

The skills on this document are organized according to ***the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards***:

- ***Recognizing and Responding to Emotions,***
- ***Building Relationships,***
- ***Self-Identify and Belonging.***

Recognizing and Responding to Emotions

Key points in teaching emotions:

- Help children understand by giving their emotions names and encouraging them to describe their feelings.
- Provide opportunities to identify feelings.
- Explain feelings by using words, pictures, books, and stories.
- Use real-life examples to talk about feelings.
- Keep it simple and use visuals.

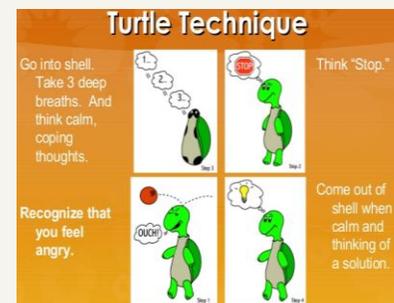
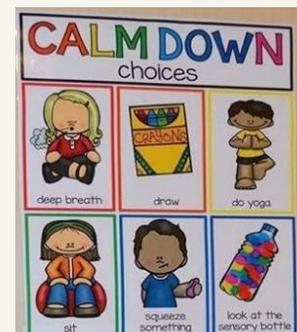
Managing Emotions and Self-Regulation

The key is Practice, Practice, and Practice

- Teach children to express the emotions they are feeling by saying words, pointing to pictures, or gesturing.
- Pre-teach strategies for self-regulation. Do not try to teach or practice in the moment the child is upset.

Strategies:

- **Play games such as Make a Face –**
Make sad, happy faces and let children guess the emotions the face is showing.
- **Use stories.**
Read a book that shows emotions and self-regulation. Discuss the feelings and actions shown in the book.
- **Make an emotion and self-regulation book** for children.
Use real photos of the child combined with pictures to show self-regulation strategies.



Building Relationships

Building Relationships - Relationships with Adults

It is vital that adults invest time and effort in communicating their interest in and dedication to the children in their care. Positive relationship building is the foundation for all interventions, especially those related to challenging behaviors. Positive relationships are the foundational component of good teaching.

Key ingredients for positive relationships:



- **Invest time** and interest in the relationship. Children will cue in on the caring of adults and react to ensure more positive attention.
- **Take Time** – Embed opportunities throughout the day to reinforce with affirming statements and positive reactions.
- **“Making Deposits”** – When adults provide positive, safe, and confidence-building interactions for children it can be compared to making a deposit in the child’s relationship bank.

Building Relationships - Relationships with Peers

These components are essential for success:



- Create a predictable, nurturing, and encouraging **environment**
- Emphasis on **problem-solving** and self-regulation
- **Practice** – beginning with guided practice and leading to independence. It is important that practice is provided throughout the day in various situations.
- Strategies that support peer interactions:
 - Books on relationship building
 - Visuals to support actions and language related to peer interactions
 - Teaching and modeling skills as part of the daily routine, not just when problems arise

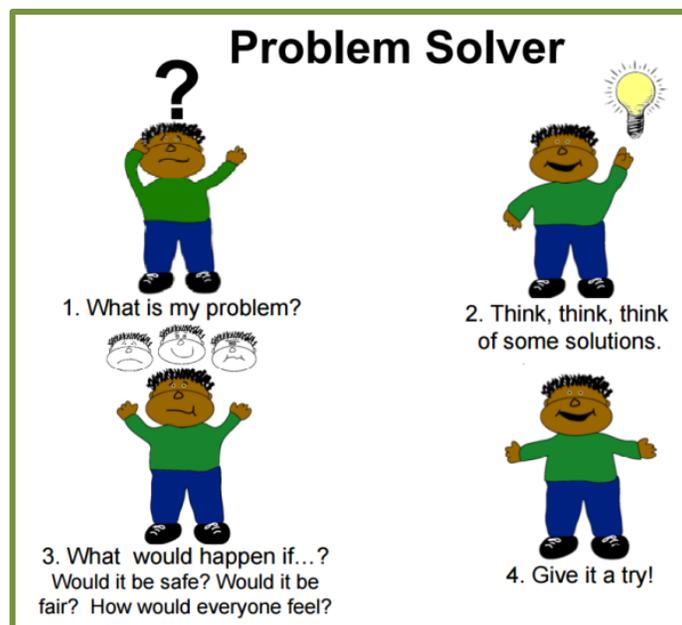
Building Relationships - Problem-solving

Children learn best from everyday experiences. Observe the moments when children have difficulty with social situations and think about strategies and lessons that would help them learn skills necessary for solving problems.

- Pre-teach problem-solving skills. Don't wait until children are in a moment of frustration or uncertainty to provide instruction.
- Provide supports such as scripted stories, puppets, dolls, and visuals.
- Provide guided practice, role play, and frequent reinforcement and feedback.

Procedure for Teaching Problem-solving skills:

1. Identify the problem
2. Think about solutions
3. Think about what will happen if I do a certain action
4. Try the solution. Important - Use the problem solving procedure in lessons by acting out scenarios, using books, puppets, and photos.



Building Relationships - Empathy

Empathy includes three distinct processes:

- **Emotional Sharing** – understanding the emotions exhibited by others
- **Empathic Concern** – the motivation to care for individuals who are distressed or vulnerable
- **Perspective-taking** – the ability to put oneself in the mind and position of another and imagine what that person is feeling

Tips for teaching empathy

1. Provide children with the support they need to develop self-regulation skills. Children are more likely to exhibit empathy if they feel secure and have strong self-regulation skills.
2. Use everyday opportunities to model. Before asking children what they should do in a situation, describe the feelings a person might be experiencing.
3. Help children with understanding facial expressions and non-verbal cues of others' emotions.

Social Skills Activities that Enhance Instruction of Empathy

1. **The Name Game** – Skill addressed: getting a person's attention before speaking – Children sit in a circle with a ball. They take turns calling the name of a peer and then rolling the ball to that peer.
2. Preschool games that Reward attention and self-control – Skills addressed – developing focus, attention, and restraining impulses. Examples include **Simon Says, Red light, Green light.**
3. **Music-making and rhythm games** – Skills addressed – helping others, cooperative and supportive behaviors – Music activities that put children together in groups with music makers and instructions to pretend to be frogs (or similar animal) to make music together to awaken the others.

Self-identity and Belonging

Self-Identity and Belonging - Play

- **Follow the child's lead.** Provide materials and wait. Then interact at the child's level using his/her interests.
- **Go slowly.** It's good to show children new toys and new ways to use toys but begin by using toys (building blocks for example) in a simple way and waiting for a child to join the play.
- **Watch for signs of frustration.** Children who have language impairments or developmental delays might have difficulty with pretend play, as well as with multi-step activities. At signs of frustration, provide help or switch to another activity.
- **Allow for repetition** during play and during daily routines. Repetition is important for the development of independence and confidence. If a child enjoys playing with the same things again and again, allow for that while trying to introduce gradual changes and additions.



Self-Identity and Belonging - Exploration and Persistence

Children show social skills in these areas with behaviors such as working to complete tasks such as puzzles, construction with blocks, or an experiment. Children who have persistence continue to work on an activity with minimal redirection and even when the task seems difficult for them.

Strategies for Helping Children Develop Persistence

- **Encourage** children who become frustrated. Make suggestions for completing a task and provide visuals to show step-by-step sequences for tasks.
- **Recognize and praise** children for working on a task or staying with a difficult activity.
- **Alert** children that you are about to give a direction and tell them the expectations for listening to and following a direction.

Self-Identity and Belonging - Routines and rituals

It is important to support children as they develop a sense of belonging and identity by following routines and being flexible when there are changes or challenges in the routine. Use strategies that provide visual, verbal, and peer support so that children become more independent in their abilities to follow routines.

Visuals can be used to support children through the following types of routines:

- Scheduled activities of the day
- Routines for independence, such as hand washing and toileting
- Transitions from one activity to the next
- Calendars are useful for helping children plan when activities might occur – in preparing for activities they might dread (such as a doctor’s appointment) and in waiting for an anticipated activity (a class or family trip).



Self-Identity and Belonging - Self-awareness and Independence

As children develop self-awareness and independence they become more able to participate in the following ways:

- **Communicating** their wants and needs
- **Recognizing preferences** and choices of others
- **Demonstrating self-knowledge** and giving information about self

[Resources](#)

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) Types of resources include: family tools, practical strategies, training kits, training modules, free and downloadable/printable resources, lessons based on classroom books.

<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/wwb/wwb7.html>

Early Childhood Perspectives and Resources, Behavior resources, IRIS Center at Peabody College, Vanderbilt. <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/ecbm/cresource/>

Fostering Healthy Social and Emotional Development in Young Children, Too Small to Fail, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/talk-read-sing/feelings-families.pdf>

Florida Positive Behavior Support Purpose: Increasing the capacity of Florida's school districts to address problem behaviors using Positive Behavior Support. <http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/>

Promoting Self-regulation in the First Five Years, Self-regulation Briefs from UNC Frank Porter Graham Center. <https://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/reports-and-policy-briefs/PromotingSelf-RegulationIntheFirstFiveYears.pdf>

Teaching Social and Emotional Skills

<https://www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200611/BTJFoxLentini.pdf>