

Peaceful Practices: Social-Emotional Support



Age Range:	All ages
Rationale (Why):	<p>Social-emotional development forms the foundation of a child's overall well-being, a healthy sense of self, and their ability to explore and engage with the world they live in. Positive experiences in this area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support healthy brain development, especially in the early years when the brain is rapidly growing.• Help children learn self-regulation, allowing them to manage emotions, cope with challenges, develop resilience and executive function skills.• Foster strong relationships, teaching children how to connect, empathize, and collaborate with others.• Contribute to academic success, as emotional security and social skills are closely linked to learning and classroom engagement.
Resources:	E.G., arts, music, books, games, movement, food, American Sign Language
Environment set-up, inside and outside:	Everywhere, including classroom meeting areas (a.k.a. circle time area), self-care moments, and indoor and outdoor work & play areas.
Materials suggested:	<p>Books:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How Kind</i>, written and illustrated by Mary Murphy (also a board book)• <i>Don't Hug Doug (He Doesn't Like It)</i>, by Carrie Finison, illustrated by Daniel Wiseman• <i>Owen & Mzee: Best Friends</i>, by Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff, Dr. Paula Kahumba (also a board book)• <i>The Rabbit Listened</i>, written and illustrated by Cori Doerrfeld• <i>Art & Max</i> by David Wiesner• <i>Hands Are Not For Hitting</i> by Martine Agassi, illustrated by Marieka Heinlen (also a board book)• <i>I Like Myself</i> by Karen Beaumont, illustrated by David Catrow• <i>Grumpy Bird</i> by Jeremy Tankard (also a board book) <p><u>Refer to our Peaceful Practices recommended book list.</u></p> <p>Accommodation or modifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create visual sequence cards for stories• Create visual cards with key words in other native languages (supporting ESL students)• American Sign Language (i.e., emotions, feelings, and directions)• Classroom visuals such as displays of children's emotions• Social Stories

Other:

- A variety of art materials for creating art (such as self-portraits and body tracing)
 - Paper
 - Pencils
 - Skin tone colored pencils, crayons, markers, paints
 - Clay
 - Pastels, chalk, etc.
- Emotion cards
- Mirrors
- Persona Dolls
- Dramatic play materials (i.e., dolls, puppets, dress up clothing, etc.)

How, Process, Directions

Opening: Introduce the topic

When children start group care, school or a new classroom, they need support in social-emotional development due to experiencing various emotions.

- How are you feeling today?
- Who are your family members or important people in your lives?
- What are these feelings you are experiencing? Do others feel the same?
- How can you express your feelings in a positive and healthy way?

Explorations: Children's Work

Teacher's role:

- Observe where the children's interests and needs are and find the appropriate books and activities/experiences
- Read aloud and have discussions about books regarding the topics of self, families, feelings, and friendships
- Create art experiences in which children can reflect on who they are in this world they live in:
 - Sketching self-portraits
 - Drawing our families
 - Connecting colors with emotions with paint
 - Using skin tone materials
 - Exploring with clay, playdough, sensory doughs, and/or materials
- Use the persona dolls/puppets when events occur in the classroom: children learn to express their feelings, engage in problem-solving, and think of solutions.

Wondering Questions — adapt for specific experiences

Examples of open-ended questions: I wonder...

- ...what facial expressions you like to make and see on others??
- ...what your family/people you live with like to do?
- ...what are some of the differences/similarities you notice? (our faces, our bodies, clothing, etc.)?
- ...how do you like to move?
- ...how you feel today?
- ...what happens when we feel [fill in the blank]?

Extended opportunities

Set up areas around the classroom (indoors as well as outdoors) where children can explore a sense of self or learn about each other.

- Dramatic play with varied and rich materials
- Art area:
 - Easel painting opportunity
 - Provide materials to create self-portraits
 - Skin tone color paints to create and name the child's own skin color (create a chart for the classroom with all of the children's skin tones)
- Opportunities for children to work together such as blocks and large floor puzzles
- Book area: create a cozy area with pillows and books, for children to engage in conversations. Provide a basket with emotion cards in this area.
- Clay table: use a small table in the classroom and add a big lump of clay. Keep it covered throughout the day with a wet cloth. This area can be used when children feel anxious or upset. Clay is naturally soothing.
- Sensory materials such as sand & water opportunities
- Providing access to nature

Closing reflection

none

Notes to share with other teachers and families

Children benefit greatly from both adult and peer support when it comes to social-emotional development. Working in small groups exposes them to diverse ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives. As children build friendships and learn to collaborate together, they become more comfortable discussing their feelings and emotions. We can also encourage families to support this development at home by getting a library card and continuing to read aloud together.