Oh the Places They'll Go!

Presented by TIKES Mental Health Consultants
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Early Experiences Shape the Brain

- Quiz For all the Smart People
- 1. How do you put a giraffe into a refrigerator?
  - You open the door and put him in
- 2. How do you put an elephant into a refrigerator?
  - You open the door take out the giraffe and put in the elephant
- 3. The Lion King is hosting an animal conference. All the animals attend except one. Which one does not attend?
  - The elephant because he is in the refrigerator
- 4. There is river you must cross but it is used by crocodile, and you do not have a boat. How do you manage it?
  - Swim, because all the animals are at the conference
Brain development is the most significant from birth to age 3 when it’s growing more rapidly than any other time in our life span!
Prime Time for Brain Development

- **Visual Development: Birth to 12 months**
  - Most visual development occurs in the first 8-12 months. During this prime time babies need to see shapes, colors, objects at varying distances and movement.

- **Language Development: Birth to 12 months**
  - Babies are born with the ability to learn language. By 12 months they can understand and babble in the language they hear most. Listening to adults talk, sing, and read increases their vocabulary.
Prime Time for Brain Development

- **Emotional Attachment: Birth to 18 months**
  - Infants learn to expect adults to behave in certain ways based on their daily relationships. Over time, a baby builds a deep attachment with important adults in their lives. These early attachments teach the child what to expect in future relationships and influences the way they form relationships throughout life.

- **Sensory Development: Birth to 18 months**
  - Babies are born with basic sensory abilities such as hearing, taste, and touch. With repeated experience, the brain connections that process sensory information become more complex.
Prime time for Brain Development

Before age 5
90% of a child’s brain development happens

Brain development before age 5
90%

Brain development after age 5
10%

Source: Harvard Center for the Developping Child
The brain’s ability to change in response to experiences over age.

The amount of effort such change requires over age.

Source: Levitt (2009)
Prime time for Brain Development

Flipped Lid Explanation

What is This?

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What Can we do?

- Remember early experiences matter because they have a lasting impact on later learning, behavior, and health.

- Getting things right the first time is easier and more effective than trying to fix them later.

- Understand that young children thrive when they have sensitive, responsive care and opportunities to learn through play. Support healthy brain development by responding to each child’s individual needs, and by building positive relationships with them.
What it can look like when your class does not have social and emotional skills...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMQADg1Dp9g
Teachable Moments

- Teachable moments are a constant in working with children in the early years, specifically those that are related to social and emotional skills.
  - Coaching through a temper tantrum
  - Calming a crying baby
  - Teaching a silly friendship song
- Best practice in early childhood is to have some planned activities that increase their social/emotional and literacy skills simultaneously.
Teaching in the Moment Examples

- Ex.: Timmy our 12 month old toddler is crying during his diaper change, Susie is pulling on your leg crying too because she wants you to hold her. What could you say to Timmy and Susie? What kind of social emotional learning could happen here?

  Susie, can you hear Timmy? He is crying, he has wet tears on his face just like you. Timmy is sad, he is crying because he does not want to stop playing with the trucks to get his diaper changed. Timmy, Susie is crying too because she wants Ms. Jennifer to hold her. I understand you are both sad. Hmmm, Susie maybe you could hold my wipe box while I get a wipe and Timmy we are going to change your diaper as fast as we can so you can go play with your truck again. (Self and Parallel Talk)

- Ex.: During dramatic play time in your classroom, you notice three children playing with the baby dolls and are communicating with them sternly and are dragging them across the floor. How could you intervene and support these children in their play to increase their social and emotional skills?

  Jamie, I see you are putting your baby in time out, what happened? Jamie replies the baby was bad so she has to go to time out. T. Should we set a timer for the time out? Jamie: Sure. T. pretends the timer goes off. Jamie takes baby out of chair. T., Jamie, what could we tell the baby now? Jamie to be good. T. Jamie what can we say to the baby to help her be good? Jamie, no hitting. T. Jamie maybe you could tell the baby to use gentle hands. Jamie tells baby to use gentle hands.
Examples of Pre-Planned Social/Emotional Activities

- Morning greeting group time, teacher calls children one by one to give a good morning hug. Then call on a friend to be the next person.

- STORY TIME – Literacy – choose books to enhance social and emotional growth.
  - use pictures of the book
  - let children tell you the story
  - focus on facial expressions
  - Why? How? When?

- Build Connection: Becky Bailey’s “I Love You Rituals”
  - Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, What a Special Child You Are!
Some Social-Emotional Development Milestones

- Self-Regulation Skills
- Emotional Communication Skills
- Social Skills
Self-Regulation
The Ability to:
• Control Emotions & Behavior
• Resist Impulses
• Exert Self-Control
• Exert Self-Discipline
Self-Regulation is...

The strongest predictor of school success over and above cognitive skills and family factors.
Lack of Self-regulation Skills shows up when children...

bite, tantrum, cry inconsolably, interrupt others, hit, push, kick, skip in line, self-harm, destroy property, scream, steal food and toys, etc.
How do we teach kids to self-regulate?

- Create an environment of safety and security, where feelings are respected and children are nurtured.
- Educate ourselves on the social and emotional milestones for the specific ages we teach.
- Have appropriate expectations based on the milestones.
- Teach skills in appropriate increments.
- Create moments throughout the day EVERY day where children can practice these skills.
Sharing & Taking Turns

- Skills of self-regulation and social cooperation
- What’s the difference?
- When do we learn how to share and take turns?
- Use the language throughout the day.
- Be patient!
Emotional Communication Skills

Emotional Communication Skills are developed:

• When children feel safe to express their emotions, even BIG ones
• When children learn how to link their emotions to their causes
• When children learn how to effectively communicate how they feel
• When children learn how to be a part of the solution in challenging moments or times of conflict
Teaching Emotional Communication Skills

- Be mindful of the typical emotional milestones of your children.
- Identify your own feelings and communicate your feelings in healthy ways. Be mindful of using your emotions to manipulate children into compliance.
- Acknowledge your children’s emotions.
- Help children “see” when other children are demonstrating an emotion, as appropriate.
- Use opportunities in play to communicate emotions.
- Teach coping skills for challenging moments.
- Have a cozy corner in your room to allow an upset child to “take a break.”
Social Skills and Play

- Children begin to demonstrate social skills in infancy. Infants coo and babble at caregivers and each other. They start showing preferences for other children beginning around age 1. Toddlers seek to be near each other and show affection to one another. Toddlers can show kindness and empathy. At around 2½ years of age, children play with each other to accomplish a task.

- Play provides great opportunities to allow social skills to develop in fun ways.

- Be a coach!!!! Speak for children when they are unable and coach them to use phrases when they can to navigate conflict.

- Don’t resolve conflict for them without coaching them through it.
The Elephant and the Dinosaur
Let’s have some fun!

- Gather with your group and you will be given a scenario to play out and plan a social and emotional learning opportunity for your children.
Experts agree that there is a deep connection between social-emotional development and literacy in children’s early school success including achieving reading proficiency in the early grades.

Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a strong predictor of high school graduation and later student success.

In Louisiana, 71% of fourth graders are not proficient in reading, which poses serious consequences for their future.
Linking S-E Development and Literacy

○ **Social-Emotional Skills**
  ○ Creating Relationships
  ○ Managing Own Behavior
  ○ Developing Curiosity
  ○ Understanding Own Emotions
  ○ Understanding Others’ Emotions
  ○ Developing Empathy
  ○ Communicating Thoughts and Feelings

○ **Literacy Skills**
  ○ Oral Language Skills
  ○ Phonological Awareness
  ○ Print Knowledge
Use of Children’s Literature
Book Example:
On Monday When it Rained

Disappointed
Embarrassed
Proud
Scared
Angry
Excited
Lonely

Proud
Book Nooks

http://www.csefel.uiuc.edu/practical-ideas.html
Characteristics of Classrooms that Foster Emotional Literacy

* Books about feelings are read and are available in the story center.
* Photos of people with various emotional expressions are displayed.
* Teachers label their own feelings.
* Teachers notice and label children’s feelings.
* Activities are planned to teach and reinforce emotional literacy.
* Children are reinforced for using feeling words.
* Efforts occur daily.
Oh, the Places You’ll Go!

- You have brains in your head.
- You have feet in your shoes.
- You can steer yourself any direction you choose.
- You’re on your own. And you know what you know.
- And YOU are the guy who’ll decide where to go!
For more information or to request mental health consultation, you can contact the Director of the TIKES Mental Health Consultation team.

- Dr. Allison Boothe, Ph.D
- aboothe@Tulane.edu
Resources

- 2017 Kids Count Profile from the Annie E. Casey Foundation - Datacenter.kidscoun.org/LA
- The Connecticut Peer Learning Pilot on Social-Emotional Development and Early Literacy, May 2016; Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut
- Zero to Three
- The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, Vanderbilt University.