Purposeful Engagements: Supporting Young Learners with Meaningful Interactions and Intentionality

infant and early childhood conference

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Purposeful Engagements: Supporting Young Learners with Meaningful Interactions and Intentionality

**Goal:** Young learner can only learn when the teacher has created and supported meaningful relationships and interactions. This presentation will give teachers an understanding of the challenges and strategies to support intentional interactions.

**Outcomes: Teachers will be able to...**
- Explore and state their core values in working with children and families
- Identify challenges in developing and sustaining relationships.
- Explore how resilience supports interactions.
- Identify intentional communication strategies that support meaningful interactions
This is your workshop!

What are Your Questions that you want me to address?

Are there questions from the last session?
Interactions

“Eager to Learn – Educating our Preschoolers” 2000 Executive Summary...

“If there is a single critical component to quality, it rests in the relationship between the child and the teacher/caregiver, and in the ability of the adult to be responsive to the child. But responsiveness extends in many directions: to the child’s cognitive, social, emotional, and physical characteristics and development.”
“We teachers must be able to catch the ball that children throw us and toss it back to them in such a way that will continue the game, perhaps developing other games as we go along”.

(Filippini 1990 as cited in Edwards, Gandini and Formam 1993, 153)

Discuss implications of practice

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_5u8-QSh6A
What can Impact Our Interactions and Relationships?

Core Value Exercise

Fill in the blank:

I believe my interactions with…

children can __________________

families can __________________

my teammates can ________________
Do Our Values Impact How We Interact?

Write down what you would say to children and families in these photos.
How important are our Interactions

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXGEbZht0

What are the implications?
The Developing Brain – Essential Needs

• Healthy Relationships - early relationships are vital to brain development because they help wire the brain to trust others, to love, and to feel safe and secure.

• Positive Experiences - new brain connections are formed and modified through verbal and physical interactions

• Consistent and Secure Environment - the brain develops gradually in response to experience and to the environment
What Strategies Can Teacher Use to Catch the Ball

• Promote a secure relationship?
• Let the child experience, regulate, and express emotions?
• Assist the child to explore the environment and learn?
• Promote the context of culture, family and community?
What are these Teachers Doing Support Emotional Development?
Fussy Babies or Sensory Processing Disorder?

Red Flags Infants and toddlers

- Problems eating or sleeping
- Refuses to go to anyone but me
- Irritable when being dressed; uncomfortable in clothes
- Rarely plays with toys
- Resists cuddling, arches away when held
- Cannot calm self
- Floppy or stiff body, motor delays
Temperament Types
Flexible, Fearful, and Feisty
Strategies to Support Temperament

Acknowledge a child’s temperament traits as well as your own

Consider ways to adapt the daily schedule, energy level, lighting, sound, pace, activity level, and stimulation to best match the child’s temperament

Focus on the positive attributes of all temperament traits (e.g., cautious vs. shy; persistent vs. stubborn; energetic vs. overactive or “hyper”)

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Characteristics of Mutually Satisfying Interactions

For the observer of the interaction did you see...

Shared emotion

Joint attention

Predictability

Reciprocity/Turn-Taking
Reflection:
What Do Your Relationships Look Like?

Imagine someone is taking pictures of your interactions with children throughout the day...

- What kinds of interactions would be captured?
- What strengths would be identified?
- How many moments of these types of interactions make up the day for the infants and toddlers in your care?
- How might you increase joyful interactions like these in your care setting?
Communication Strategies
Continuous Contingent Interactions (Lilian Katz)

• Self-talk: younger children and dual language learners, say what you are doing to prompt their learning.

• Parallel-talk – Be explicit, say what they are doing use descriptive words that will build larger vocabulary and increases understanding.

• Repeat – say exactly what they say

• Restate – paraphrase to validate
Communication Strategies

- Open Ended Questions

- Extend and Expand – Supporting metacognition, helping children to think about their own process of thinking.

- Encouraging Ideas – Creative thought, analyzing and evaluating their inquiries and projects.

High/Scope
Teaching to enhance development and learning - Practice

Acknowledge
Encourage Give specific feedback
Model/Scaffold
Demonstrate
Create or add a challenge
Give a cue, hint or other assistance
Provide information
Give directions
Questions & Feedback