

Nourishing the sparks of connection whilst your child is in care, or not living with you

Children thrive when they are surrounded by people who love them. When parents know what is happening for their child, they can support them and the adults around them to make the most of Family Time*/ Contact.

* Family Time is the preferred term for the contact that children in care, or not living with them, have with their family members.



Your child may be trying to:

- Adjust to changed routines
- Understand where they belong
- Avoid upsetting you
- Sustain friendships
- Stay in touch with family
- Express difficult emotions
- Work out what they want from Family Time



Fear

What they may be feeling:



Sadness



Guilt



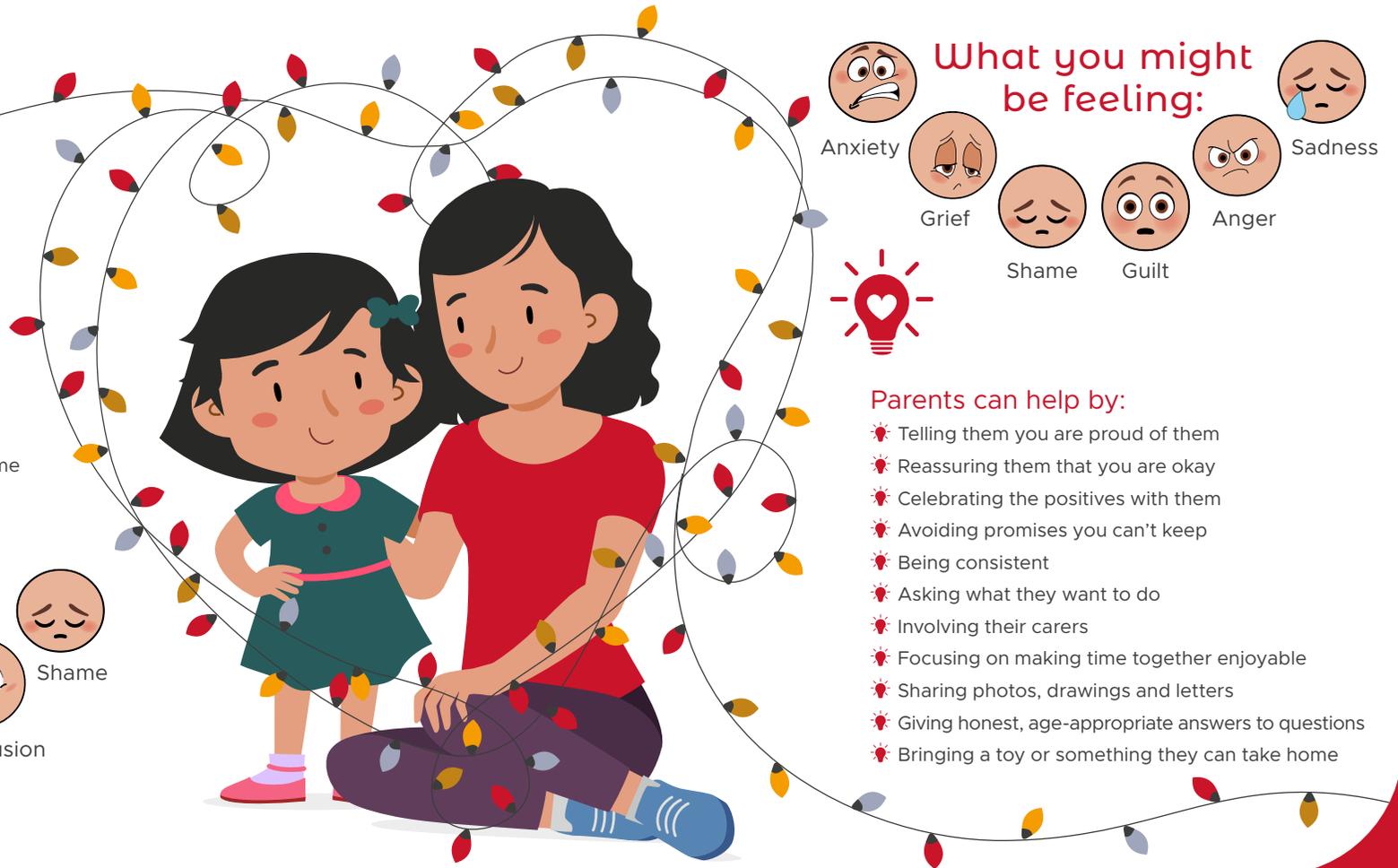
Anxiety



Confusion



Shame



Anxiety

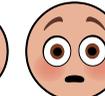
What you might be feeling:



Grief



Shame



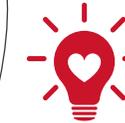
Guilt



Anger



Sadness



Parents can help by:

- Telling them you are proud of them
- Reassuring them that you are okay
- Celebrating the positives with them
- Avoiding promises you can't keep
- Being consistent
- Asking what they want to do
- Involving their carers
- Focusing on making time together enjoyable
- Sharing photos, drawings and letters
- Giving honest, age-appropriate answers to questions
- Bringing a toy or something they can take home

Strengthening all the sparks of connection

How parents can support the carers looking after their child and improve Family Time* / Contact

* Family Time is the preferred term for the contact that children in care, or not living with them, have with their family members.

There are things parents can do to show support for their child and strengthen important connections at Family Time.



Your child's carer may be:

- ⚡ Balancing care needs of multiple children
- ⚡ Lacking information about your child's history
- ⚡ Getting to know your child
- ⚡ Following agency rules
- ⚡ Lacking certainty about how long your child will stay with them



The professionals working with your child may be:

- ⚡ Balancing the needs of multiple families
- ⚡ Following policies and procedures
- ⚡ Experiencing burnout and stress
- ⚡ Continuing to develop skills and knowledge
- ⚡ Facing time or resource pressures
- ⚡ Coping with staffing shortages



What they may be feeling:



Uncertain



Stressed



Helpless



Overwhelmed



Protective



Frustrated that they can't make things better



Pressured by the agency



Blamed by families for past decisions

Parents can help by:

- ⚡ Suggesting a meeting with carers and professionals
- ⚡ Showing you want to help your child settle in
- ⚡ Being open about your goals and feelings
- ⚡ Listening to their goals and feelings
- ⚡ Suggesting that you have a communication book
- ⚡ Sending letters/photos to update them and your child



What they may be feeling:

Parents can help by:

- ⚡ Suggesting how professionals can support you and your child
- ⚡ Allowing them time to respond to your queries
- ⚡ Keeping records of agreements
- ⚡ Being open about your concerns
- ⚡ Giving details of your culture, values, beliefs
- ⚡ Updating them on changes to your situation if appropriate
- ⚡ Asking for advance notice of staff changes