

# ELSA - SMART Targets

## Emotional Literacy

A SMART target is a goal-setting tool that helps ensure objectives are clearly defined and achievable. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound:

- **Specific:** The target clearly outlines what the child is expected to achieve.
- **Measurable:** Progress can be tracked and evaluated using clear criteria.
- **Achievable:** The target is realistic and suited to the child's developmental stage and abilities.
- **Relevant:** The goal directly supports the child's emotional literacy and overall learning needs.
- **Time-bound:** The target is set within a clear time frame, ensuring focus and motivation.

Using SMART targets is essential when supporting children's emotional literacy because it ensures a structured approach to developing key skills, such as recognising, understanding, and managing emotions. SMART targets provide clarity for both staff and children, helping to monitor progress effectively, adjust strategies when needed, and celebrate successes. This approach encourages consistency, making it easier to support children in achieving their emotional development goals.

## SMART target examples

### 1. Perceiving Emotions in Self and Others

**(Recognising and identifying emotions in self and others.)**

- Early Primary: In 6 weeks, [child's name] will recognise and label three basic emotions (happy, sad, angry) in themselves with 80% accuracy in classroom discussions.
- Early Primary: Over the next 8 weeks, [child's name] will identify emotions in pictures by labelling facial expressions in 4 out of 5 classroom activities.
- Mid Primary: Within 8 weeks, [child's name] will correctly recognise basic emotions (happy, sad, excited) in peers during play on four separate occasions.
- Mid Primary: Over the next 6 weeks, [child's name] will identify peers' emotions using facial expressions and body language during group activities 80% of the time.
- Late Primary: In 8 weeks, [child's name] will correctly identify when a peer is upset or happy in classroom activities on four separate occasions.
- Late Primary: Within the next 10 weeks, [child's name] will independently use emotion cards to identify their own and a peer's feelings during group activities on 5 occasions.
- Early Secondary: In 6 weeks, [child's name] will identify emotions in more complex situations (e.g., sarcasm, subtle anger) during discussions with 75% accuracy.
- Early Secondary: Over 8 weeks, [child's name] will recognise emotions in others through voice tone and body language, successfully identifying them 4 times in group work.
- Late Secondary: Over the next 8 weeks, [child's name] will recognise when others are masking their emotions (e.g., hiding disappointment) in at least 3 class discussions.

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- Late Secondary: Within 10 weeks, [child's name] will identify emotional cues from subtle nonverbal behaviours (e.g., fidgeting, eye contact) in peers in 3 separate situations.
- College-aged: Over the next 8 weeks, [young person's name] will correctly interpret complex emotional cues (e.g., ambivalence, conflicting emotions) during academic or social group settings 3 times.
- College-aged: In 10 weeks, [young person's name] will demonstrate the ability to recognise the emotions of others in diverse social settings (e.g., new environments, group activities) at least 4 times.

## 2. Understanding Emotions

### (Grasping why emotions occur and what they mean.)

- Early Primary: In 6 weeks, [child's name] will explain why they feel happy or sad after specific classroom activities (e.g., losing a game) in 3 different situations with teacher prompts.
- Early Primary: Over the next 8 weeks, [child's name] will match basic emotions to causes (e.g., feeling sad when left out) in at least 3 classroom discussions.
- Mid Primary: Within 8 weeks, [child's name] will explain why peers might feel certain emotions in response to class events or games on 4 separate occasions.
- Mid Primary: Over the next 6 weeks, [child's name] will discuss the reasons behind a peer's emotions in class storytime or role-play, explaining these 3 times.
- Late Primary: In 8 weeks, [child's name] will predict how they and others might feel in response to upcoming school activities (e.g., school trips, assemblies) in 3 separate situations.
- Late Primary: Over the next 10 weeks, [child's name] will explain how specific events (e.g., changes in routine) can lead to certain emotional reactions in themselves and peers at least 4 times.
- Early Secondary: Within 6 weeks, [child's name] will differentiate between immediate and delayed emotional responses (e.g., frustration turning into sadness later) in classroom discussions with 75% accuracy.
- Early Secondary: In 8 weeks, [child's name] will identify complex emotions (e.g., guilt, jealousy) and their causes in classroom discussions on 4 occasions.
- Late Secondary: Over 10 weeks, [child's name] will explain how different perspectives or backgrounds can lead to different emotional responses to the same event, in at least 3 classroom discussions.
- Late Secondary: Within the next 8 weeks, [child's name] will identify how stress or pressure can affect emotional responses (e.g., irritability, anxiety) in at least 3 academic situations.
- College-aged: Over 8 weeks, [young person's name] will analyse how external factors (e.g., social expectations, cultural norms) can influence emotional responses in group discussions or essays on 2 occasions.
- College-aged: In 10 weeks, [young person's name] will demonstrate understanding of emotional complexities (e.g., feeling both proud and anxious about a decision) in 3 reflective essays or discussions.

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### 3. Using Emotions

#### (Leveraging emotions for tasks, decision-making, and social interaction.)

- Early Primary: In 6 weeks, [child's name] will participate in weekly creative activities (e.g., drawing, role-play) to express basic emotions (happy, sad).
- Early Primary: Over the next 8 weeks, [child's name] will use emotion cards to select and express how they are feeling before engaging in classroom activities on 4 separate occasions.
- Mid Primary: In 8 weeks, [child's name] will express their emotions verbally (e.g., "I feel happy when...") during group discussions in at least 4 class sessions.
- Mid Primary: Over the next 6 weeks, [child's name] will use their current emotional state to make decisions (e.g., choosing a quiet or active task) in unstructured classroom time on 3 occasions.
- Late Primary: In 10 weeks, [child's name] will identify how their emotional state impacts their academic work (e.g., frustration slowing them down) at least 3 times.
- Late Primary: Over the next 8 weeks, [child's name] will use positive emotions (e.g., enthusiasm) to contribute more actively in group discussions on 3 separate occasions.
- Early Secondary: In 6 weeks, [child's name] will use emotional awareness to make decisions about group work (e.g., managing frustration) during 4 different group activities.
- Early Secondary: Within 8 weeks, [child's name] will adapt their emotional responses (e.g., calming down before speaking) when working in teams during 3 group projects.
- Late Secondary: Over the next 10 weeks, [child's name] will use empathy to adjust their responses and better collaborate with peers during 4 class projects.
- Late Secondary: In 8 weeks, [child's name] will demonstrate how to use emotional motivation (e.g., excitement, determination) to complete tasks (e.g., homework, class presentations) on at least 3 occasions.
- College-aged: Over 10 weeks, [young person's name] will apply emotional awareness when making decisions in high-pressure situations (e.g., group leadership roles) at least 3 times.
- College-aged: In 8 weeks, [young person's name] will use emotional intelligence to adapt their communication and leadership styles based on peer feedback in 3 group settings.

### 4. Managing Emotions

#### (Regulating emotional responses and applying coping strategies.)

- Early Primary: In 6 weeks, [child's name] will use a calming strategy (e.g., deep breathing) when upset during classroom activities in 3 separate instances with teacher guidance.
- Early Primary: Over the next 8 weeks, [child's name] will use emotion cards to express their feelings when frustrated, instead of reacting impulsively, on 4 occasions.
- Mid Primary: In 8 weeks, [child's name] will successfully use a calming corner or designated quiet area when overwhelmed during free play in 3 different instances

- Mid Primary: Over the next 6 weeks, [child's name] will use a break strategy (e.g., asking for time out) when feeling frustrated in 3 separate situations.
- Late Primary: In 10 weeks, [child's name] will demonstrate the use of two coping strategies (e.g., deep breathing, positive self-talk) during stressful situations (e.g., tests) in 4 different cases.
- Late Primary: Over the next 8 weeks, [child's name] will use a learned emotional regulation strategy (e.g., counting to 10) to avoid conflict in at least 3 classroom situations.
- Early Secondary: In 6 weeks, [child's name] will apply an appropriate self-regulation technique (e.g., mindfulness) to manage anxiety before exams or presentations on 3 occasions.
- Early Secondary: Over 8 weeks, [child's name] will independently use two self-regulation techniques (e.g., reframing, asking for help) when managing disappointment or frustration in group tasks on 3 occasions.
- Late Secondary: Within the next 8 weeks, [child's name] will reflect on their emotional responses in academic settings and choose a strategy (e.g., journaling, talking with a peer) to manage stress on 3 occasions.
- Late Secondary: In 10 weeks, [child's name] will successfully use a coping technique to manage high levels of stress or anxiety during exams or significant events, as reported by teachers, on at least 3 occasions.
- College-aged: Over 8 weeks, [young person's name] will demonstrate the use of advanced self-regulation techniques (e.g., cognitive reframing, mindfulness) to manage stress during high-pressure academic or social events on at least 3 occasions.
- College-aged: In 10 weeks, [young person's name] will regularly employ time management, mindfulness, or other coping strategies to maintain emotional balance during the semester, successfully applying them on 4 occasions.

## Top tip for writing SMART targets

When writing SMART targets for emotional literacy, it's essential to focus on clear, achievable, and time-bound objectives that match the child's current level of emotional understanding. Begin by observing each child's emotional strengths and areas for growth, then tailor the target to suit their specific needs.

Personalising these targets requires attention to the unique developmental trajectory of each child. Keep in mind that a child's chronological age doesn't always align with their emotional development. For example, a child in secondary school might still need to work on recognising basic emotions, or a younger child may be ready to begin using more advanced emotional strategies. It's okay to draw from targets designed for younger or older age groups based on the child's needs.