



STARCATCHERS

**WEE
PEOPLE,
BIG
FEELINGS
MORAY**



Ministry
of Defence

THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST
Funded by HM Government

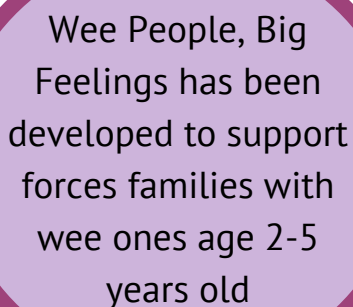
ABOUT STARCATCHERS

Starcatchers is Scotland's Arts and Early Years organisation. We believe that our youngest children, those aged birth-to-five, should be able to fulfil their right to access arts and creative experiences that give inspiration, joy and wonder to early childhood in Scotland.

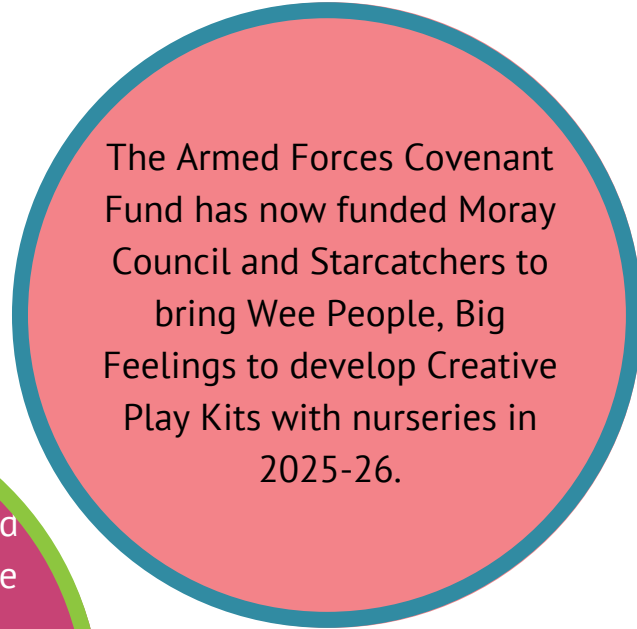
A bit about the Wee People Big Feelings Approach

"Every forces family is different, and every deployment is different: sometimes we cope well with the transitions, and sometimes it can bring a lot of challenges. There's no one size fits all approach, its important we develop a repertoire of techniques to support wee ones and their families."

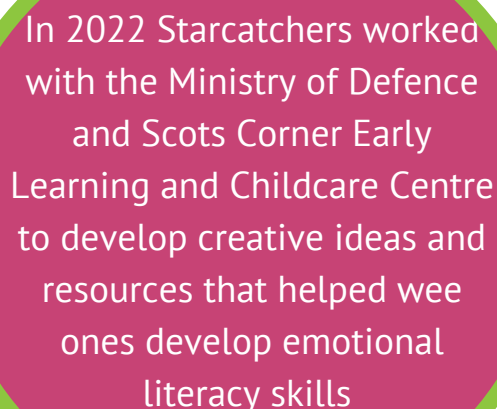
Early Years Practitioner and Forces Family member



Wee People, Big Feelings has been developed to support forces families with wee ones age 2-5 years old



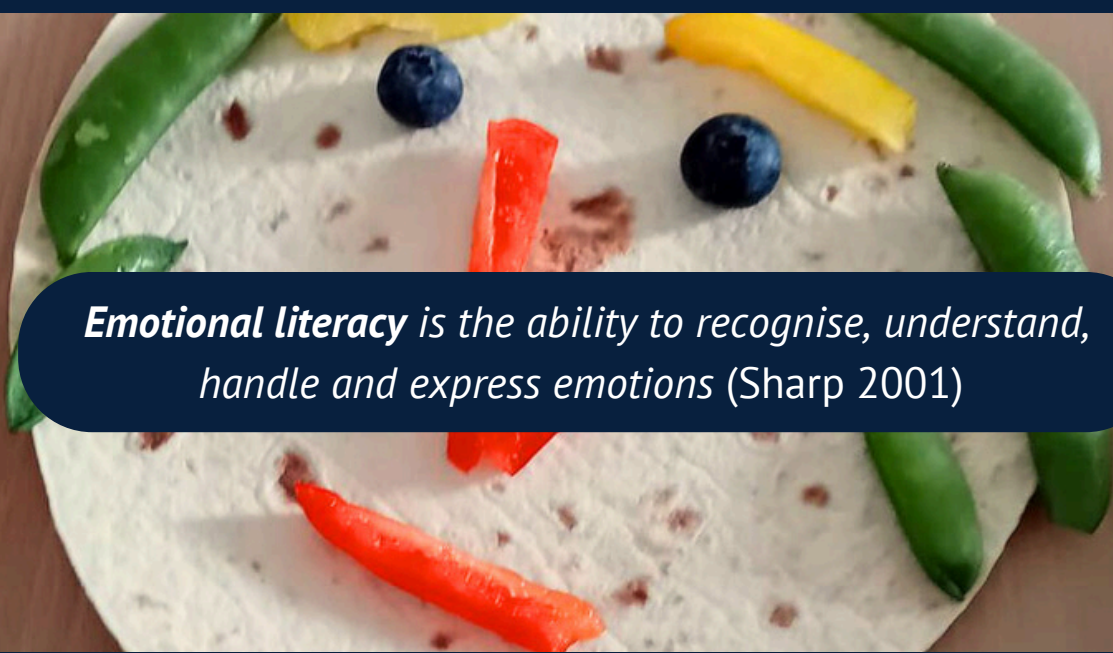
The Armed Forces Covenant Fund has now funded Moray Council and Starcatchers to bring Wee People, Big Feelings to develop Creative Play Kits with nurseries in 2025-26.



In 2022 Starcatchers worked with the Ministry of Defence and Scots Corner Early Learning and Childcare Centre to develop creative ideas and resources that helped wee ones develop emotional literacy skills



WHAT IS EMOTIONAL LITERACY?



Emotional literacy is the ability to recognise, understand, handle and express emotions (Sharp 2001)

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MORAY?

Starcatchers recognises that Forces families experience deployment differently, so we're developing Wee People, Big Feelings for the wee ones in Moray.

Over next 18 months, we'll be running sessions in 5 local nurseries working directly with the staff, wee ones and their families to develop creative play kits that help develop emotional literacy. We'll be working with local artists:



Heather Fulton



Ruby Worth



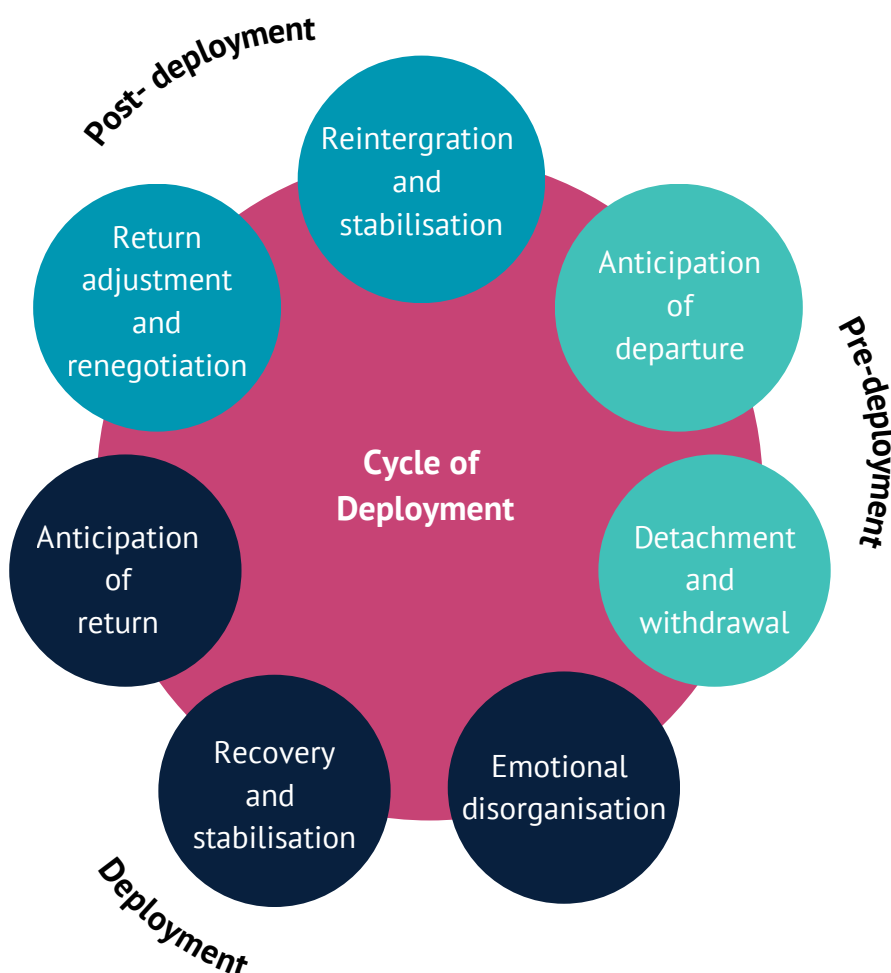
By the end of the 18 months, we want the community to be full of early years staff who understand the challenges of deployment and know how to support families with wee ones, and we want to make sure Forces families have lots of fun, creative ways to play together that help with emotional literacy.

We also want to make sure we're talking to families as we develop resources, to make sure what we create is accessible and helpful.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

- ▶ **Every family and every deployment is different** – the emotional cycle of deployment can be a useful starting point, but there is no one way to feel
- ▶ While this project focused on forces families and the emotional cycle of deployment, remember that **ALL children go through transitions**
- ▶ **Emotional literacy isn't built in times of crisis, it's a skill we build over time**, often through play and creative experiences where we can express ourselves in the moment AND "practice" lots of different feelings
- ▶ **Emotional literacy doesn't have to be words!** There are lots of non-verbal ways we express ourselves and understand each other
- ▶ **None of this is a magic wand or a quick fix** - the part of our brain that regulates our thoughts, actions and emotions doesn't fully mature until we're 25!

The Emotional Cycle of Deployment



To learn more about the importance of transitions, see "Section 8: Transitions Matter; To Me" of Realising the Ambition by scanning the QR code below.

SCAN ME



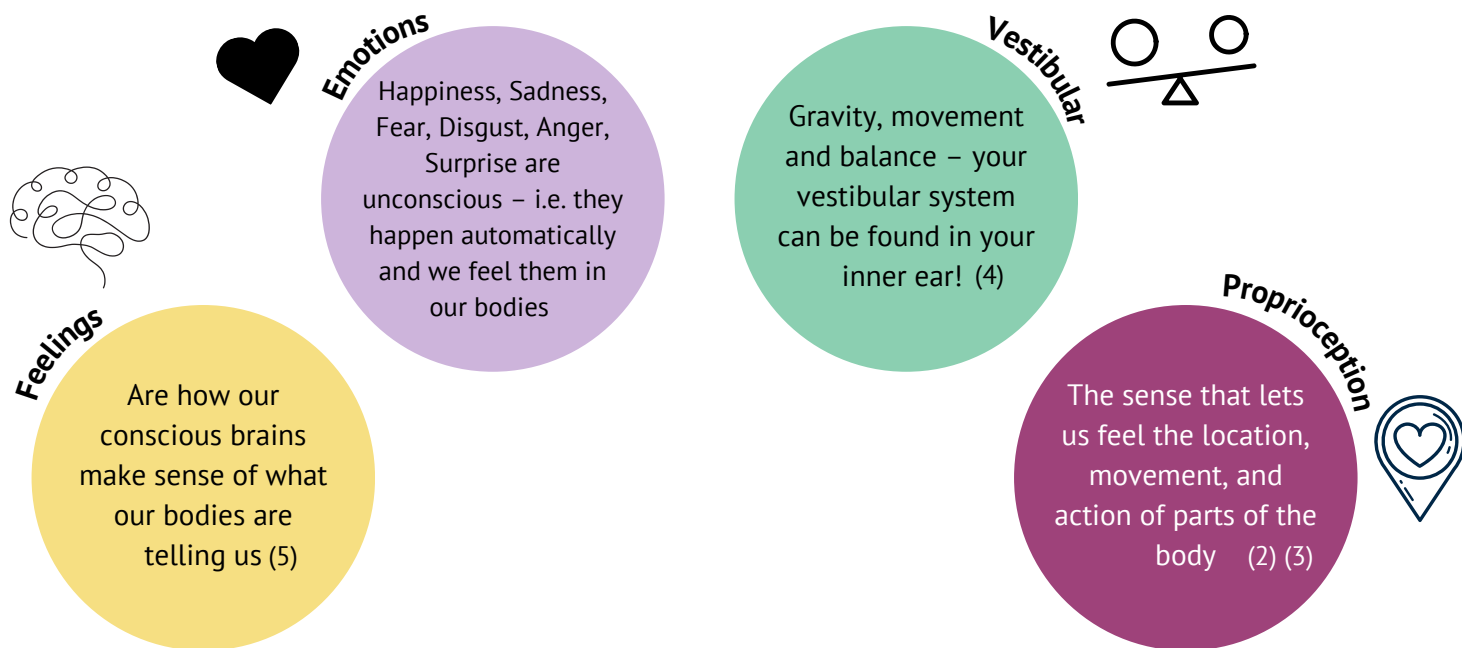
<https://education.gov.scot/media/3bjpr3wa/realisingtheambition.pdf>

A BIT ABOUT BRAINS, BODIES AND EMOTIONS

Did you know...

...90% of the connections in our brains are developed **in the first three years.** (1)

We now believe we have at least **seven** senses: As well as sight, touch, taste, hearing and smell, there is **vestibular** and **proprioception**.



Behind every behaviour is an emotion

As we get better at helping children identify how they feel, we can give them chances to express their emotions appropriately (e.g. without hurting themselves or others) (6)

Children don't always have the words to tell us how they feel

Movement, music, art and drama/pretend play all give them opportunities to express themselves without needing words

We need to express our emotions, or our brains can often go into a fight-or-flight state: increasing heart rate, slows digestive function and makes us feel anxious or depressed

References

(1) Pre-Birth to Three, LTS, pg 16

(2) https://cchp.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/Proprioception_HK_V1b.pdf

(3) https://cchp.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/The%20Vestibular%20System_handout_V1.pdf

(4) Realising the Ambition pg 24

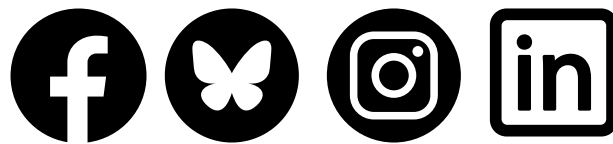
(5) <https://www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/introduction-to-mental-health/understanding-my-feelings/#:~:text=They%20mean%20slightly%20different%20things,and%20give%20meaning%20to%20them>

(6) <https://www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline-scotland/guidance-advice/behaviour-and-feelings/>



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