



CHAVORE ACTIVITY CARDS



Children As Directors:

Story Play
ACTIVITY CARD



Goal: Empower children to express and process experiences through self-directed storytelling and role-play. Support emotional development, creativity, and confidence by allowing children to lead play while adults follow with empathy and respect.

Age Range: 3 – 6 years

Time: 30–45 minutes (can be extended or repeated)

Materials:

- Costumes, scarves, hats, or props (optional)
- Natural or everyday items for setting up a scene (e.g. pillows, chairs, cardboard, leaves, boxes)
- A quiet indoor room, courtyard, or park space
- Simple decorations (fabric, drawings, signs, lights—optional)





Steps:

- 1. Explain the Activity:** Tell children they will be the directors of a story game where they get to decide what happens. You can begin with a small suggestion:
 - “Are we in a forest? A far-away village?”
 - “Are we animals, parents, teachers, or heroes?”
 - Or you can start a short story with many characters, then pause and ask, “What happens next?”Let the children take it from there. Adults follow their lead, asking light questions like “Who am I?” or “Where should I stand?”—but without adding your story ideas or judgment.
- 2. Follow Their Lead:** Let children guide the plot, roles, and rules. Avoid interpreting or correcting their choices, even if the story seems unusual or chaotic. This kind of play often helps children work through real-life feelings and experiences in a safe, symbolic way.
- 3. Respect and Empathy for All:** Make sure every participant (adult or child) is treated with kindness and has space to participate. Support shy children by asking, “Would you like to be part of this?” without pressure. Let each child “shine” in their own way.
- 4. Set the Scene Together:** Help the children decorate the space if they choose—a room corner, yard patch, or park area can become a stage, forest, castle, or shop. Use blankets, paper, nature items, or anything safe and imaginative. Keep the environment comfortable and secure for everyone.
- 5. Repeat Often:** Even if the game repeats, let it become a familiar rhythm. Over time, new stories and roles will emerge. Eventually, introduce other self-directed games—but always keep the core rule: children are the authors and directors, and everyone is safe and respected.
- 6. Do It All Again and Make It A Routine:** Designate a "Story Play Space" in your home, yard, or school where this kind of creative play can continue. Keep a box of loose parts or costume items nearby. When repeated regularly, this becomes a grounding, empowering experience for children—and a joyful time of connection for everyone involved.



Colors of My Day

ACTIVITY CARD



Goal: Support mental health through predictable routines and emotional reflection, helping children feel secure, heard, and in control of their day.

Materials: A children's book featuring emotions/themes

- Paper (plain or a printable template with a circle divided into 4–6 parts)
- Crayons or markers
- (Optional) Stickers for faces/emotions (happy, sad, tired, excited)

Why it matters: Routine and emotional awareness are crucial protective factors in early childhood mental health. This activity strengthens self-regulation, provides structure, and builds communication between parent and child. It's also an opportunity to process feelings in a safe space.

- Use simple language to describe feelings.
- Normalize all emotions ("It's okay to feel mad or tired too.")
- Do this at the same time each evening to reinforce routine.
- Use stickers or simple smiley/sad faces for younger children



Steps:

1. **Draw the Circle:** Help your child divide the circle into parts that represent parts of their day (morning, playtime, lunch, nap, evening, bedtime).
2. **Talk It Through:** Ask, "What did we do this morning?" or "How did you feel when we were playing outside?"
3. **Color and Reflect:** In each section, the child draws or colors something from that part of the day and picks a color or face to show how they felt.
4. **Parent Connection:** While drawing, the parent shares one feeling from their own day ("I felt happy when we ate lunch together").
5. **Evening Review:** Before bedtime, briefly review the day together: "It looks like playtime made you feel happy! That's great!"



Next steps for parents

- **Choose one** activity to start this week. Introduce it with warmth and curiosity.
- **Track how your child responds:** notice if they seem more confident, expressive, or connected.
- **Integrate both** over time: one in the morning (self-esteem), one in the evening (emotional reflection).
- **Repeat weekly**, building a home environment full of growth, connection, and joy

The two proposed home activities: 1. *Storytime*, and 2. *Colors of My Day* are directly aligned with the key findings from the local mapping and the evidence from Parent Powered resources <https://parentpowered.com/>.

The mapping highlighted a need for simple, practical ways for parents to support children's emotional expression, routine, and mental well-being at home.

These activities address that need by:

- Encouraging emotional connection and daily reflection;
- Promoting self-esteem and emotional vocabulary;
- Requiring minimal materials, making them accessible for all families.

They are rooted in best practices that promote joyful relationships, family engagement, and social-emotional development all essential for children's mental health.



Music Connection Pause:

Singing and Movement for Calm and Bonding

ACTIVITY CARD



Goal: To help parents create warm, playful moments of connection with their child while supporting emotional regulation and physical movement, using simple songs and gentle actions as part of everyday routines.

Age Range: Parents with children ages 2–7 years

Time: 5–10 minutes (can be used in the morning before leaving home, after returning from kindergarten, or during evening wind-down)

Why It Matters: In Chavore focus groups, parents shared that mornings and evenings can feel stressful, and getting children to cooperate is often a challenge. Singing and movement together can transform these moments into positive, connecting experiences while supporting your child's emotional needs and energy release.

Why It Works:

- Singing and rhythm help reduce stress and calm the nervous system.
- Movement allows children to release energy in a safe, positive way.
- Shared songs and movement strengthen parent-child connection.
- Supports language, musical, and emotional development.



Steps:

1. **Choose A Simple Song or Rhyme:** Pick a song your child likes, such as a lullaby, a playful clapping song, or a finger-play rhyme. Examples:
 - “If You’re Happy and You Know It”
 - “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”
 - Any simple family song you enjoy.
2. **Begin Singing Together:** Sing at a gentle, steady pace. Invite your child to sing along, but if they prefer to listen, that is perfectly fine.
3. **Add Movement:**
 - Clap your hands together in rhythm.
 - Rock your child gently in your arms or on your lap.
 - If your child enjoys jumping, invite them to jump softly with the beat.
4. **Check In On Feelings:** After the song, gently ask:
 - “How do you feel now?”
 - Your child can show you with their face or choose a feeling card if you use them at home.
5. **Offer A Gentle Connection:** End with a warm hug or a small gesture of closeness, like touching foreheads together or holding hands quietly for a moment.

Tips:

- Use it as part of your daily rhythm (before meals, after coming home, or before bedtime).
- Let your child choose the song, or learn a new one together.
- If your child is tired, gentle rocking with quiet humming can replace active singing.



My Proud Star: A Celebration of Strengths

ACTIVITY CARD



Goal: Support children’s self-esteem, emotional awareness, and positive identity development by encouraging daily reflection on their strengths, accomplishments, and kind actions. Build a family or classroom tradition of appreciation and affirmation.

Age Range: 3 – 6 years

Time: 10 – 15 minutes (can be extended or repeated daily)

Materials:

- Star template (drawn or printed)
- Crayons, markers, pencils
- Scissors
- String or tape (optional, for hanging)
- A visible space (wall, fridge, board, etc.) for display

MY PROUD STAR





Steps:

1. **Introduce the Activity:** Tell the child: “Today is a special day for giving ourselves praise! We are going to make a *Proud Star* to celebrate five things you did really well or that you feel proud of.”

Explain that everyone in the family can join in too. Each person will write or draw things they are proud of on a star.

2. **Name the Star:** Have the child (or parent) write their name in the center of the star. This is their proud star!
3. **Reflect and Express:** text Ask the child:
 - “What went really well for you today?”
 - “What are you proud of doing or learning?”
 - “What made you feel good about yourself?”

Support their thinking by giving examples if needed. They can write, draw, or describe five things they’re proud of in the star’s points.

4. **Color, Cut, and Display:** Once the star is filled in, the child can color it and cut it out. Hang the star somewhere visible—on the fridge, wall, or a string across the room.
5. **Invite Family Participation:** Encourage siblings, parents, or other caregivers to create stars too—writing five things *they* admire or are proud of about the child. These stars can be added to the display or given as small gifts.
6. **Make It a Daily Ritual:** Repeat the star activity daily or weekly with small variations:
 - One day: “What are 5 things you’re proud of today?”
 - Next day: “What did you do today that was kind or helpful at home or in kindergarten?”
 - Another day(s):
 - “What new thing did you learn today?”
 - “What good thing did you do today for the environment (plants, animals around you...)?”
 - “What good thing did you do today for your older family members?”

Create a “Proud Star Wall” or a “Star Journal” to collect stars and track the child’s reflections over time.

7. **Celebrate Growth:** After a week or a month, revisit the stars with the child. Talk about changes, patterns, or surprises in what they wrote. Celebrate their efforts and growth together.

TIP: Keep extra star templates handy and make this part of your bedtime routine or daily check-in. Small moments of recognition build big confidence over time.





We Are Community:

Child involvement in household life

ACTIVITY CARD



Goal: Promote children's sense of competence, self-regulation, and self-esteem by meaningfully involving them in family life. Encourage emotional expression, decision-making, and cultural connection through everyday participation and playful routines.

Age Range: 3 – 6 years

Time: Flexible – woven into daily routines

Materials:

- A small journal or paper for drawing and writing
- Materials for decorating a personal space (e.g. posters, safe paint, string, paper)
- A dedicated space in the home or courtyard for free expression and play
- Music (traditional or favorite songs), instruments or DIY instruments
- Family stories, photos, or objects with cultural significance
- Toys and materials of the child's choosing





Steps:

- 1. Explain the Activity:** Let children know they are important members of the household. Tell them that their ideas, feelings, and choices matter, and that the family will work together—like a small community. Explain that this includes choosing games, helping with daily plans, and sharing how they feel.
- 2. Encourage Participation and Planning:** Invite children to help with household planning:
 - Let them choose their own play or rest activities during free time.
 - Involve them in simple decisions—like what meals to prepare, or what household tasks they want to help with.
 - Ask for their input when setting family rules, especially those that affect them directly.
 - Use visual charts or symbols for tasks if helpful.
- 3. Create Emotional Check-In Moments:** Set aside a quiet, calm moment each day (morning or bedtime works well) to talk with your child. Ask:
 - What made you happy today?
 - What made you feel worried or scared?
 - What dream did you have? What do you want to do tomorrow?
 - Combine this with cuddles, storytelling, or soft music
- 4. Designate Expression Spaces:** Give your child permission to decorate part of their room or a wall with drawings, notes, or small crafts. If you have a courtyard or shared outdoor space, set up a "Free Play Zone" where they can explore, build, or perform (within respectful limits).
- 5. Join their world of play:** Play with your child regularly, both indoors and outdoors. Respect their toy choices, follow their lead in games, and encourage them to create stories or characters. Let them be the "storyteller" or "director."
- 6. Connect to family and culture:** Share stories about your family's history or culture. Teach them traditional dances, songs, or games. Encourage them to create new versions—combining their imagination with cultural roots. Join community events or folklore activities when possible.
- 7. Do it all the time:** Maintain family routines where children feel they are active participants in daily life. Keep emotional check-ins, storytelling, and shared planning with a regular, trusted rhythm. Let their "expression space" evolve with them and return often to shared cultural activities and play.



Move It to Soothe It:

Calming Frustration Through Playful Movement

ACTIVITY CARD



Goal: To help children release built-up frustration and restore emotional balance through physical movement. The activity supports emotional regulation by using the body to positively influence brain chemistry and reestablish a sense of control and calm.

Age Range: 3 – 7 years

Time: 10–15 minutes (can be adjusted based on the child's needs and energy level)

Materials:

- Open space (living room, backyard, hallway)
- Optional: music speaker for upbeat songs
- Optional props: scarves, soft balls, pillows, or yoga mats





Steps:

1. **Recognize the Frustration:** Notice when your child is overwhelmed, restless, or on the verge of a meltdown. Gently reflect what you see: “You seem really frustrated right now. Let’s move that big feeling out of your body together!”
2. **Invite Movement Playfully:** Choose one or more of the following movement games based on your child’s age and mood:
 - **Shake It Out:** Stand up and shake arms, legs, hips, and head while counting to 10 or singing a silly song.
 - **Animal Moves:** Ask your child to show you how a gorilla stomps, a frog jumps, a cat stretches, or a bird flaps its wings. You can turn this into a short “animal parade.”
 - **Pillow Toss:** Throw soft pillows across the room into a pile. Let your child push, carry, or jump into the pile.
 - **Dance It Out:** Put on an upbeat song and dance freely together for a few minutes. Try freezing when the music stops (freeze dance).
 - **Ball Roll:** Sit on the floor and roll a soft ball back and forth while naming a feeling with each roll (e.g., “angry,” “confused,” “tired”).
 - **Breathing Movement:** Do simple movements synced with breathing: stretch arms up while inhaling, bend forward while exhaling. Repeat slowly 3–5 times.
3. **Bring It Back:** As the energy starts to release, gradually shift to slower movements or cuddling. Offer a calm comment like: “That was a lot of moving! I can feel my body relaxing now. How about you?”
4. **Optional Cool-Down:** Finish with a calming breath together. Try:
 - “Smell the flower, blow out the candle” breathing
 - Hug while counting to 10 slowly
 - Lie down on the floor and feel the heartbeat slow down

Tips:

- Be silly, loving, and non-judgmental - the goal is emotional release, not “perfect” behavior.
- Join in the movement - co-regulation works best when you're part of the fun.
- Avoid forcing; invite and model instead. Even a few moments of movement can help.



Soft Hug Pause:

Connection and Calm at Home

ACTIVITY CARD



Goal: To help parents support their children in calming down during moments of overwhelm or strong feelings while strengthening connection, using a simple, warm practice that teaches emotional regulation in a safe, loving way.

Age Range: Parents with children ages 2.5 – 7 years

Time: 3–10 minutes (can be used whenever your child feels upset, angry, or restless).

Why It Matters: During Chavore focus groups, parents shared that they often feel helpless or disconnected when their child has a “meltdown” or strong feelings. The *Soft Hug Pause* offers a way to connect instead of escalating, and helps the child learn how to calm themselves while feeling safe and supported.

Why It Works:

- Physical closeness and slow breathing help calm the nervous system.
- The child feels you are with them, not against them.
- Supports emotional regulation and builds a language for feelings.
- Strengthens connection between parent and child, even in challenging moments.



Steps:

1. **Set Up A Soft Space:** Use a couch, a blanket, or a corner with pillows. You can call it your “Hug Corner.”
2. **Announce It Gently:** “We’re going to take a Soft Hug Pause so we can calm down together.” This helps your child know it is not a punishment, but a comforting break.
3. **Sit Together Comfortably:**
 - Invite your child to sit on your lap or beside you.
 - Wrap a soft blanket around you both, or bring your child’s favourite stuffed animal.
 - If your child does not want physical touch, they can hold a soft toy while sitting near you.
4. **Breathe Together:** Say: “Let’s take a slow breath together, like we’re blowing out a bubble.” Breathe in slowly through your noses, then exhale gently through your mouths, as if blowing out a candle. Repeat 3–5 times.
5. **Name the Feeling:** In a calm voice, say: “I see you’re feeling really angry/sad right now.” This helps your child recognise and name their feelings, reducing overwhelm.
6. **Offer A Gentle Hug or Soft Touch:** If your child is open to it, give a soft, warm hug or gently rub their back until they feel calmer.
7. **Close with Encouragement:** “You did such a good job calming down with me.”
If your child would like, they can draw how they felt before and after, or choose a quiet play activity afterward.

Tips:

- Try it for the first time when everyone is calm, so it feels familiar when needed.
- Use it before bedtime if your child feels restless.
- Create a “Soft Hug Pause” corner at home with a blanket, a favourite soft toy, and a calm-down book.



Goal: Strengthen emotional literacy, empathy, and parent-child bonding through shared storytime and reflective questions.

Materials: A children's book featuring emotions/themes

Optional: puppets or emotion cards (happy, sad, mad, calm)

Why it matters: Dialogic reading and open-ended questions help children express emotions, foster self-awareness, language, and secure parent-child communication.

- Keep sessions under 10 minutes; it's about quality engagement.
- Focus on 2–3 emotions per book.
- Validate your child's feelings: "That's okay to feel."
- Use this moment to practice emotion naming in daily life.



Steps:

1. **Pick a story:** Choose one that explores characters' emotions.
2. **Read together:** As you go, pause at emotion-rich moments.
3. **Ask open-ended questions** such as, "Why do you think she feels that way?"
"Have you felt like that before?"
4. **Name the emotion:** Identify it: "That's frustration," or "He's excited."
5. **Connect personally:** The parent shares: "When I feel like that, I sometimes..."

Wrap-up reflection: "How did the story make you feel?" if used, have a child match their emotion to a puppet or card.



Tell Me the Story:

Helping Children Make Sense of Difficult Experiences

ACTIVITY CARD



Goal: To help children process and understand challenging or painful experiences by engaging both the left and right hemispheres of the brain through storytelling. The activity supports emotional regulation, builds connection between parent and child, and encourages children to make sense of what happened using language and emotion.

Age Range: 3 - 7 years

Time: 20–40 minutes (can be extended or split into parts depending on the child's readiness and engagement)

Materials:

- Comfortable space to sit or play
- Optional: Drawing paper, markers/crayons
- A quiet activity to do together (e.g., building blocks, card game, or car ride)





Steps:

1. **Set the Scene Naturally:** Choose a moment when your child feels safe and relaxed - not during a meltdown or immediately after a stressful event. Ideal times include while playing, walking, or doing a calming activity together.
2. **Start with a Story (from the Parent):** Begin by gently sharing a short story of your own about a time you felt scared, upset, or confused as a child. Keep the tone calm and reassuring. Include:
 - What happened
 - How you felt
 - What you thought
 - What helped you feel better
3. **Invite the Child to Share (No Pressure):** Say something like: "Have you ever felt something like that?" or "That reminds me of what happened when you... Do you remember that?"
Let your child speak as much or as little as they like. If they don't want to talk, respect their space and try again another time.
4. **Gently Co-Narrate:** If the child begins telling a story, help them build it out:
 - Ask about details: "What happened next?"
 - Help them name feelings: "Were you scared?" "Did it make you sad or angry?"
 - Reassure and validate emotions: "That makes a lot of sense, I would feel the same."
5. **Use Drawing or Writing as an Alternative:** If the child resists talking, invite them to:
 - Draw the situation or how it felt
 - Write or dictate a short story about what happened
 - Or use toys to "act it out" in play
6. **Wrap Up with Safety and Connection:** After the story, offer comfort and emphasize that they are safe and loved.
7. For example: "Thank you for sharing that with me. I'm really proud of you. You can always tell me anything."

Tips:

- Avoid forcing the conversation. Try again later if the child resists.
- Keep your voice soft, body relaxed, and attitude curious.
- Remember: The goal is not to "fix" the feelings but to help the child understand and name them.



Wellbeing Bingo:

Everyday Acts of Kindness and Care
ACTIVITY CARD



Goal: Promote children’s social-emotional development, self-awareness, and connection with others through playful daily actions that support wellbeing. Encourage healthy habits, kindness, movement, rest, and positive self-talk in a fun, family-friendly format.

Age Range: 3–6 years

Time: Flexible – over one day or one week

Materials:

- Printable Wellbeing Bingo card (or draw your own grid on paper)
- Crayons, stickers, or stamps for marking boxes
- Optional: small rewards or celebrations for full rows/columns
- A place to display the bingo card

Wellbeing Bingo

 Smelled a flower	 Got a good night's sleep	 Played outside	 Said something kind to myself
 Helped someone	 Laughed	 Ate a healthy snack	 Drank water
 Took a deep breath	 Read a book	 Gave someone a hug	 Had quiet time
 Said hello to a friend	 Stretched my body	 Talked about my feelings	 Tried something new



Steps:

- 1. Introduce the Game:** Tell the child: “We are going to play a special game called Wellbeing Bingo! Every time you do one of the kind or healthy things in a box, you can color it in or put a sticker on it.”
Let them know they can choose which box to complete first, and there’s no need to rush. They can do one or several a day.
- 2. Explain the Goal:** The goal is not to “win” quickly but to try as many acts of wellbeing as possible during the week. Celebrate effort, not speed!
- 3. Display the Bingo Card:** Place the card somewhere visible (e.g. the fridge or wall). Encourage the child to check in daily and talk about what they did.
- 4. Celebrate the Small Wins:** When the child completes a row, column, or even just one act, celebrate it! Offer praise, a high five, or a sticker. Focus on what the child felt while doing the activity:
 - “How did it feel to help someone?”
 - “What made you smile today?”
 - “What was hard, and how did you do it anyway?”
- 5. Extend and Reflect:** At the end of the week, reflect together. Which boxes were easy? Which ones were new? Would they like to create their own wellbeing bingo for next time?

Tip: You can adapt the bingo sheet to include personal or cultural routines. For example: “I listened to stories my grandparents tell in Romani”, or “I helped prepare a traditional Roma dish at home.”

Wrap-up reflection: “How did the story make you feel?” If used, have a child match their emotion to a puppet or card.



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