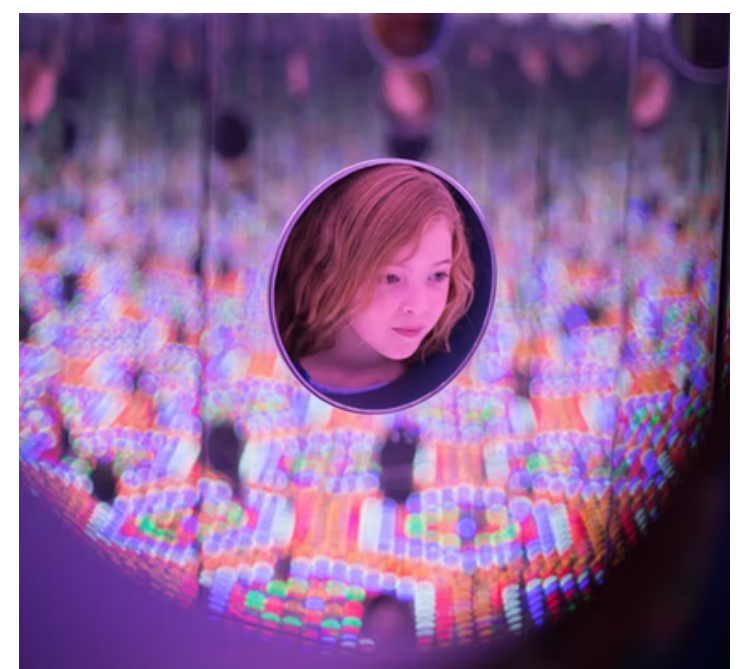




Understanding facial expressions

Having the ability to understand another person's facial expression, and to use your own expression to demonstrate your thoughts and feelings, is a key skill for both social and emotional expression. For many children who are Neurodivergent, this can be a difficult skill to acquire and the Covid-19 pandemic has made it a little more difficult. Due to the increased use of face masks, many children have not had the same opportunity to see many different full faces and expressions. This has led to some children finding it particularly difficult to interpret facial expressions and understand their meaning. This information sheet will offer some guidance around how we can support children with this.

Mirrors - Use mirrors to help children to see their own face. Ask the child to look in the mirror and describe what they see "My nose," "My eyes," "My big smile." You could also use the camera on a tablet or a phone to do this activity.



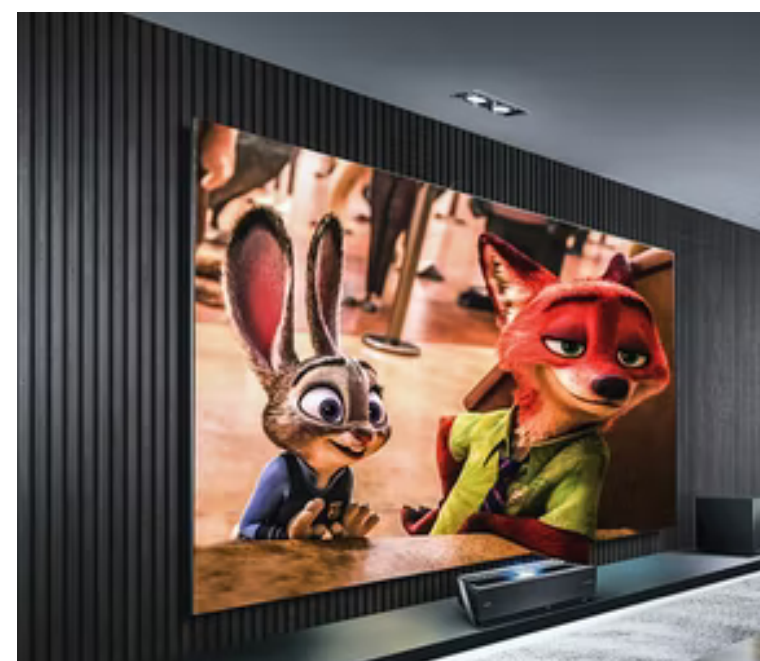
Arts and crafts activities - You could use playdoh and make different facial expressions with it. Chalk drawings of faces. Creating faces using paint and paper plates is also a really fun and engaging activity.



Films and television- watching children's films/television programme and describing the emotions of the characters.

Asking the child to guess what the character is going to do next.

Watch with the sound off and try and work out the emotions together.



Practice - Ask the child to show you what they know. "Show me your happy face?" Show me your sad eyes?"

Labelling emotions - When you see an emotion in a child, label it for them. You might want to use a phrase like "I think that your happy, because you have a big smile on your face" or if a child is sad "I think that you are sad because you have tears in your eyes"

