



Teacher Time

Building Relationships with Children Birth to Five

October/November 2022



In this Issue:

Building relationships • Responding to children's cues • Supporting self-regulation



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National Center on
Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning



Teacher Time

ELOF

Central Domains					
	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Literacy	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
Infant/Toddler Domains	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
Preschooler Domains	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Mathematics Development	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
			Literacy	Scientific Reasoning	

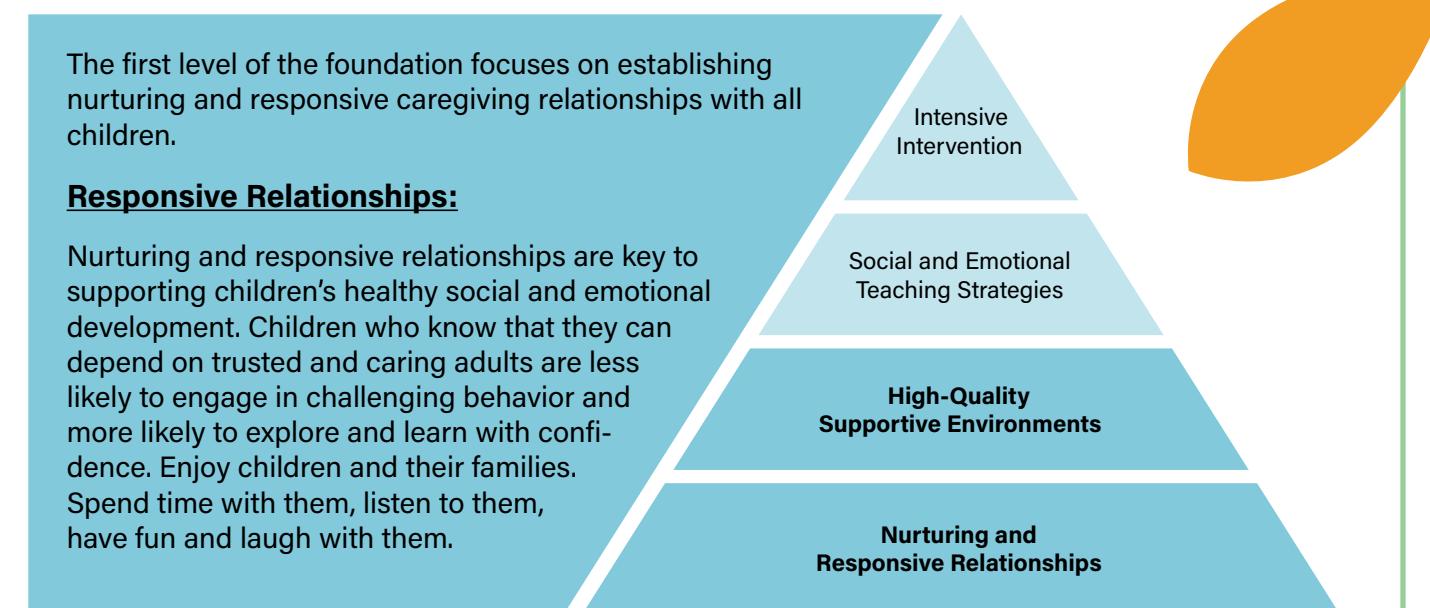
To learn more about the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF), [visit this page on the ECLKC website](#).

Positive Behavior Support (PBS)

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a positive approach to challenging behavior that focuses on building social and emotional skills. PBS recognizes that all behavior communicates a message or need. Once educators understand the meaning of a child's behavior they can, together with the family, teach the child more effective ways to communicate their needs.

A Continuum of Support

The Pyramid Model is an established PBS framework for addressing the social and emotional development and challenging behavior of young children. The framework offers a continuum of evidence-based teaching practices that are organized into four levels of support.



Adapted from Fox, L., Dunlap, G., Hemmeter, M., Joseph, G. E., & Strain, P. S. (2003). The teaching pyramid: A model for supporting social competence and preventing challenging behavior in young children. *Young Children*, 58(4), 48-52.

It's All About You

Caring for and educating young children is physically and emotionally demanding work. By taking time to learn resiliency practices and care for yourself, you can increase feelings of happiness and satisfaction. These positive emotions improve your ability to face daily stressors, such as challenging behaviors, with empathy, patience, and intention. The good news is that you can start learning resilience at any time; it develops with practice.



Cut it out and post in your learning environment!

Ideas to Try: 4-4-8 Breathing

Take a moment and focus on your breathing.

Breathe in through your nose for a count of 4, taking the breath into your belly.

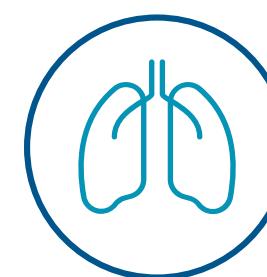
Hold your breath for 4 counts.

Release your breath through your mouth with a whooshing sound for 8 counts.

You can repeat this exercise 3 or 4 times for a full minute of mindful breathing.



4 breathe in



4 hold



8 breathe out

Supporting Your Own Self-Regulation: Mindful Breathing

Self-regulation is the ability to manage our feelings, actions, and behaviors, which can be very challenging! Before we can support children's behaviors positively, it's important to find ways to regulate our own feelings throughout the day. Our ability to self-regulate is foundational to building strong and positive relationships with the children in our care.

Mindful breathing is one form of self-regulation. Taking a few seconds to pause and focus on your breath can help support you in responding intentionally to children's cues, behaviors, and communications.

Highlights and Key Ideas (Across All Ages)

Nurturing and responsive relationships with adults are the foundation for children's social and emotional development. Children who develop trusting relationships with adults are better able to manage their thoughts, feelings, and actions. They build strong social skills, gain self-confidence, and are more likely to engage in positive behaviors.

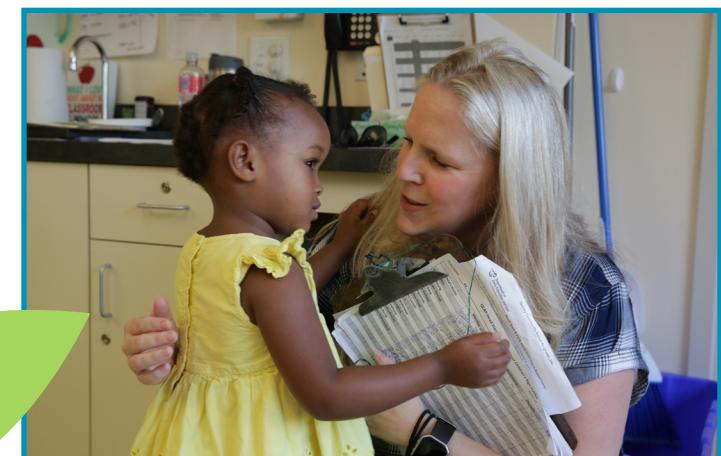
Build relationships and trust

Responsive and nurturing adult-child interactions during daily activities and routines strengthen relationships. When children have positive relationships with adults, they develop a sense of security, feelings of attachment, and can engage more fully in exploring their environment.



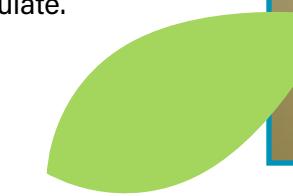
Respond to children's cues

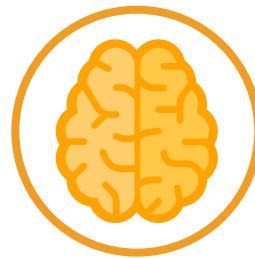
Behavior always communicates a message. When educators are close by and observe young children's behaviors and nonverbal cues, they learn to understand what children are trying to communicate and respond before challenging behaviors occur.



Support self-regulation

Self-regulation is the ability to manage emotions, thoughts, and behavior. Consistent, responsive caregiving creates a safe and reassuring environment that supports children's efforts to self-regulate.





Neuroscience Nook

Research tells us that the early years are foundational for brain development. Adults play an important role in supporting healthy brain development, connections, and architecture. In Neuroscience Nook we will connect this research to everyday practices.

Serve and Return

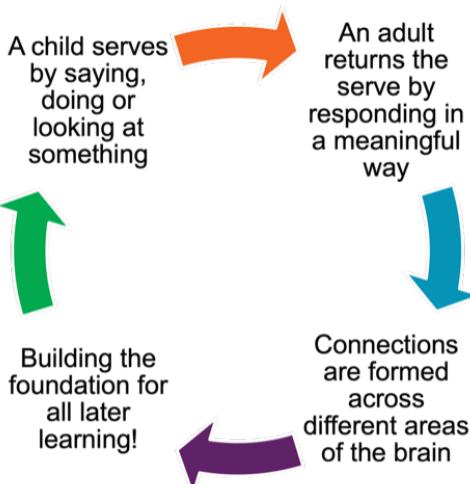
One way we develop healthy relationships with a child is through responsive interactions. Serve and Return (see graphic on the right) is a special type of responsive interaction that:

- "Forms the brain architecture upon which all future brain development will be built."
- "Helps create neural connections between all of the different areas of the brain building the emotional and cognitive skills children need in life."

"Serve & Return Interaction Shapes Brain Circuitry" Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University

Learn more about how Serve & Return interactions shapes brain circuitry on [the website for the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University](#).

 Cut it out and post somewhere for your own continual reflection!



Focus on Equity

Relationships are complex and many of the ways we relate to others are rooted in our cultural background and past experiences. Sometimes subtle biases that we might not even be aware of can interfere with our ability to relate to another adult, infant, or young child. The process of uncovering these implicit biases takes time and reflection.

Intentionally connect with children in your care in a meaningful way. Consider the following statements.

- | | |
|---|---|
| • I made this child feel included today; | • I had high expectations for this child today; |
| • I asked this child a question about themselves or their family today; | • I let this child, and their family, know how much I enjoy them today; |
| • I showed genuine interest in this child today; | • I supported this child to learn a new skill today. |

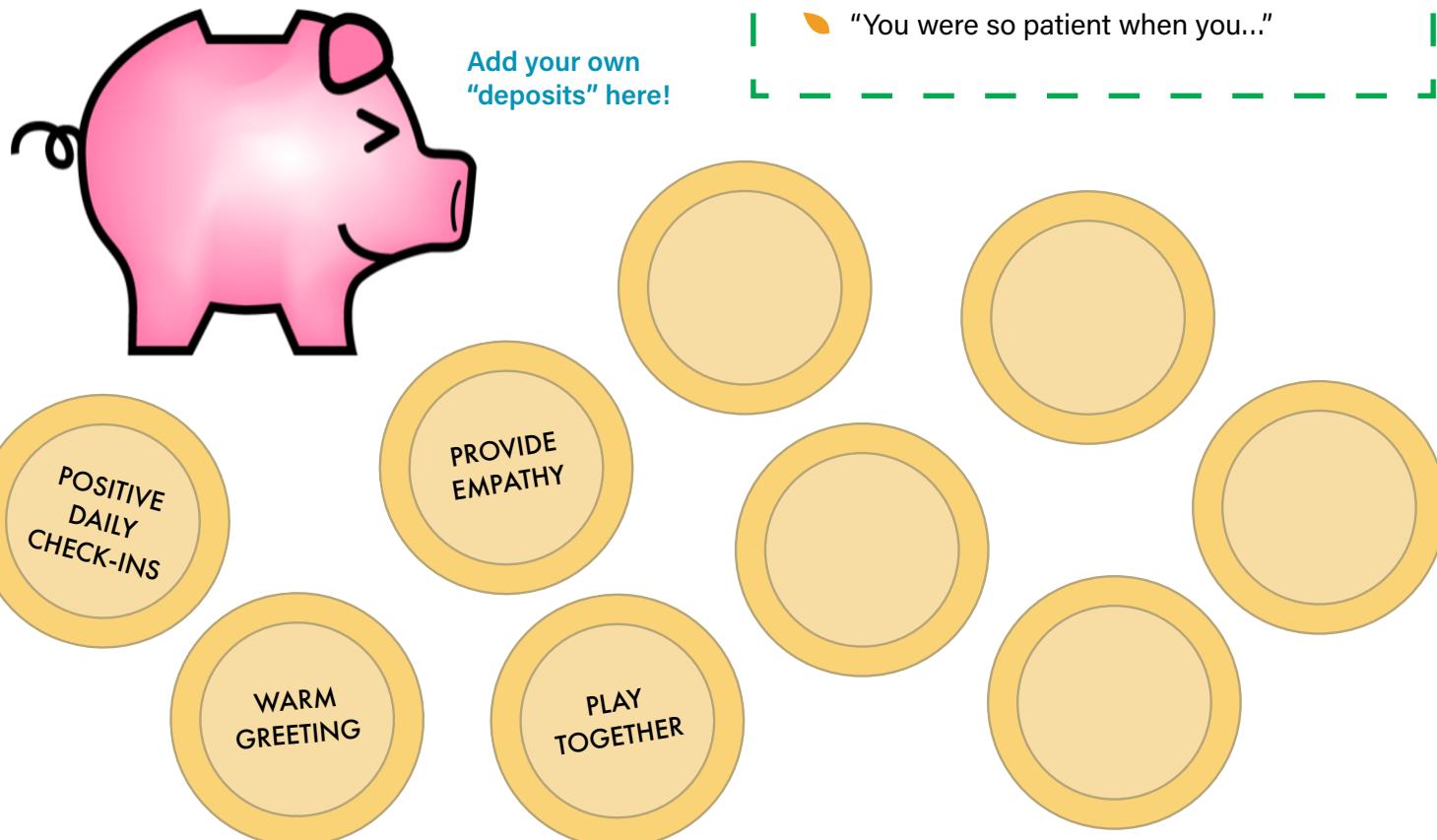
Try creating a checklist, as a reflective tool, to support you in connecting with each child equitably. At the end of the day, consider your check list and set an intention for the next day.

Small Change, Big Impact

Curriculum modification or adaptations can ensure all children's full participation in their learning environment or group routines and activities. We know that no two children are the same. When we modify our learning environment to ensure it's more inclusive it benefits the entire learning community. It's also important to note that sometimes children will need more support in addition to curriculum modifications, including embedded teaching or intensive, individualized teaching.

Relationship Piggy Bank

One way to think about how to build relationships with children is by imagining each child coming to school with their own personal "Piggy Bank." A piggy bank that can be filled with "deposits" from an educator such as a warm greeting, an inviting smile, a listening ear, validation of feelings, and words of encouragement spoken at just the right time. If we should have to make a "withdrawal" in the form of correction or redirection, the child's piggy bank has enough positive deposits to off-set an occasional withdrawal. Check out the resources in the resources section for more information.



Cut it out to reference later!

 Here are sentence starters for giving positive feedback:

- "Thank you for helping me..."
 - "You almost have it! You can..."
 - "You've done a wonderful job at..."
 - "You have really learned how to..."
 - "You have worked so hard..."
 - "You were so patient when you..."
- 

Small Change, Big Impact

Warm Greetings

One way we can fill a child's piggy bank and build relationships is through warm greetings. Try using a visual choice board of different greetings. Greetings are then individualized and children can choose which greeting feels comforting to them.



Cut it out and post in your learning environment!

10 Ways to Foster a Connection with a Child

- Imitating gestures words or sounds
- Using a special handshake
- Remember what a child tells you
- A hug or a gentle touch
- Let child take the lead
- Validate feelings
- Encourage effort
- Laugh together
- Give affection
- Provide support



Understanding Developmental Stages

A strong understanding of each child's developmental ability allows educators to plan appropriate learning opportunities and offer support at the child's level of need.



INFANTS — Early On

Children who are at an early stage of social and emotional development are ready to learn how to:

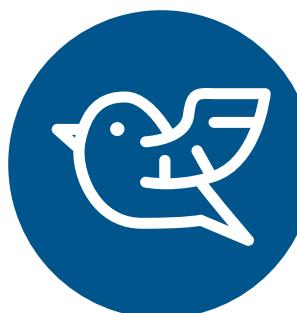
- Interact in predictable ways with familiar adults.
- Try to calm themselves with the support of familiar adults.
- Look for the caregiver's response in uncertain situations.
- Express and respond to a variety of emotions.



TODDLERS — Emerging Skills

Children who are at an emerging stage of social and emotional development are ready to learn how to:

- Show emotional connection and attachment to familiar adults.
- Look to others for help in coping with strong feelings and emotions.
- Stop an activity or avoid doing something if directed.
- Sometimes remember and cooperate in daily routines.



PRESCHOOLERS — Increasing Mastery

Children who are increasing their mastery of social and emotional development are ready to learn how to:

- Interact readily with trusted adults.
- Appropriately manage actions, words, and behaviors with increasing independence and consistency.
- Remember and frequently cooperate in daily routines.
- Behave differently in different settings.





Put It Into Practice

Infants thrive when they have a strong emotional attachment to their primary caregivers. Warm, responsive care from adults is critical for infants to develop secure and trusting relationships. These relationships become a secure base from which infants can explore the environment and manage stress.

Putting these strategies into practice helps infants learn to:

- ▶ Interact in predictable ways with familiar adults.
- ▶ Look for the caregiver's response in uncertain situations.
- ▶ Try to calm self with the support of familiar adults.
- ▶ Express and respond to a variety of emotions.

Building Relationships

Use a warm voice and give lots of eye contact, smiles, laughter, and enthusiasm.

Offer affection through kind words, encouragement, and touch.

Show respect by communicating intentions before actions. For example: "Alejandro, I'm going to pick you up to give you a fresh diaper."

Add Your Ideas Here:

Reading Behavior Cues

Stay near infants to notice their cues. Interpret or make guesses about what they are trying to communicate. Respond to infants' cues as soon as possible and offer comfort in times of distress.

Model new language by describing what you think the infant is trying to communicate.

Respond consistently to children's cues so infants can learn that their needs will be met.

Add Your Ideas Here:

Supporting Co-Regulation

Adjust levels of stimulation (e.g., noise, lighting, approach) to match the infant's needs.

Engage in songs, movement, and activities that are calming.

Observe and encourage infant's self-soothing attempts such as cooing, babbling, clutching, sucking, or snuggling with a comfort item.

Add Your Ideas Here:

Try It Out

Try out these practices and techniques to promote trusting relationships with infants.

B.A.S.I.C.S.

Behavioral expectations in advance; **A**ttend to and encourage positive behavior; **S**ccaffold with cues and prompts; **I**ncrease engagement; **C**reate or add challenge; **S**pecific feedback

The BASICS a collection of strategies that can be used in any setting interacting with infants and toddlers. In this season of Teacher Time, we will be focused on two letters of the basics for each episode. We hope that you will join us for all the webinars of the season or access them on PushPlay so that you can get the BASICS of Positive Behavior Supports!



Behavioral expectations in advance

One way we can share behavioral expectations in advance with infants is to let them know ahead of time, what will happen next. This shows respect to and for the infant and helps them develop a trusting relationship with you.

Over time the infant will learn that you mean what you say, especially if you say something ahead of time like "in a few minutes I'm going to sit down and read a book with you" and then you follow through and sit down to read a book.



Attend to and encourage positive behavior

Letting infants know you see them when they are engaging in positive behavior by narrating what the child is doing or re-capping what you saw happen. This connects the behavior to words that describe that behavior as positive. These serve and return interactions support positive behaviors, build brain circuitry, and positive relationships.

There are a few things to keep in mind when naming positive behaviors and building relationships:

- ▶ Show interest in the infant's experiences and ideas, communicate with your body language, tone of voice and words and you are interested in what the infant is doing, thinking and saying.
- ▶ Match the infant's level of energy, volume and emotional expression.
- ▶ Share affection and use words that communicate respect, this is at the foundation of building all relationships!

Add Your Ideas Here

Add Your Ideas Here

Talk About It

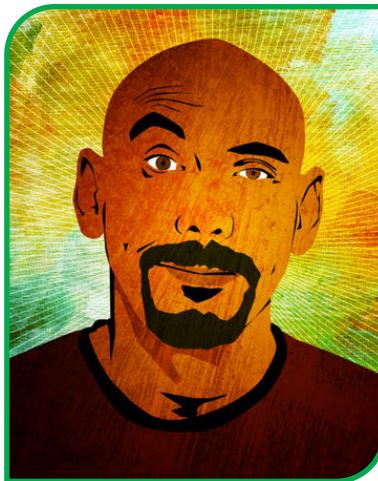
The BookCASE

Check out these board books about relationships.

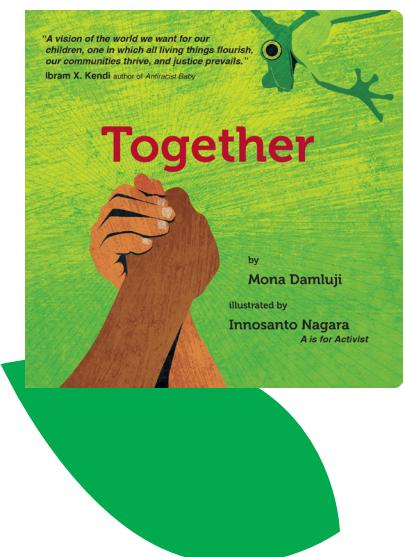
- *Girl of Mine* by Jabari Asim, LeUyen Pham (Illustrator) — there is also *Boy of Mine!*
- *In My Anaana's Amautik* by Nadia Sam-murtok, Lenny Lishchenko (Illustrator)
- *Count to Love* by Andrea Davis Pinkney and Brian Pinkney — check out the other books in the Bright Brown Baby series.



Pictured above: Mona Damluji, author of *Together*



Pictured above: illustration of Innosanto Nagara, illustrator of *Together*



Making the CASE

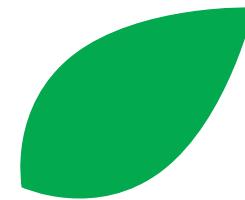
Together by Mona Damluji, Innosanto Nagara

Connection - This is a beautiful picture book about what people, animals, and feelings can do on their own and what they can do together, highlighting the idea of relationship!

Advanced vocabulary - This story uses words like galaxy, cacophony, canopy, harmony, and majesty. As you read these words, look at the infant's response. Say the words slowly so they can hear each sound. Point the words out in the illustrations.

Support active engagement - Respond to what the infant's point at, give them more information about what they are interested in and follow their lead!

Extend the learning - There are so many extensions you could provide for this story. Since it's all about what things, people, animals, and feelings can do together, let that be your guiding question for planning activities and experiences. Maybe you put out multiple musical instruments for the infants to explore and encourage them to make a symphony!



Put It Into Practice

Toddlers who have solid relationships with adults feel safe to actively explore the world. A responsive caregiver provides reassurance and encouragement.

Putting these strategies into practice helps toddlers learn to:

- Stop an activity or avoid doing something if directed.
- Show emotional connection and attachment to familiar adults.
- Sometimes remember and cooperate in daily routines.
- Look to others for help in coping with strong feelings and emotions.

Building Relationships

Be a secure base that young children can explore and come back to for safety and comfort.

Share affection and use words that communicate respect (e.g., please, thank you, hugs).

Join in and participate in the child's play with smiles and encouragement.

Show interest in children's experiences and ideas through parallel-talk, back-and-forth interactions, and conversations.

Add Your Notes Here

Understanding Children's Behaviors

Acknowledge and accept the child's emotions.

Model language for the children to express themselves. Match the child's level of energy, volume, and emotional expression.

Adjust plans to follow children's needs for movement, talking, and autonomy.

Add Your Notes Here

Supporting Co-Regulation

Stay close and attentive to provide comfort and reassurance to all children, as needed.

Notice and comment on children's efforts to manage their behavior.

Use language to describe conflicts and help children connect emotions to actions.

Help children find solutions to a concern.

Add Your Notes Here

Try It Out

Try out these practices and techniques to promote trusting relationships with toddlers.

B.A.S.I.C.S.

Behavioral expectations in advance; **A**ttend to and encourage positive behavior; **S**ccaffold with cues and prompts; **I**ncrease engagement; **C**reate or add challenge; **S**pecific feedback

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Behavioral expectations in advance

One way we can share behavioral expectations in advance with toddlers is to let them know ahead of time, what will happen next. This shows respect to and for the toddler and helps them develop a trusting relationship with you.

Over time the toddler will learn that you mean what you say, especially if you say something ahead of time like "in a few minutes I'm going to sit down and read a book with you" and then you follow through and sit down to read a book.



Attend to and encourage positive behavior

Letting toddlers know you see them when they are engaging in positive behavior by narrating what the child is doing or re-capping what you saw happen. This connects the behavior to words that describe that behavior as positive. These serve and return interactions support positive behaviors, build brain circuitry, and positive relationships.

There are a few things to keep in mind when naming positive behaviors and building relationships:

- 👉 Show interest in the toddler's experiences and ideas, communicate with your body language, tone of voice and words and you are interested in what the toddler is doing, thinking and saying.
- 👉 Match the toddler's level of energy, volume and emotional expression.
- 👉 Share affection and use words that communicate respect, this is at the foundation of building all relationships!

Add Your Notes Here

Add Your Notes Here

Talk About It

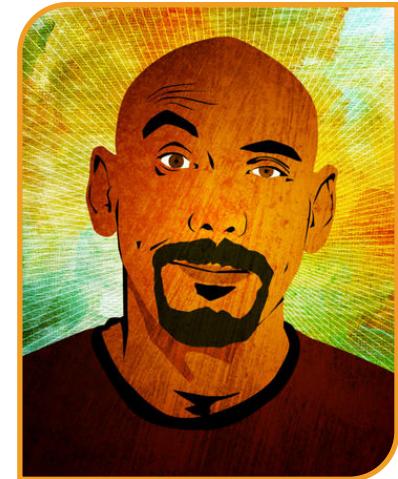
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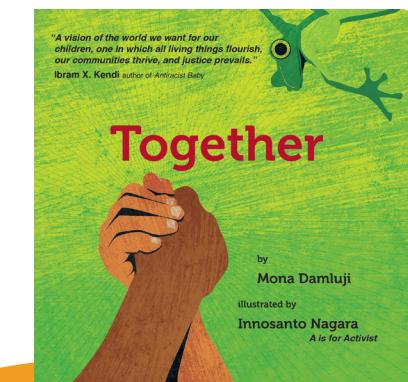
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Pictured above: Mona Damluji, author of *Together*



Pictured above: Innosanto Nagara, illustrator of *Together*



Making the CASE

Together by Mona Damluji, Innosanto Nagara

Connection – This is a beautiful picture book about what people, animals and feels can do on their own and what they can do together so we see a connection to today's topic that relationships are key!

Advanced vocabulary – This story uses words like galaxy, cacophony, canopy, harmony, and majesty. As you read these words, try giving an example of them or try asking the toddlers what the words mean, this could give you some great information into how/what the toddlers are thinking about.

Support active engagement – respond to what the children point out or name in the story, give them more information about what they are interested in and follow their lead! Try asking open-ended questions like "what do you think that sounds like?" or "what do you think they will make together?"

Extend the learning – There are so many extensions you could provide for this story. Since it's all about what things, people, animals, feelings can do together, let that be your guiding question for planning activities and experiences. Maybe you put out multiple musical instruments for the children to explore and encourage them to make a symphony!



Preschoolers — Increasing Mastery

Relationships Are Key

Put It Into Practice

Teachers and preschoolers continue to create and maintain positive connections. Consistent and predictable responses support a strong teacher-child relationship.

Putting these strategies into practice helps preschoolers learn to:

- Interact readily with trusted adults.
- Remember and cooperate in daily routines.
- Manage actions, words, and behaviors with increasing independence.
- Adapt behavior to different settings.

Build Relationships

Model positive and respectful words and body language.

Have personal social conversations with each child to let them know that you care.

Plan activities based on the children's interests.

Play with children and celebrate their successes.

Add Your Notes Here

Understand Children's Behavior

Acknowledge children's feelings positively.

Describe what you think they are trying to say. Reassure the child you are there to help.

Ask questions and provide language to help children express themselves.

Add Your Notes Here

Support Self Regulation

Watch for moments of concern and move closer to the child when needed.

Offer encouragement to help children persist in completing a task or finding a solution.

Provide choices to deal with a challenging situation.

Ensure that expectations for behavior are consistent and predictable.

Add Your Notes Here

Preschoolers — Increasing Mastery

Relationships Are Key

Try It Out

Try out these techniques and activities to promote trusting relationships with preschoolers.

B.A.S.I.C.S.

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Behavioral expectations in advance

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Over time the preschooler will learn that you mean what you say, especially if you say something ahead of time like "in a few minutes I'm going to sit down and read a book with you" and then you follow through and sit down to read a book.



Attend to and encourage positive behavior

Letting preschoolers know you see them when they are engaging in positive behavior by narrating what the child is doing or re-capping what you saw happen. This connects the behavior to words that describe that behavior as positive. These serve and return interactions support positive behaviors, build brain circuitry, and positive relationships.

There are a few things to keep in mind when naming positive behavior and building relationships:

- Show interest in the preschooler's experiences and ideas, communicate with your body language, tone of voice and words and you are interested in what the preschooler is doing, thinking and saying.
- Match the preschooler's level of energy, volume and emotional expression.
- Share affection and use words that communicate respect, this is at the foundation of building all relationships!

Add Your Notes Here

Add Your Notes Here

Talk About It

The BookCASE

Check out these books about relationships.

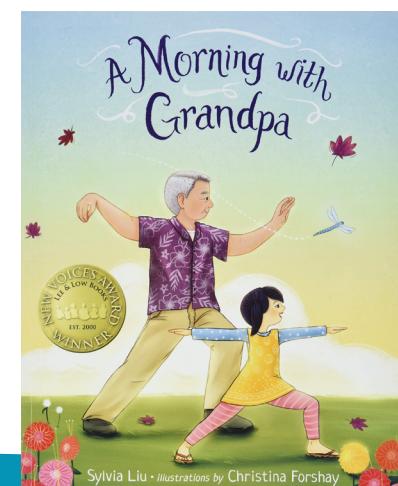
- 👉 *Danbi Leads the School Parade* by Anna Kim
- 👉 *Dress-Up Day* by Blanca Gómez
- 👉 *Thank you, Omu!* by Oge Mora



Pictured above: Sylvia Liu, author of *A Morning with Grandpa*



Pictured above: Christina Forshay, illustrator of *A Morning with Grandpa*



Making the CASE

A Morning with Grandpa, written by Sylvia Liu, illustrated by Christina Forshay

Connection - This is a beautiful picture book about the special bond between grandparent and grandchild and the joy of learning new things together so we see a connection to today's topic that relationships are key!

Advanced vocabulary - This story uses words and concepts like energy, martial arts, motion, yoga, flexing, and steady. As you read these words, try giving an example of them or try asking the preschoolers what the words mean, this could give you some great information into how/what the preschoolers are thinking about.

Support active engagement - respond to what the children point out or name in the story, give them more information about what they are interested in and follow their lead! Try asking open ended questions like "what are some ways that you move energy in your body?" or "what do you think they will do next?"

Extend the learning - There are so many extensions you could provide in for this story. Since it's all about moving and relationships, let that be your guiding question for planning activities and experiences. Maybe you put out yoga mats and cards for the children to explore and encourage them to move their bodies and energy in different ways.

Resources

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/interactive-head-start-early-learning-outcomes-framework-ages-birth-five> (English)

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/marco-interactivo-de-head-start-sobre-los-resultados-del-aprendizaje-temprano-de-los-ninos-desde-el> (Spanish)

Social and Emotional Development Effective Practice Guides

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/effective-practice-guides/social-emotional-development>

15-minute In-service Suites: Fostering Connections

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/fostering-connections>

Tips for Teachers: Fostering Connections

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/iss/building-relationships/fosteringconnections-teachertips.pdf>

15-minute In-service Suites: Curriculum Modifications: An Introduction

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/curriculum-modifications-introduction>

Classroom Visuals & Supports

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/classroom-visuals-supports>

Center on the Developing Child: A Guide to Serve and Return

<https://devhcpc.wpengine.com/guide/a-guide-to-serve-and-return-how-your-interaction-with-children-can-build-brains/>

Center on the Developing Child: Serve & Return Interaction Shapes Brain Circuitry

<https://devhcpc.wpengine.com/resources/serve-return-interaction-shapes-brain-circuitry/>

Pyramid Model Overview

<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/overview/index.html>

Acknowledging Children's Positive Behaviors

https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/what-works/WhatWorksBrief_22.pdf

Expressing Warmth and Affection to Children

https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/what-works/WhatWorksBrief_20.pdf

Building Positive Teacher-Child Relationships

https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/what-works/WhatWorksBrief_12.pdf

Building Positive Relationships with Young Children

<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/building-positive-relationships-with-young-children.pdf>

Positive Attention Data Sheet

https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/ToolsBuildingRelationships_Positive-Attention-Data-Sheet.pdf

Greeting Board for Social Distancing (English-Spanish)

<https://challengingbehavior.org/docs/Greeting-Board-EN-SP.pdf>

Providing Positive Feedback and Encouragement

https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/ToolsBuildingRelationships_starters-for-giving-positive-feedback_Home.pdf

Some Starters for Giving Positive Feedback and Encouragement

https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/ToolsBuildingRelationships_starters-for-giving-positive-feedback.pdf

Send In Your Ideas

We'd love to hear about how you're using some of these practices in your learning environment. Please post your ideas in the Teacher Time community on MyPeers!

If you're not already a member of MyPeers, we invite you to join! Check out this ECLKC webpage to find out more about MyPeers: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/mypeers-social-network-early-childhood-professionals>

Add Additional Notes Here

