

The Crucial Role of Social-Emotional Development in School Readiness

Pam Schiller, Ph.D.

S-M-I-L-E

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e

So smile when you're in trouble

It will vanish like a bubble

If you only take the trouble just to

S-M-I-L-E!

Research to Practice: Singing

Research Finding:

 Singing enhances learning.

 Increases alertness (oxygen)

 Enhances memories (endorphins)

 Energizes thinking (cross-lateral movements)

 Provides a transition

 Encourages pattern processing.

 Provides support for literacy skills.

Practice:

 Sing several times a day. Make it a routine.

 Use singing as a springboard to literacy skills.

 Be intentional!

Social-Emotional Intelligence



Social development covers the broad range of skills people use to relate to, play with, learn from, and teach others. Social skills are important for survival and for a good life.







Healthy emotions allow people to express and constructively manage the full range of human feelings, to postpone gratification, to find constructive outlets for negative emotions, and to understand and appreciate how others feel. Healthy emotions lead to self satisfaction and joy.

The Social-Emotional Intelligence Model




Emotional Intelligence	Social Intelligence
Self-awareness	Social awareness Primal empathy Empathy accuracy Attunement Social cognition
Self-management	Relationship management Synchrony Self-presentation Influence Concern

Characteristics of Social-Emotional Intelligence








-  Exhibits self confidence.
-  Expresses natural curiosity.
-  Makes thoughtful choices.
-  Exhibits self control. (controls impulses, delays gratification)
-  Relates to others. (reads social cues)
-  Knows feelings of others and expresses concern.
-  Communicates needs, desires and ideas.
-  Solves problems. (negotiates and compromises)
-  Employs claming strategies.

Stress Management

Infants and Toddlers

-  Swaddle babies. Use swooshing sounds.
-  Monitor bright lights, loud noises and heavy fragrances
-  Keep clothing loose

Preschool

-  Bring hands to the center of the body
-  Stretch
-  Listen to relaxation music
-  Breath
-  Exercise
-  Release
-  Talk to a friend

Emotional Coaching: Five Steps

1. Awareness
2. Connecting
3. Listening
4. Naming
5. Finding Solutions

Gottman, John, Ph.D. (2004)



Current Trends Among Children

Ages 2 to 18

- ❖ Depression (1.22 million to 3.22 million in last decade)
- ❖ Use of antipsychotic drugs (5 fold in decade)
- ❖ Eating disorders (7 million girls)
 - ❖ Overweight (1 in 2 children)
 - ❖ Obese (1 in 5)
- ❖ Cutting (2 million girls each year)
- ❖ Sleep deprivation (67% miss 1 to 2 hours per night)
- ❖ Children are being diagnosed with anti-social personality disorder.

In total, one-third of our children are now diagnosed with some significant mental or physical disorder.

Brain Research Finding

 The Role of Experience

 Mirror neurons

 Spindle cells

 Nature/Nurture Equation

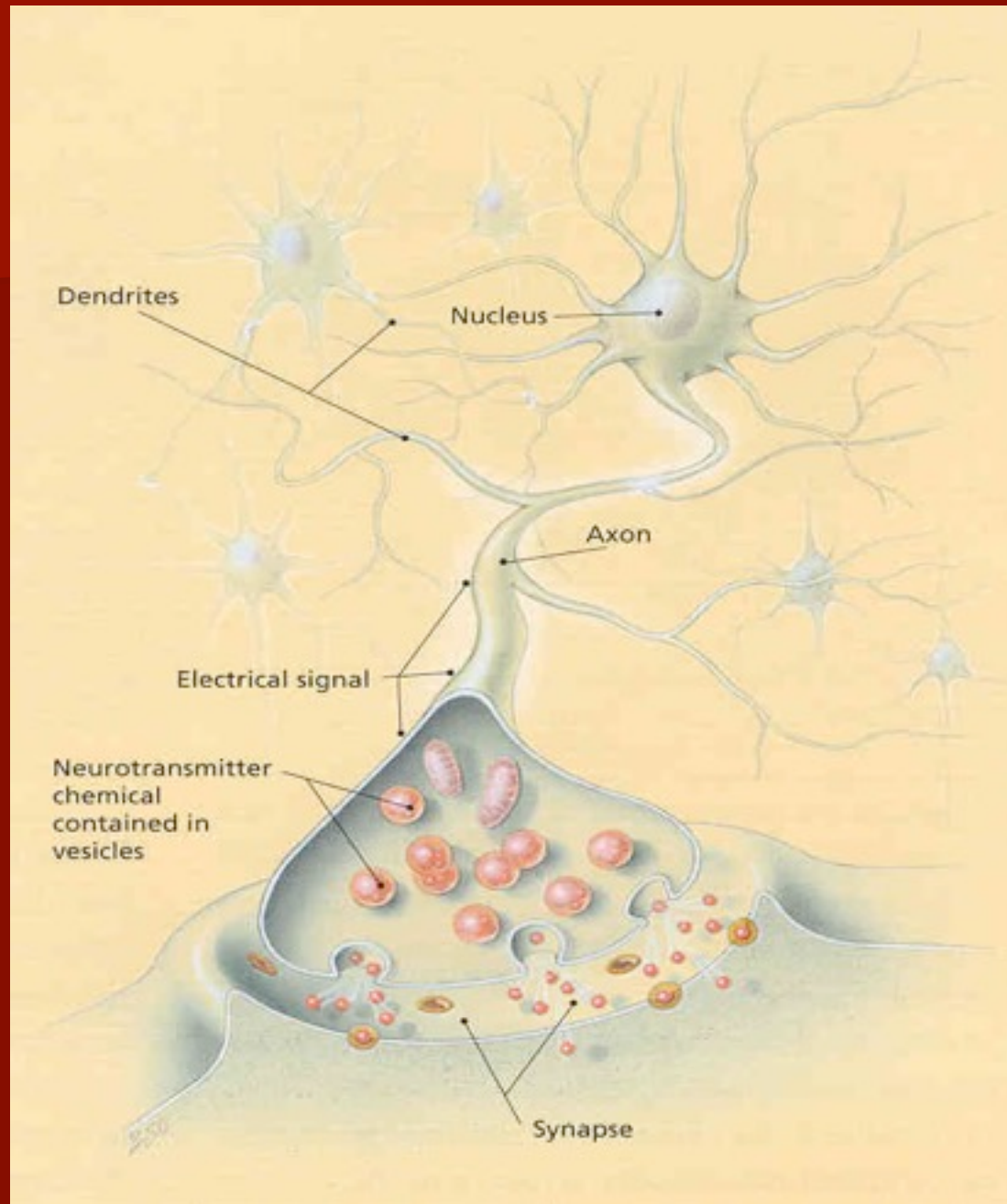
 The Windows of Opportunity

 Relationships

 Stress/Deprivation/Trauma

Experience wires the brain.

Repetition strengthens the wiring.



Humans have more than
1,000,000,000,000
neurons.

There are several different kinds of neurons,
each performing a specific task.

Mirror neurons and spindle cells are
responsible for social wiring.

Mirror Neurons



Mirror Neurons:



reflect back the actions of other.



fire as we watch others.



make emotions contagious.



Help us know the intent of others.

“When you smile the whole world smiles with you.”

Empathy

The Heart of Social-Emotional Intelligence



Knowing the feeling of others



Feeling what that person feels







Responding compassionately

Scientists say that the more active a person's mirror neuron system, the stronger their empathy.

Spindle Cells

Spindle cells

-  make us socially aware and sensitive.
-  put the snap in snap judgments.
-  create our interpersonal intelligence.
-  position themselves in the brain during the first 4 months of life. How prolific they are depends on factors such as stress (for worse) and loving atmosphere (for the better).

Humans, apes and whales are the only animals with spindle cells.

The Nature—Nurture Debate

- There are probably more differences in human brains than in any other animal, partly because the human brain does most of its developing in the outside world.

Robert Ornstein and Richard Thompson

The Amazing Brain

- Seventy percent of what is given to us genetically is brought to fruition by our environmental experiences.

Daniel Goleman

Social Intelligence

- Brain development is contingent on a complex interplay between genes and the environment.

Roadmap to Individual Differences

Characteristic	Genetic	Environmentally Influenced	Emergence
Learning Style		✓	20 months
MI Profile	✓	✓	30 months
Personality	✓	✓	11 months
Temperament	✓	✓	15 months

Temperament Variables

Temperaments	High Level	Low Level
Novelty Seeking	Thrill seeking, intuitive adventurous, fickle disorderly, impulsive	Orderly and organized, Self-controlled, loyal, analytical, direct, stoic
Harm Avoidance	Anxious, pessimistic, inhibited, easily fatigued, given to depression	Confident, optimistic, highly energetic, carefree even in the face of danger, uninhibited
Reward Dependence	Dependent on emotional support and feedback of others, sentimental, sensitive to social cues	Socially detached, loner, non-conformist, cynical, socially insensitive
Persistence	Eager, ambitious, determined	Uninterested in achievement, unambitious

Dimensions of Character

 Self-directedness

 Cooperativeness

 Self-transcendence

Windows of Opportunity

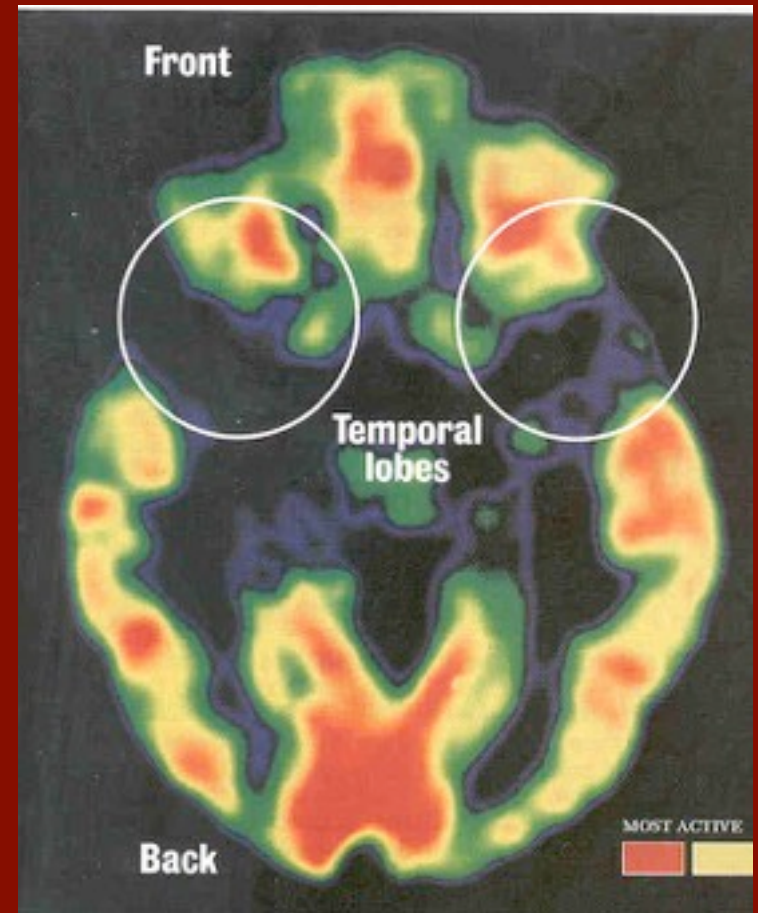
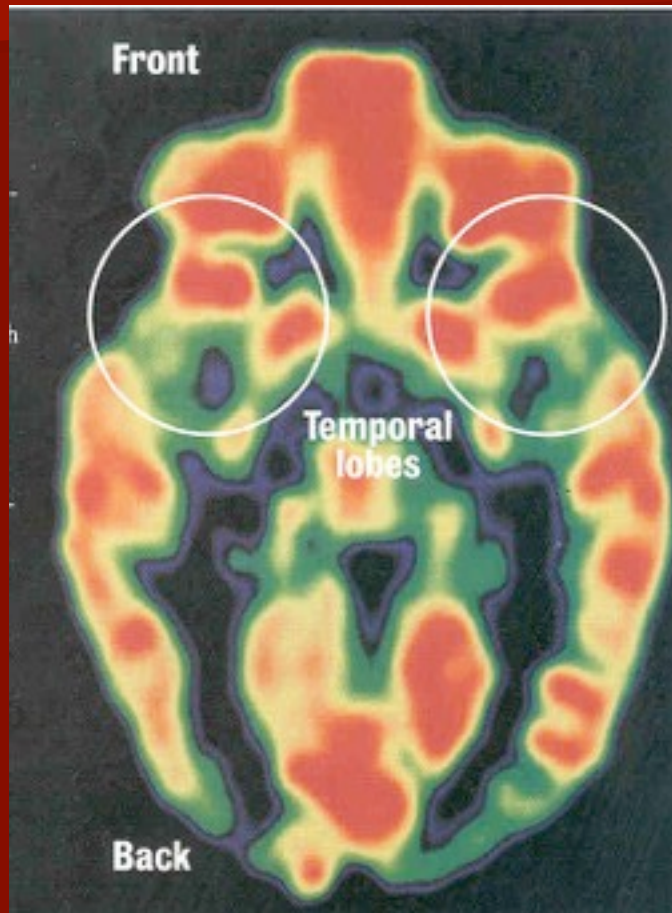
Window	Wiring	Greatest
Emotional Intelligence	0 - 48 months	4 - 8 years
Social Development Attachment	0 - 48 months 0 - 12	4 years to puberty
Thinking Skills Cause and	0 - 48 months	4 years to puberty
Motor	0 - 24	2 years to
Vision	0 - 24	2 years to
Reading Foundation	0 - 24 months	2 - 7 years 8 mos. - 10

Relationships play a major role in the wiring of social-emotional intelligence.

“Caregivers, parents and teachers, hold in their hands the chance to shape a child’s entire future. High on the list of priorities are the social interactions and emotional exchanges between caregiver and child.”

Bruce Perry, MD.
Texas Medical Center

Pet Scans of Three Year Olds



Seven Key Ingredients of School Readiness

1. Confidence
2. Curiosity
3. Intentionality
4. Self-control
5. Relatedness
6. Capacity to communicate
7. Cooperativeness

Seven Skills for School Success

Pam Schiller, Ph.D.

If You're Happy

If you're happy and you know it laugh out loud...

Ha, ha, ha! (laugh)

If you're sad and you know it say, "I'm sad." (words)

If you're surprised and you know it say, "Yippee."
Yippee (words)

If you're angry and you know it stomp your feet.
Stomp, stomp (feet)

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Five Strategies for Developing Social-Emotional Intelligence



Model



Discuss



Practice









Acknowledge



Reflect

Confidence

-  Challenge children to the edge of their competency. Balance abilities and limitations.
-  Be “fully present.”
-  Keep physical space cozy.
-  Avoid perfectionism.
-  Provide opportunities for children to practice problem-solving. Embrace failure.
-  Use encouragement as opposed to praise.


Use Encouragement instead of Praise

Findings:


Extrinsic reward inhibits intrinsic motivation.

The brain functions optimally when stress is low and safe challenges are high.

Applications:

 Eliminate the use of stickers and privilege rewards.




 Be honest and sincere with compliments.

 Encourage children to critique themselves.

 Avoid comparisons.

 Focus on process instead of product.




Negative Impacts of Praise

-  Too much praise burdens—it pressures children to live up to your expectations.
-  Value - driven praise results in children equating good with pleasing others and bad with displeasing others. We raise people-pleasers instead of thinkers.
-  If you praise for only completed tasks, you send a message that effort doesn't matter.

Bottom line: You can't build confidence from the outside.

Encouragement Strategies

Notice, Acknowledge, and Appreciate

-  Notice and describe behavior.
 - “Look at you. You finished the puzzle. That took determination.”
 - “You did it. You came down the slide feet first and landed right in my arms.”
-  Link actions to enjoyment and satisfaction instead of a tangible reward.
-  Use encouragement especially when children make a poor choice.
 - “I feel confident that you will find a better way.”

Literature with Problem-solving Theme

- ❏ Imogene's Antlers by David Small
- ❏ Swimmy by Leo Lionni
- ❏ Domino by Claire Masurel
- ❏ Pickle-Chiffon Pie by Roger Bradfield
- ❏ Mr. Pine's Purple House by Leonard Kessler
- ❏ Benjamin Dilley's Thirsty Camel by Roger Bradfield
- ❏ Mouse Paint by Ellen Stoll Walsh
- ❏ Ant Attack! by Ann James
- ❏ The Doorbell Rang by Pat Hutchins

Curiosity

- ❧ Set up an **environment** that allows children to “fall in love” with their world. Keep the environment safe for exploration.
- ❧ Accept the **non-traditional**.
- ❧ Consider ways to offer **novelty**.
- ❧ Provide **interesting** materials for exploration.
- ❧ Ask “what if” and other **open-ended** questions.
- ❧ Redefine failure as **determination**.
- ❧ Stimulate **imagination**. Encourage **dreams**.
- ❧ Follow the **interest** of the children.

Curiosity	results in	Exploration
Exploration	results in	Discovery
Discovery	results in	Pleasure
Pleasure	results in	Repetition
Repetition	results in	Mastery
Mastery	results in	New Skills
New Skills	results in	Confidence
Confidence	results in	Self esteem
Self esteem	results in	Sense of Security
Security	results in	More Exploration
Perry, Bruce (2001) "Curiosity: The Fuel of Development." Early Childhood Today. NY, Scholastic.		

Literature with Curiosity Theme

- Curious George by Hey A. Ray
- How Come? by Kathy Wollard
- Why? by Catherine Ripley
- In the Forest by Pierre de Hugo
- Edward the Emu by Sheena Knowles
- The Rainbow Mystery by Jennifer Dussling
- The Nose Knows by Ellen Weis
- What's that Sound? by Mary Lawrence

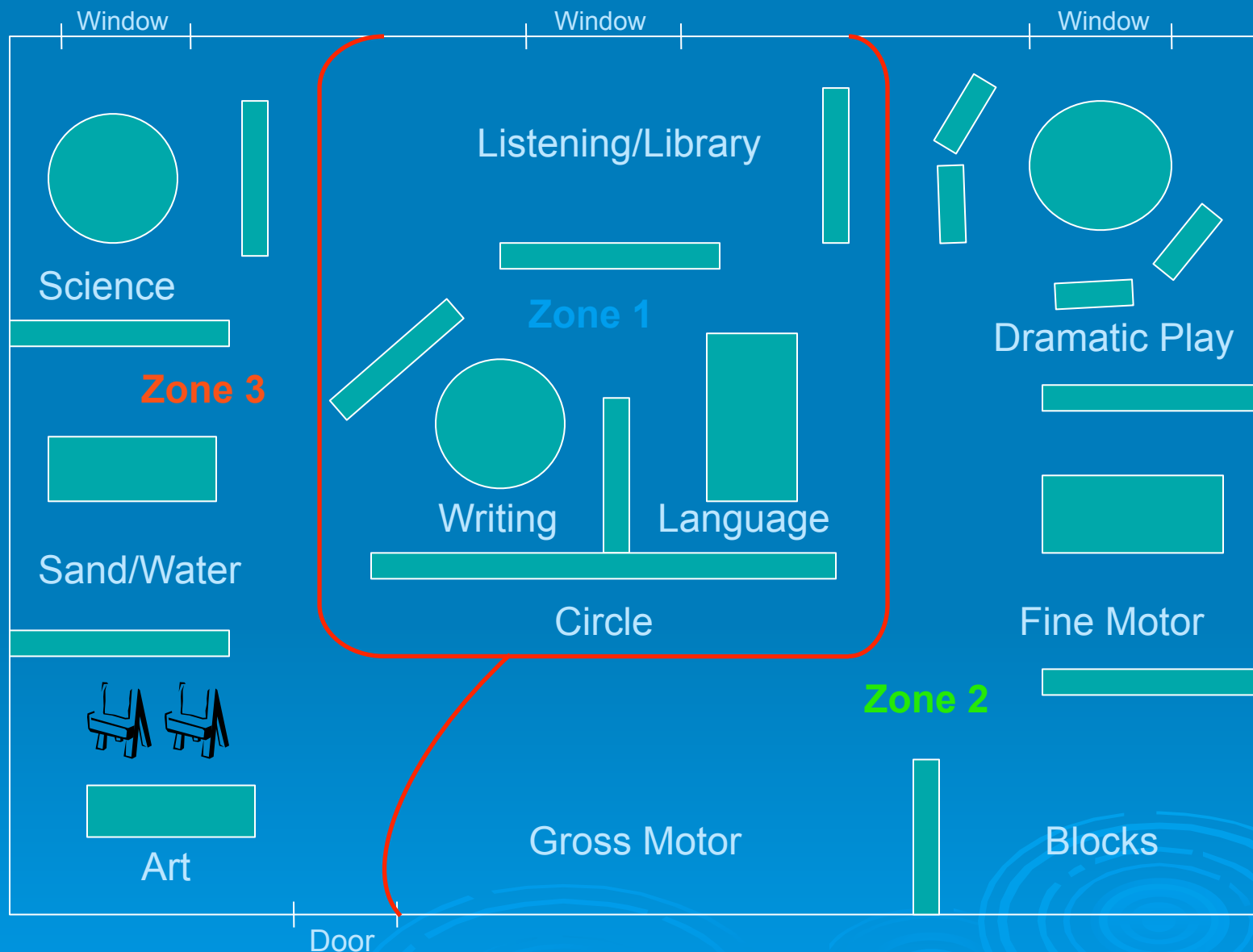
Intentionality

- ❏ Offer **choices**. Teach children how to make **thoughtful choices**.
- ❏ Discuss the **difference** in what we want to do and doing the right thing.
- ❏ Use the choices that characters in **literature** make as a springboard for discussion.
- ❏ Allow **time** for focusing and reflecting.
- ❏ Encourage **persistence** and **commitment**. Insist on **finishing** what is started.
- ❏ Encourage **internal** satisfaction.



Literature with Intentionality Theme






- ❏ Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman
- ❏ The Little Red Hen (traditional)
- ❏ Itsy Bitsy Spider by Iza Trapani
- ❏ Dream Carver by Diane Cohn
- ❏ A Chair for My Mother by Vera Williams
- ❏ Something for Me by Vera Williams
- ❏ The Little Painter of Sabana Grande by Patricia Markum
- ❏ The Little Engine that Could by Watty Piper











Self-Control

- ☞ Ensure **physical needs** are met. Provide a “safe place TM.”
- ☞ Consider using **agreements TM** as opposed to rules.
 - ☞ Use **clear, simple agreements**. Hold boundaries.
 - ☞ Allow children to **help** set the rules.
- ☞ Be **consistent**. Be **firm**. Be **fair**.
- ☞ **View** behavioral challenges as teaching opportunities for all.
- ☞ Provide opportunities to **practice** patience.
- ☞ Have **appropriate** expectations.
- ☞ Use **natural** and **logical consequences** for inappropriate behavior.
- ☞ **Ignore** attention-getting behaviors.
- ☞ Offer limited **choices**.
- ☞ Avoid **over-stimulation**.

Literature with Self-Control Theme

-  Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak
-  Be Brown by Barbara Bottner
-  Harry the Dirty Dog by Gene Zion
-  Noisy Nora by Rosemary Wells
-  Julius, the Baby of the World by Kevin Henkes

Relatedness









-  **Discuss** feelings as they pertain to both spontaneous and planned events that occur in the classroom.
-  Express **your** feelings as appropriate.
-  Teach and model basic rules of **politeness**.
-  Teach **verbal clues**.
-  Teach and model strategies for **negotiating** and **resolving** conflicts (Cooperative Problem-Solving).
-  Model **empathy**. Teach empathy. Acknowledge empathy.
-  Use “Wish You Well Rituals” TM for absent class members.
-  Encourage an **environment** that reflects the classroom as a

Literature with Relatedness Theme








- ❏ Chester's Way by Kevin Henkes
- ❏ Matthew and Tilly by Rebecca Jones
- ❏ Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes
- ❏ Best Friends by Steven Kellogg
- ❏ Old Henry by Joan Blos
- ❏ That's What Friends Are For by Florence Heidi
- ❏ That's What Friends Do by Kathryn Cave
- ❏ The Lion and the Mouse (Aesop fable)

Ask feeling questions.

Capacity to Communicate

-  Build **trust**.
-  Listen with interest. Be “fully present.”
-  Expand **vocabulary**. **Model** vocabulary that shows compassion and empathy.
-  Encourage **appropriate language**.
-  Point out **non-verbal** (body language) communication.
-  Treat “Show and Tell” as a springboard to **oral reporting**.
-  Use **sign language** as a beginning with toddlers, reluctant speakers or second language speakers.
-  Practice making **eye contact** and appropriate ways to **greet** others.

Literature with Communication Theme

-  Marti and the Mango by Daniel Moreton
-  The King who Rained by Fred Gynne
-  Epossumondas by Coleen Salley
-  Tops and Bottoms by Janet Stevens
-  The Gardner by Sarah Stewart
-  Dear Mr. Blueberry by Simon James
-  The Old Man and the Door by Joe Cepeda

Cooperativeness

- ☞ Play **games** that promote cooperative effort.
 - ☞ Cooperative Musical Chairs
 - ☞ Group Cover Up
- ☞ Participate in **community** and **school-wide** events.
- ☞ Work on **class projects**.
- ☞ Encourage children's **friendships**.
- ☞ Encourage **sharing** and **taking turns**.
- ☞ Use **peer tutoring** and the **buddy system**.
- ☞ Model **cooperative vocabulary**: team, together, help me, let's try, thank you...
- ☞ Model lending a **helping hand**.

Literature with Cooperativeness Theme

- ❏ The Great Big Enormous Turnip by Alexei Tolstoy
- ❏ Stone Soup by Heather Forest
- ❏ The Little Red Hen (traditional)
- ❏ Fox Tale Soup by Tony Bonning
- ❏ The Blind Men and the Elephant by Karen Backstein
- ❏ Eight Animals Bake a Cake by Susan Middleton Elya

Whether a child enters

Those who say that social intelligence amounts to little more than general intelligence applied to social situations might do better to reason the other way around: to consider that general intelligence is merely a derivative of social intelligence, albeit one our culture has come to value.

Daniel Goleman

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