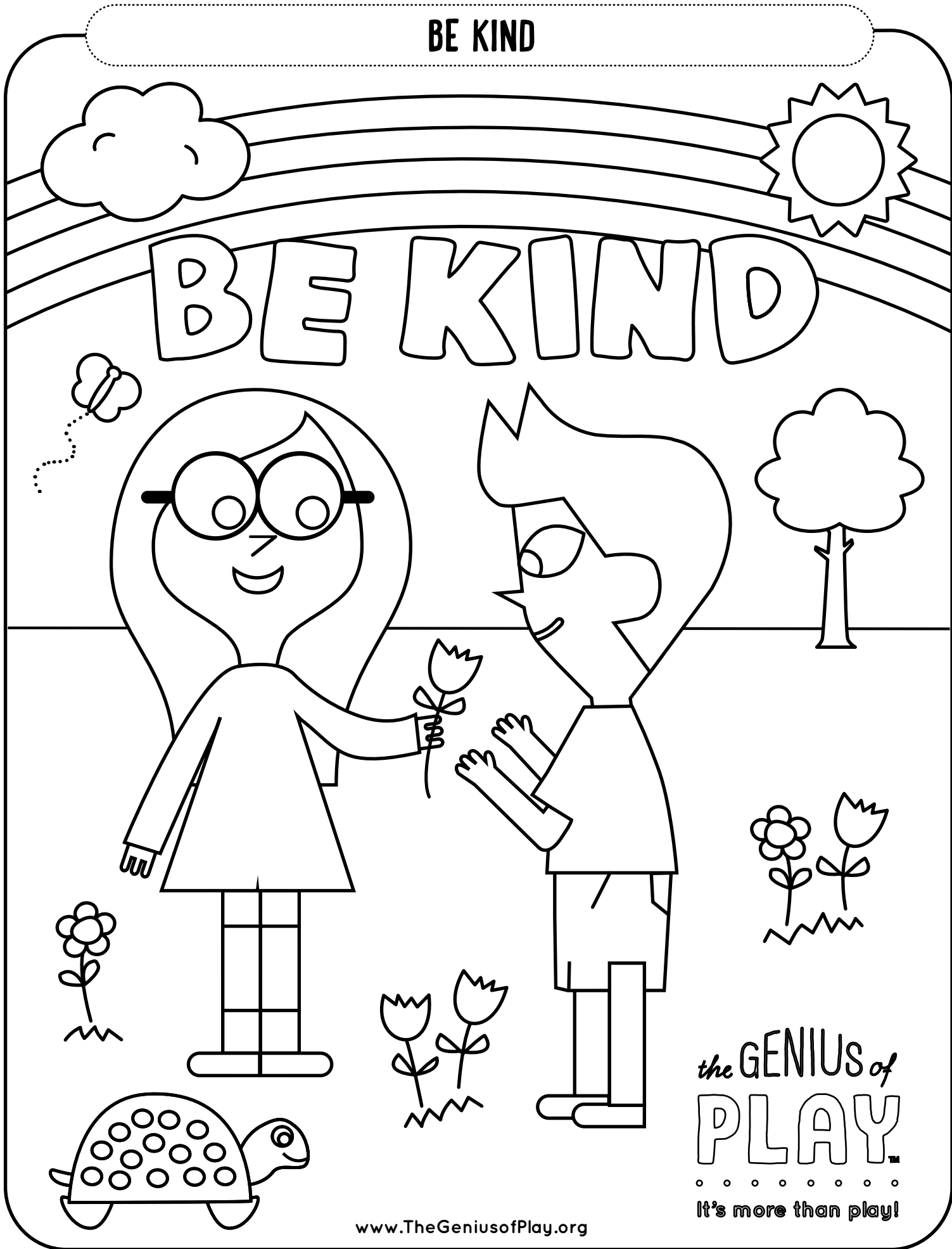
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BE KIND

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