

Inside Out: A Parent's Guide to Viewing & Teaching SEL Skills

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Pixar/Disney film *Inside Out* is a wonderful opportunity for families to have really valuable conversations about the importance of all emotions, what purpose they serve, and how best to express them. Movies such as *Inside Out* can serve as a valuable tool to teaching social-emotional learning (SEL) and enhance verbal skills.

Young children have all the same emotions that adults have, such as anger, joy, sadness, disgust, and fear, to name just a few. (In the movie these five emotions are the leading cast of characters, even though emotions run a much wider gamut). *Inside Out* creates a visual model of the psyche so that young children can better understand how our brains are three-dimensional. Ultimately the message that is most valuable for young viewers is that **all emotions are valuable and serve a purpose and emotions are neither good nor bad, they are all just normal!**

- **Watch it Together.** Watching together will allow you to identify what moments really struck a chord for your child by viewing their emotional reactions and will provide you with a starting place to begin your conversations once you have seen the movie in its entirety.
- **Listen and Reflect.** Listen to your child's observations first. By building on their interests and excitement we can engage them in deeper and more thoughtful conversations because they have taken a lead in the conversation. When your child shares a thought or opinion, even if you don't agree with it, it is important to reflect back what you have heard or paraphrase it before following up with a question, so they feel heard and thus will be more open to hearing what it is you will be sharing or asking. This might sound like, "Wow, it sounds like you thought the memory dump was a really scary place."
- **Ask Lots of Questions.** After paying attention to what it is your child responds to in the movie, ask open-ended questions about the story, its characters, situations, and themes. Listen to how your child answers your questions and be sure to ask a follow-up question that refers to their answer. Feel free to ask questions during the movie that you can later reference when the movie is over. For example, "What do you think of (*a certain character*)" or "What do

you think is going to happen next?” or “How do you think this is going to end?” After the movie you can then follow up with questions like “So after seeing how things ended, did you feel the same about (*a certain character*)?” or “Was there anything that surprised you about the ending?” When your child answers, you can always follow up with a “why?” if they don't share their reasoning.

There is not a right or wrong time to have these conversations. Your child may need time to process what happened in the movie and formulate their opinions, so don't feel like you need to have these conversations right away. Really meaningful conversations often take place at bedtime, during car rides, or during meals. Take advantage of these moments when you have your child's undivided attention to process and ask questions about the movie you have watched together in the recent past.

Discussion Guide

- What did you enjoy about this movie?
- Who was your favorite character? What did you like most about him/her?
- Do you remember the names of the different emotions and what they were? Can you make a face that represents that emotion? When might you feel this emotion?
- What other emotions are there that you did not see in the movie? When might you feel these emotions?
- What scene do you remember best? Why do you think that is?
- What did the parents say or do when Riley was feeling sadness or anger? Did you like what they did or said? How do you think that made Riley feel? Is there anything you would have liked her parents to have done or said instead/as well?
- How do you think Sadness made Bing Bong feel better? What did she do or say? Why do you think this made Bing Bong feel better?
- Is sadness a bad feeling? Why or why not?
- What do you normally do when you are feeling Angry? Sad? Fearful? Joyful? Disgusted?
- Why did God give us all these emotions? How do emotions help us?
- Where is God when we are feeling these emotions?