

‘The Colour Monster’ by Anna Llenas

Using the book to support children’s emotional wellbeing in school.

This resource is designed to support young children to recognise and name their emotions.

As young children begin to experience a range of emotions that they cannot yet put into words, this is the perfect book to help them. The protagonist is a sweet monster who wants to explain how he feels and uses colour to do so. It features a monster confused by all his feelings, who then learns to compartmentalise them. Each double-page spread features a different emotion. Parents and teachers could certainly use this book to spark discussion about different feelings and perhaps help children understand them a bit more. It might lead to talk about other feelings too, such as what colour would represent boredom - perhaps brown or grey? Sharing this book may also inspire children to create their own colour monster.

Faupel et al (ed 2003) use the term ‘Emotional Literacy’ to define one’s ability to ‘recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express their own emotions and to recognise, understand and respond appropriately to the expressed emotions of others’. They go on to say that

‘the understanding and management of emotions are increasingly being seen as central to the whole process of growth and development into adulthood’.

Emotional Literacy is concerned with *myself and my emotions* on the one hand and with *other people and their emotions* on the other.

This is a very visual representation of emotion linked clearly to different colours which children can use to define/say how they are feeling both at home and in the classroom.

Using the resource

This resource is intended for use with younger children in KS1. It can be linked to the *Zones of Regulation* (Leah Kuypers) when children move into KS2 (NB: there are slight colour discrepancies but these can easily be altered/addressed).

There are three elements to

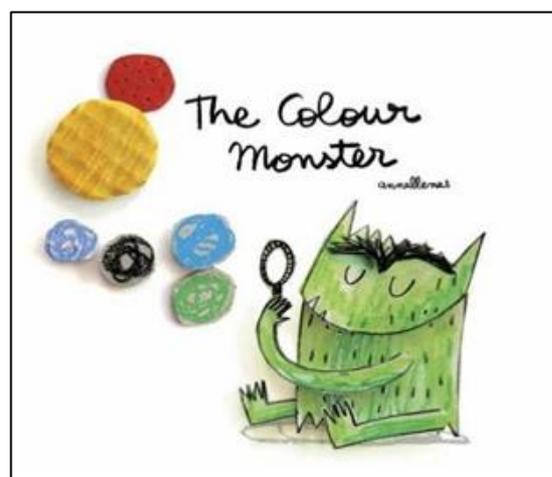
‘The Colour Monster’, the story book,

An activity book

and a 3D ‘pop-up’ book.

Colour representation of emotions in the book:

- Yellow = happy
- Blue = sad/not feeling right
- Red = angry
- Green = calm
- Black = fear/scared
- Pink = loved



Schools can use this resource in a variety of ways:

Checking in. Children can select a monster in a particular colour or put their name on a coloured jar to represent how they are feeling. This can be done first thing in the morning and then throughout the day.

Children should be encouraged to do this when things are going well as well as when things are beginning to unravel.



Adults can also use the resource to model to children how they are feeling. This can be done on an individual basis or can be used by the whole class

When a child is 'bubbling'. Getting a child to be able to point to a monster or move their name onto a jar when they are starting to feel a particular emotion can be taught using this resource. This is the first step for a child to be able to recognise when they may need help with managing how they feel.



Supporting the child ...

In order to contain and support the emotions of the children, adults should monitor the displays and take note of where children place themselves. Children should then be approached and the adult can ask them what has made them feel like that and if they need any help to manage this. Individual children with SEMH needs may need an adult to take over and manage the feeling for them, e.g. if they are on red. This is likely to be part of a Consistent Management Plan where the adult follows particular steps when the child is displaying 'red' behaviours. Adults can begin to use the 'language of emotions' when the child is familiar with the colours. E.g. 'I can see you have moved your name to the red jar, this is telling me you are angry'.

The blue jar can be different as it can show sadness as well as just not feeling 'right', children may need guidance and questioning if on this colour to ensure adults understand exactly what they are displaying.

Further ways to use the resource



Black and white monsters. These can be used in a number of ways. They can be used as part of a discussion around emotions, children can select a picture they think represents them and talk about what colour it would be and why. They can use the pictures to tell a story about that monster using emotions vocabulary. They can also be selected instead of the pre-coloured monsters when a child want to say how they are feeling – this would need to be accompanied by the language of emotion and so would be something a child could use when they have mastered using the colours.

Discussion. The book can be read to the whole class as part of a PSHE session to stimulate a discussion around emotions and how we are feeling. This can then start a whole class use of the Colour Monster. Discussion about further feelings and the colours they might be can also take place, e.g. boredom, jealousy, etc.

Collecting coloured objects for the jars. Children can have a selection of clear jars which they can physically collect items of the different colours featured in the story to represent feelings and make a display. E.g. yellow objects that make the child feel happy, green objects that are calming, etc.

Using the activity book. The activity book can be used to photocopy different pages for children to colour. This can be done as a calming activity if needed or just to show how they are feeling at the time.

Resources and References:

Llenas, A. (2016) *The Colour Monster* Templar Publishing:London

Faupel et al (ed) (2003) *Emotional Literacy - Assessment and Intervention* GL Assessment.