GREEN RED BLUE YELLOW

SQUARES
of Emotion

A Comprehensive Multi-Tiered Social-Emotional Learning System

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Mark R. Dixon, Ph.D.

EMERGENT LEARNING PRESS

Finally.

A social emotional curriculum grounded in contemporary behavioral neuroscience.

GROUNDED IN NEUROSCIENCE

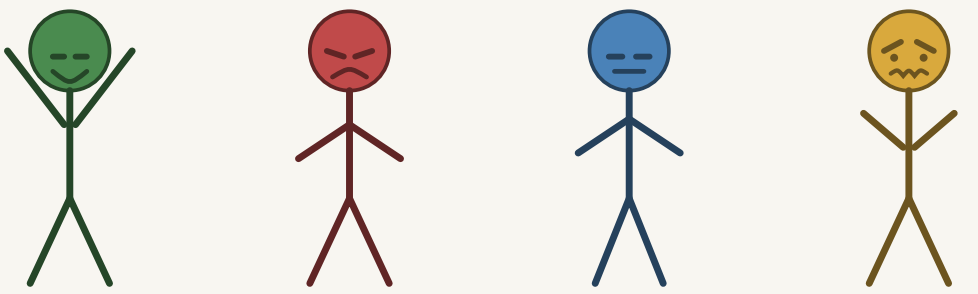
FEEL ALL FEELINGS

SCALABLE BY AGE, SETTING + ABILITY

BUILT ON BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

VISIBLE PROGRESS. DEFENSIBLE DATA.

FROM PRE-K TO TWELFTH GRADE

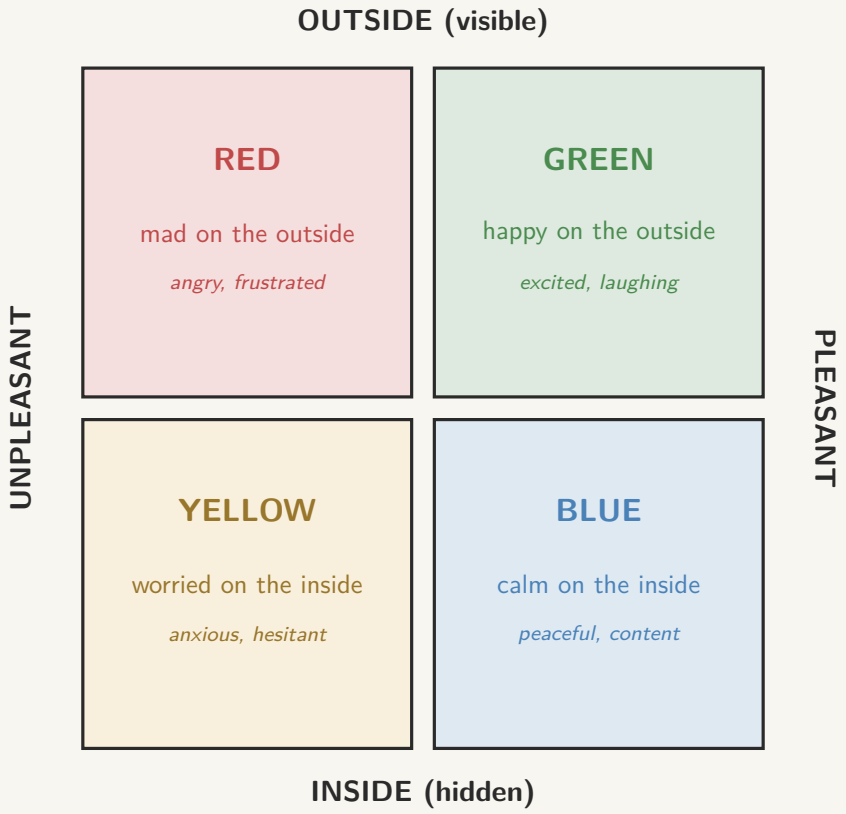


GREEN **RED** **BLUE** **YELLOW**

Four feelings. Four colors.

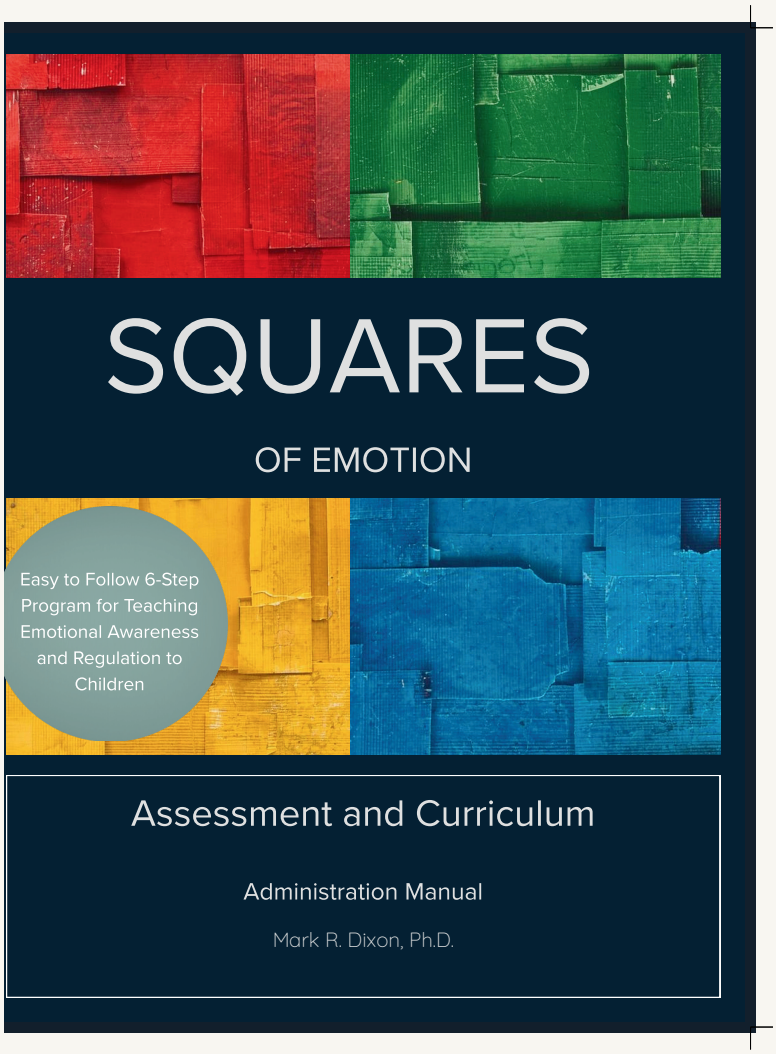
The vocabulary children can see, name, and use.

The SQUARES model replaces abstract feeling words with four colors organized on a two-axis grid. Each color is a category of emotion. Together they cover the human emotional landscape from the most exuberant Green to the quietest Yellow.



"Why colors instead of words? Children who struggle with abstract emotional vocabulary often grasp colors and shapes more easily than the words happy, calm, angry, and worried. Once the colors are in place, the words can be layered on top."

from the Implementer Guide, Section 1



SQUARES of Emotion
The Textbook

Dixon, 2026

The textbook is where the science lives. Emotion-categorization research, the arousal-valence model and its relationship to the circumplex, the rationale for the intensity scale, the case for teaching color before vocabulary, the foundations of Emotional Volatility, the assessment framework, the ethics of teaching emotional categories to vulnerable populations, and the worked clinical examples that show what good practice looks like across age and disability.

The Complete Product Line

Six manuals. Two age bands. Six levels.

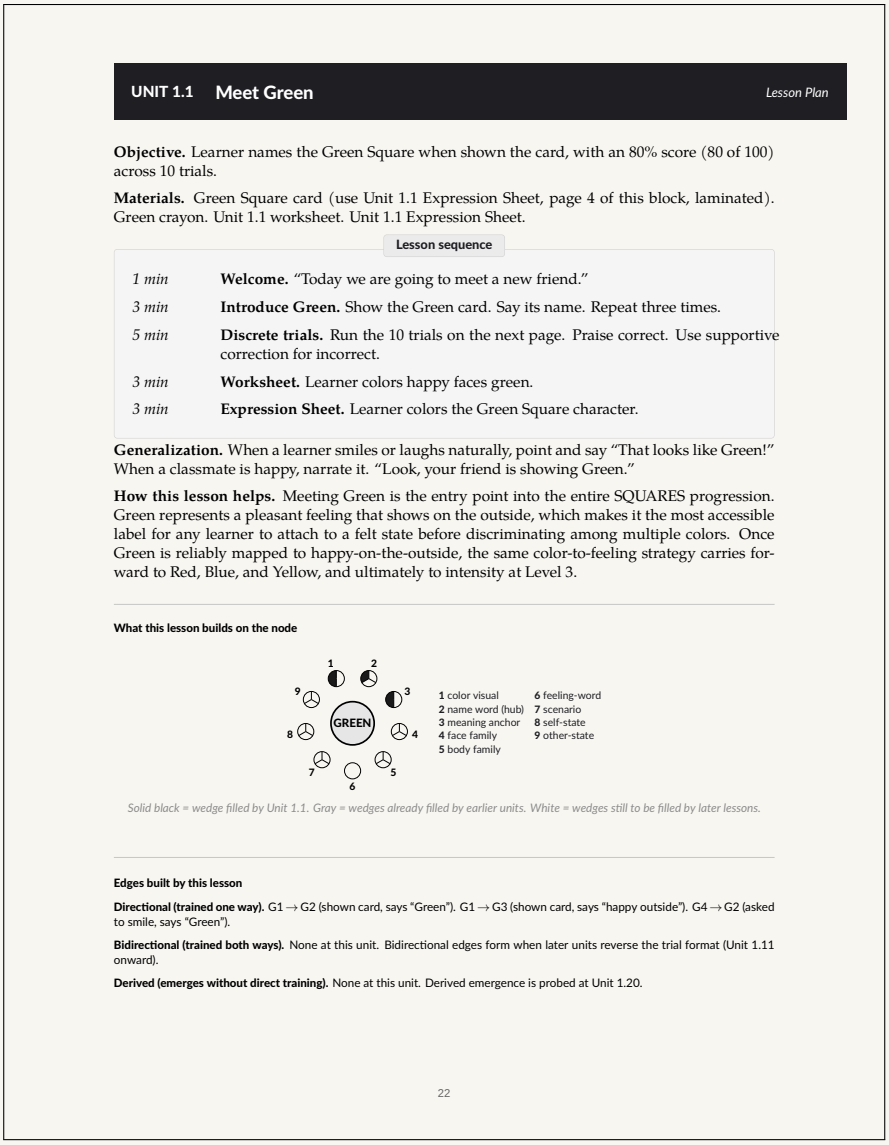
SQUARES is published as a complete product line. Two instructional manuals span ages 3 to 12, two more carry the same six levels into adolescents ages 13 to 18, and a dedicated Applied Behavior Analysis program curriculum supports 1-on-1 clinical practice. Same colors. Same network. Different developmental targets.

Product	Ages	Covers
Instructional Curriculum	3–12	Levels 1–3. Outside feelings + Inside feelings + Intensity.
Instructional Curriculum	3–12	Levels 4–6. Multiplicity + Values + Social Inclusion.
Instructional Curriculum	13–18	Levels 1–3 for adolescents.
Instructional Curriculum	13–18	Levels 4–6 for adolescents.
ABA Program Curriculum	Vol. 1	Levels 1–3. Build the Foundations of Emotional Awareness.
ABA Program Curriculum	Vol. 2	Levels 4–6. Expand Understanding to Include Values and Social Inclusion.

Plus even more online videos, games, and flash cards to expand generalization.

Green and Red.

Children learn to recognize emotions that show on the face and body. Twenty units take a learner from *Meet Green* to *Level 1 Mastery Check*. Each lesson is one color at a time. Every Lesson Plan includes a network visualization that shows which wedge of the SQUARES skill graph this unit fills.



UNIT 1.1 Meet Green *Lesson Plan*

Objective. Learner names the Green Square when shown the card, with an 80% score (80 of 100) across 10 trials.

Materials. Green Square card (use Unit 1.1 Expression Sheet, page 4 of this block, laminated). Green crayon. Unit 1.1 worksheet. Unit 1.1 Expression Sheet.

Lesson sequence

1 min	**Welcome.** "Today we are going to meet a new friend."
3 min	**Introduce Green.** Show the Green card. Say its name. Repeat three times.
5 min	**Discrete trials.** Run the 10 trials on the next page. Praise correct. Use supportive correction for incorrect.
3 min	**Worksheet.** Learner colors happy faces green.
3 min	**Expression Sheet.** Learner colors the Green Square character.

Generalization. When a learner smiles or laughs naturally, point and say "That looks like Green!" When a classmate is happy, narrate it. "Look, your friend is showing Green."

How this lesson helps. Meeting Green is the entry point into the entire SQUARES progression. Green represents a pleasant feeling that shows on the outside, which makes it the most accessible label for any learner to attach to a felt state before discriminating among multiple colors. Once Green is reliably mapped to happy-on-the-outside, the same color-to-feeling strategy carries forward to Red, Blue, and Yellow, and ultimately to intensity at Level 3.

What this lesson builds on the node

Solid black = wedge filled by Unit 1.1. Gray = wedges already filled by earlier units. White = wedges still to be filled by later lessons.

Edges built by this lesson

Directional (trained one way). G1 → G2 (shown card, says "Green"). G1 → G3 (shown card, says "happy outside"). G4 → G2 (asked to smile, says "Green").

Bidirectional (trained both ways). None at this unit. Bidirectional edges form when later units reverse the trial format (Unit 1.11 onward).

Derived (emerges without direct training). None at this unit. Derived emergence is probed at Unit 1.20.

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Unit 1.1 Meet Green | Lesson Plan page

What gets taught

Outside feelings, visible on face and body.

Blue and Yellow.

Inside feelings are quieter. Calm Blue, worried Yellow. Hard to see from the outside, hard for a child to name without vocabulary. Level 2 adds these two colors plus the cross-color discriminations that bind all four into a coherent system. Implementers run small-group sessions that build self-state awareness.

UNIT 2.1 Meet Blue *Lesson Plan*

Objective. Learner names the Blue Square when shown the card, with an 80% score (80 of 100) across 10 trials.

Materials. Blue Square card (use Unit 2.1 Expression Sheet, page 4 of this block, laminated). Green and Red cards for review. Blue crayon. Unit 2.1 worksheet. Unit 2.1 Expression Sheet.

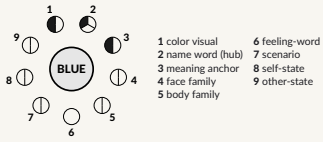
Lesson sequence

1 min	**Welcome.** "You know Green and Red. Now we add Blue."
2 min	**Review Green and Red.** Hold up each card. Confirm.
4 min	**Introduce Blue.** Show the Blue card. "This is Blue. Blue means calm on the inside." Repeat three times. Demonstrate: take a slow breath, smile a tiny smile.
4 min	**Discrete trials.** 10 trials with one Green and one Red review.
3 min	**Worksheet.** Color calm faces blue.
2 min	**Expression Sheet.** Color the Blue Square character.

Generalization. When a learner is calm during quiet time, say: "I see Blue right now. Your body is calm. That is Blue."

How this lesson helps. Blue is the first time the SQUARES model asks the learner to name an emotion that may not show on the outside at all. Blue means calm or content on the inside, and a learner can be Blue while sitting quietly, reading, or breathing slowly without any visible signal. Naming Blue teaches the larger lesson of Level 2: feelings exist whether or not anyone can see them.

What this lesson builds on the node



1 color visual
2 name word (hub)
3 meaning anchor
4 face family
5 body family
6 feeling-word
7 scenario
8 self-state
9 other-state

Solid black = wedge filled by Unit 2.1. Gray = wedges already filled by earlier units. White = wedges still to be filled by later lessons.

Edges built by this lesson

Directional (trained one way). B1 → B2 (shown Blue card, says "Blue"). B1 → B3 (shown card, says "calm inside").

Bidirectional (trained both ways). None.

Derived (emerges without direct training). None at this unit.

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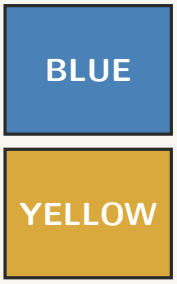
Unit 2.1 Meet Blue | Lesson Plan page

What gets taught



Inside feelings,
felt but harder to see.

Each color at small, medium, big.

Level 3 adds magnitude. Each color now scales 1, 2, or 3 – small, medium, or big. A learner who has mastered Level 3 can name both color AND intensity for any moment: "Yellow, medium." "Big Green." The same vocabulary now expresses the full range of human emotional experience.

UNIT 3.1 Meet Intensity *Lesson Plan*

Objective. Learner uses the words "low," "medium," and "high" to label three sizes of Green Square, with an 80% score (80 of 100) across 10 trials.

Materials. Three Green cards from the Level 3 stimuli (small, medium, large). Optional: a small / medium / large physical object set (e.g., three blocks) to anchor the size idea. Unit 3.1 worksheet. Unit 3.1 Expression Sheet. Green crayon.

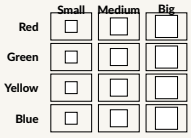
Lesson sequence

1 min	**Welcome.** "You know Green from Level 1. Today we learn how MUCH Green."
3 min	**Introduce the idea of intensity.** Hold up three objects of different sizes (small, medium, large). "A little. Medium. A lot." Repeat with the words 1, 2, 3.
4 min	**Apply to Green.** Hold up the small Green card. "This is a low Green. 1." Hold up medium. "This is medium Green. 2." Hold up large. "This is high Green. 3." Repeat three times.
4 min	**Discrete trials.** 10 trials. Show one Green card, ask "Which one is this?"
2 min	**Worksheet.** Match three sizes of Green to the words.
1 min	**Expression Sheet.** Color the three Green Squares.

Generalization. When a learner is mildly happy, say: "You look low Green right now." When a learner is very excited, say: "You look high Green right now."

How this lesson helps. Intensity is the dimension Level 3 adds on top of the four-color map. Emotions vary in strength: a little Green is not the same as a big Green, and a small Red is not the same as a high Red. This unit introduces the 1-2-3 scale as a property the learner can name in addition to color, which is the conceptual move that makes Level 3 different from everything before it.

What this lesson builds on the node



L3 intensity grid for Unit 3.1. Solid black = color × size cell filled by this lesson. Gray = filled by an earlier L3 lesson. White = still to be filled.

Edges built by this lesson

Directional (trained one way). Introduces the concept of intensity (size 1, 2, 3 = small, medium, big). No specific cells filled yet.

Bidirectional (trained both ways). None.

Derived (emerges without direct training). None.

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Unit 3.1 Meet Intensity | Lesson Plan page

Intensity scaling

12 intensity cells: four colors at three sizes.

More than one color at once.

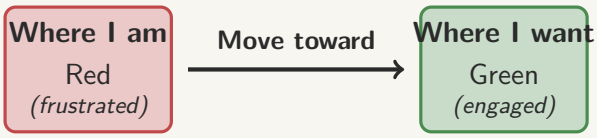
Real emotional moments rarely come in one color. A child can feel Green AND Yellow at the same time – excited about a party AND worried about the new kids. Level 4 introduces multiplicity: naming two colors simultaneously, identifying the dominant color, and tracking how the balance shifts. Twenty units, the same four-page packet structure, the same mastery probe at Unit 4.20.

Excited about a party AND worried about meeting new kids.

What is taught	2-color labeling, dominant color identification, balance shifts.
What learners can do	Name what they feel even when feelings stack. Communicate complex states.
Why it matters	Real life produces mixed states. The vocabulary has to keep up.

Color as a guide to action.

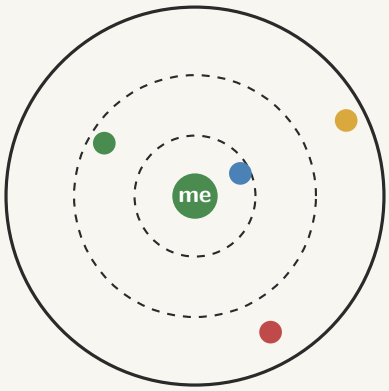
At Level 5 the learner names not only *what color am I*, but *what color do I want to move toward, and why*. Values are introduced as predefined scaffolding then internalized. Toward-and-away movements are practiced first with adult guidance, then chosen independently. Acceptance and persistence emerge as the learner stays the course when emotions push against the chosen direction.



What is taught	Naming current color, naming chosen color, action steps.
What learners can do	Choose a direction even when they are not yet there.
Why it matters	Self-regulation begins with naming the target.

Color in social space.

At Level 6, color becomes a social tool. The learner asks: *where am I, who is near, and what color does the setting call for?* Distance and color combine. When closeness helps, when it hurts, when to step in and when to give space. Level 6 is for the learner ready to use SQUARES vocabulary to navigate relationships, classrooms, and community.



Distance + color = social regulation.

What is taught	Distance rings, who is near, what color the setting needs.
What learners can do	Read a room, choose a position, adjust.
Why it matters	Emotional skill is social skill. Level 6 closes the loop.

Built on a Network

One network. Six levels. Every relation visible.

Level 1 Outside Feelings
Green + Red. Visible on face and body.

Level 2 Inside Feelings
Blue + Yellow. Felt inside.

Level 3 Intensity
Each color at small / medium / big.

Level 4 Multiplicity
More than one color at once.

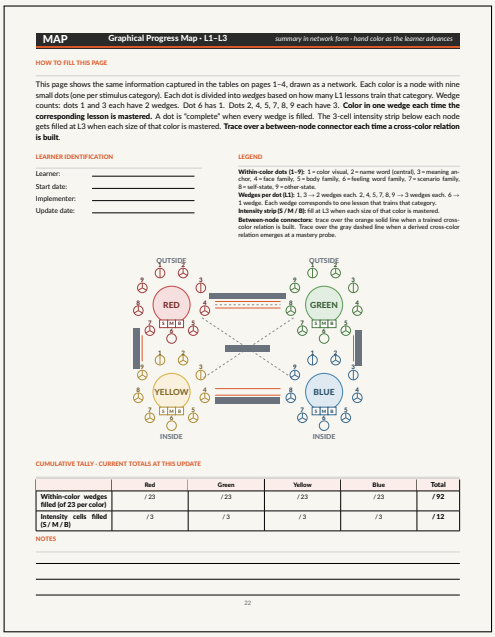
Level 5 Values
Color as a guide to action.

Level 6 Social Inclusion
Color in social space.

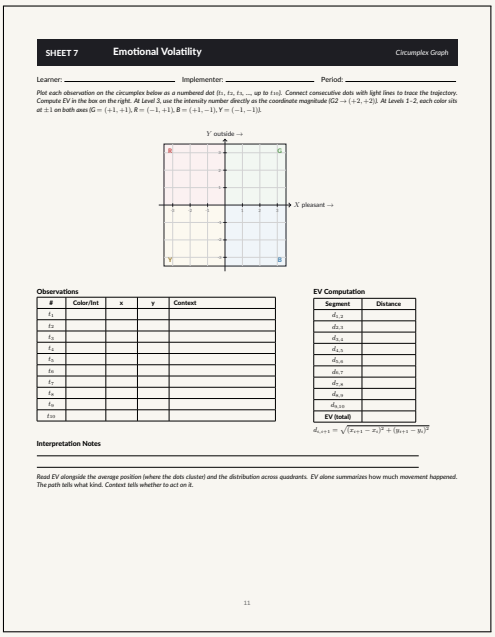
Every wedge filled is a relation built.

See growth. Show growth. Defend growth.

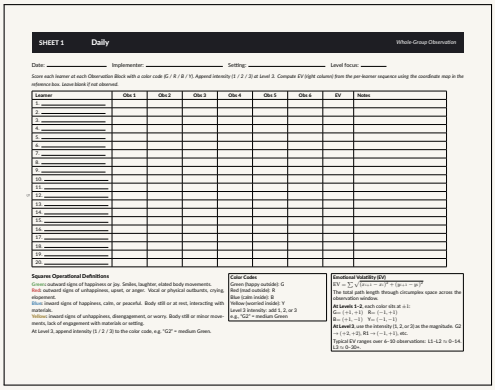
SQUARES is the only social-emotional system that gives implementers a complete measurement stack. Network maps for the long view, data sheets for the daily view, mastery probes for the formal view, and an Emotional Volatility computation for objective regulation data. Hand the map to a family. Attach a probe to an IEP. Bring all of it to the case review.



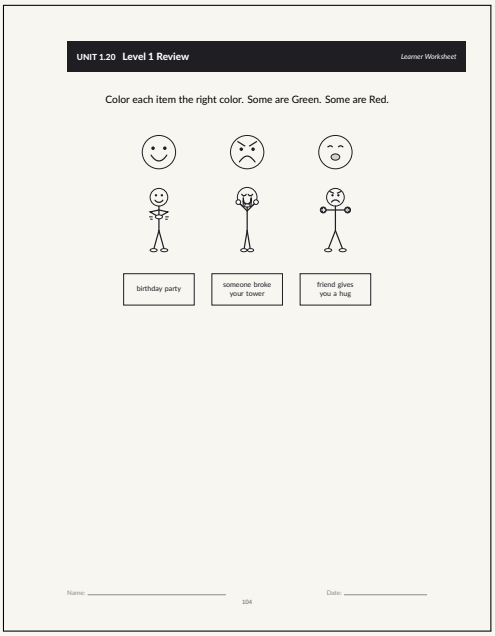
Graphical Progress Map



Emotional Volatility (Sheet 7)

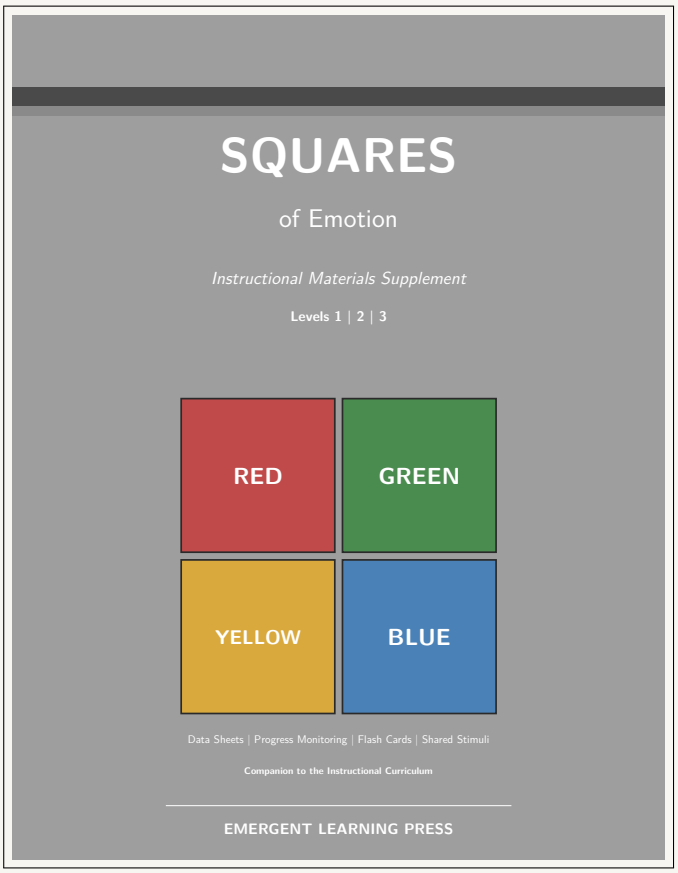


Whole-Group Observation (Sheet 1)



50-Trial Mastery Probe

One learner. One record. A complete story.



Companion to the Instructional Curriculum

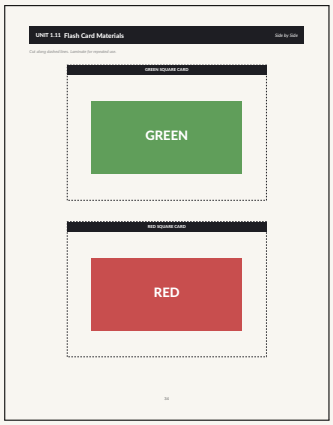
Ready on Day 1.

All the stimuli and materials are already made. Ready to print. Ready to put on whiteboards. Ready to laminate, cut, and use. No prep weekend. No DIY clip art. Open the supplement, print what you need, and start teaching.

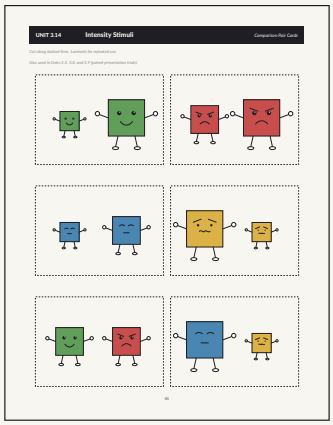
What is in the supplement:

- ◇ **Instructional Materials**: every printable for every lesson
- ◇ **Data Sheets**: seven sheets for every observation context
- ◇ **Flash Cards**: 60-unit deck, one page per unit
- ◇ **Stimulus Materials**: shared cards reused across lessons

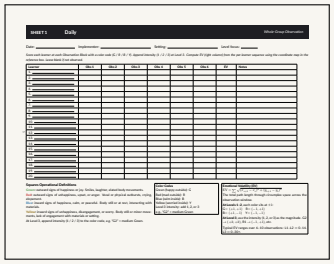
89 pages, full color, downloadable.



Flash Card



Shared Stimuli

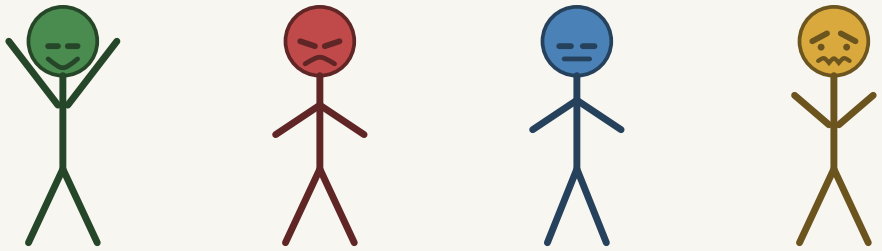


Data Sheet

One model. Every setting. Every learner.

SQUARES of Emotion is a complete K–12 social-emotional learning solution AND a 1-on-1 clinical curriculum. Whole-school adoption. Small-group support. Individualized intervention. A dedicated behavior analytic program for one-on-one practice. The same colors and the same network, scaled by setting and need.

Solution Tier	What it covers
Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)	*The school-wide MTSS intervention.* Tier 1 universal classroom delivery. Tier 2 small-group support. Tier 3 individualized work for learners on an IEP or 504 plan. One curriculum, three intensities. Coverage from preschool through twelfth grade.
Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)	*The complete SEL program.* Vocabulary, recognition, regulation, expression, and social application. Authored by a behavior analyst, grounded in neuroscience, organized as a network. The only SEL system with an objective measurement stack and a network analysis.
Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)	*The dedicated ABA curriculum.* PEAK-style program instruction for 1-on-1 clinical and behavioral practice. Two volumes covering all six levels. For BCBAs, RBTs, social workers, behavior interventionists, and clinical settings.



SQUARES
of Emotion

Four Squares. Four Colors. Endless Growth Potential.

Textbook	*SQUARES of Emotion*, Dixon (2026). The conceptual foundation.
Instructional Curriculum	Leveled and age-banded. K–12 coverage.
Supplements	Instructional materials, data sheets, flash cards, and stimulus materials. Full color, downloadable.
ABA Treatment Protocol	Develop direct and emergent learning while building bold and durable networks of emotional understanding, comprehension, and utilization.

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