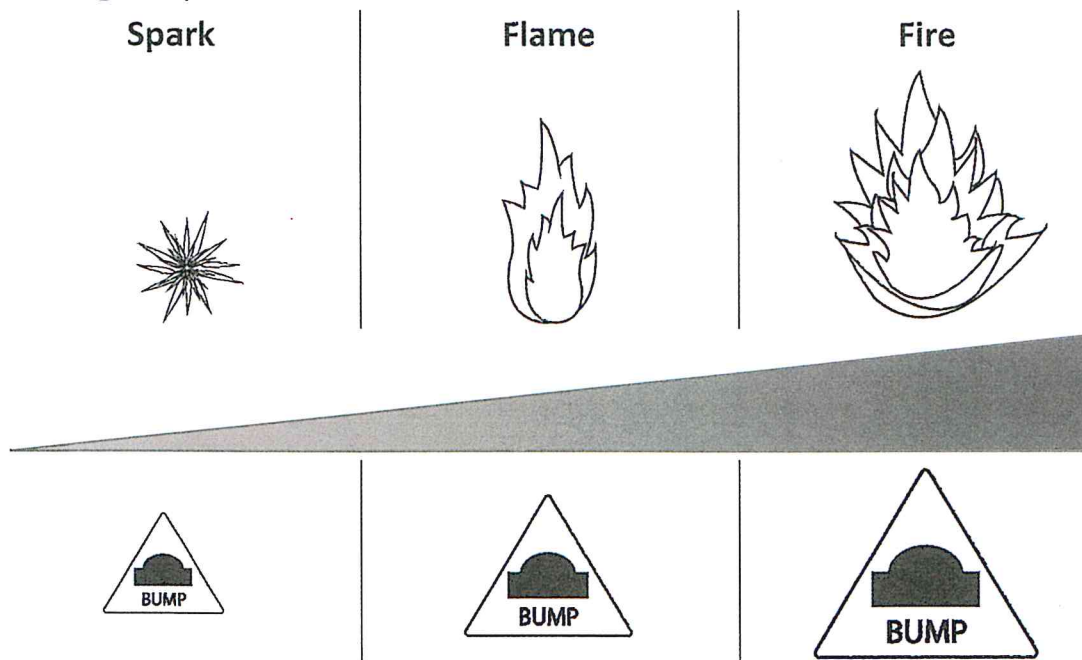


## PARENT INFORMATION 4

### Friendship Flare Ups & The Triple A's

Friendships - like most things - are not perfect. Like experiencing a refusal to join in play, this fact is a 'FOPL' - a Fact of Playground Life - and although friendships bring happiness, BUMPS also occur. The key is to learn the skills to deal with these BUMPS - early in life, in an emotionally healthy way - because that means a good chance of a smoother Relationship Journey all along The Highway. In fact, dealing appropriately with Friendship Flare Ups in childhood will help to create healthy boundaries in adult relationships.

Your child has been introduced to the HIGHWAY BUMP of Friendship Flare Ups, which have been categorized into 3 types: 'Spark', 'Flame' and 'Fire.' Each reflects the size of the BUMP - or Flare Up intensity. Children who can de-catastrophise friendship issues, will be better able to deal with the conflict in an emotionally healthy way - and this is a Smart Skill 4 Life. This is the Friendship Flare Ups Poster that the children have been discussing today.






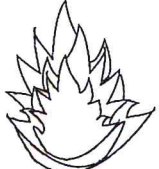
Responses to Friendship Flare Ups are always individual. What hurts your feelings might not be important to someone else. Your child has sorted examples of Flare Ups into categories - with an emphasis on these being a personal reflection - that is, there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. However, it was recommended that anyone who noticed that their sorting tended to favour one of the categories - particularly those at the mild or intense end, e.g., a Flame or a Spark - could find a further discussion with the teacher or a parent to be helpful.

The reason for helping children to differentiate the intensity of Friendship Flare Ups is that the emphasis of *Highway Heroes* is on helping children to perceive any HIGHWAY BUMP in a rational, balanced way – for which solutions can be found. This is in direct contrast to seeing difficulties in a catastrophic and highly emotionally-charged way, where Sparks are perceived - and dealt with - like Fires. The alternative is to perceive Flare Ups in an underwhelming way – and deal with serious issues as Sparks. Both of these can over, or under-play the child’s true emotional responses.

So, to extend the lesson a little more, try to find an opportunity to ask your child what they learned about the HIGHWAY BUMP of Friendship Flare Ups.

**The Triple A’s 4 Friendship Flare Ups**

The Triple A’s responses of Accept and Assert, are HIGHWAY TOOLS. They have been introduced as a way of dealing with Normal and Nasty Refusals, and represent emotionally healthy and socially appropriate ways of responding to HIGHWAY BUMPS. The Triple A’s 4 Friendship Flare Ups remain the same 3 choices: Accept, Assert or Argue - and as previously, the emphasis is on the first 2 responses.

<b>A ccept</b>	Spark 		
<b>A ssert</b>	Spark  (If it keeps happening)	Flame 	Fire 
<b>A rgue</b>	<i>Not useful for any Friendship Flare Up</i>		

Accept is used only for Sparks - unless they are consistently happening – in which case, an Assert Response is suggested to ensure that the other person is aware of the irritation value of their behaviour. For example, if your friend made a joke about one of your personal characteristics, and it was ‘funny the first time’ (but not the second, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> ... times), then Assert is an appropriate response. For Flames and Fires, Assert is the only response recommended.

**REFLECTION POINT:**

*Discuss with your child the way in which they respond to Play Refusals. If you are also able to do some role plays, this will consolidate the learning in this Module.*