

Chatter Pack

Pain rating chart

Helping children to
communicate how they feel

Free resource

The following was written by Helen Weston, parent to two boys with SEND who live with chronic pain. However, these ideas can be adapted to use with children and young people to help them express how intense any feeling might be, either physical, or emotional.

You can find a blank template at the end of this resource. You can also find another resource to help children and young people develop an awareness of emotions and triggers, on our homepage at ChatterPack.net

Making a chart

In terms of managing pain with a child, it is really important to be aware of their starting point. My children are used to pain daily and therefore their tolerance is perhaps different to children who may suddenly experience acute pain.

When my son started school, he did not want to make a fuss or be sent home, so the staff had difficulty assessing and managing his pain. This would create a huge impact as I was often unable to gain control of his pain once I had collected him from school at lunchtime. His afternoons would be incredibly challenging for him, often needlessly.

We discussed this issue at length, I realised that he needed to be reassured that he would not have to come straight home if his pain increased. Also school staff needed advice on how to react, whilst remembering that some pain was his 'normal'. So, given that my son loved plastic bricks and little men, we devised a visual chart for him to communicate his pain.



Using the Chart

- We chose the men based on their facial expressions!
- He then dictated the wording, he was familiar with pain scales as his nurse had created one for his older brother. But it was fundamental that this one included a course of action with each pain level.
- I wrote the words for him, he was clear he only wanted to come home at level 5. School can often be a good distraction for chronic pain.



This pain chart is personal to my son. Some children may prefer to use colours, face emoji's, Disney characters etc, they may want more levels or less levels. If they need help creating the vocabulary you could have word cards prepared such as, 'sore', 'uncomfortable', 'distracting,' 'sad,' 'worried' etc.

Chart template

| I'm feeling... | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I need... | | | | |
| | | | | |



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