Overview of Social and Emotional Skills

Social-emotional development consists of components such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning). A definition of social development generally includes the context of family, community, and background; but, is considered to be a child's developing capacity to form secure relationships, experience and regulate emotions, and explore and learn (Zero to Three). Social-emotional development affects children's growth later in life in areas such as learning, communicating, accomplishing self-care skills, and being successful in school.

The Battelle Developmental Inventory – 2nd Edition (BDI-2) addresses three subdomains in the Personal/Social Domain area: Adult Interaction
Peer Interaction
Social Role

Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for ages Birth to 5 years (FELDS) addresses four subdomains for both 3-year olds and 4-year olds. Refer to the charts on the following pages for the correlations of FELDS and BDI-2.

Domain Labels in BDI=2 and FELDS	
Battelle Developmental Inventory – 2nd Edition	*Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards*
Adaptive	----
Personal-Social	Social-Emotional
Communication	Language and Communication (+Emergent Literacy)
Motor	Physical
Cognitive	Cognitive (+Knowledge)
----	Approaches to Learning

Development of skills is interrelated across domains.

Examples of the interrelated relationship of social skills to skills in other domains:
- **Understanding** the steps involved in initiating and maintaining peer interactions, as well as maintaining attention to a shared task or play activity is an important aspect of peer interaction.   Cognitive delays which impact memory and processing of information also impact the development of social skills.
- **Development** of skills in social interaction and self-regulation is often impacted by delays in expressive and/or receptive language. Children with language delays might have difficulties understanding and processing directions, responding to adult and peer interactions, and initiating interactions such as asking for help.
- **Skills** in the areas of attention, motor, communication, as well as past experiences can impact a child's ability activities such as manipulating toys and engaging in pretend scenarios. These types of issues greatly impact a child's social development because much of the preschool day is spent playing.

It is important to be aware of the **interrelatedness of domain skills** in order to determine the impact of various delays or difficulties when teaching social skills. It is likely that several domain needs will have to be addressed in order to best teach skills.

Correlations of Florida Early Learning and Development Standards that relate to items in the Personal-Social Domain of the Battelle Developmental Inventory – 2nd Edition.

3-4 years		Social and Emotional		
Subdomain		**Standard**	**BDI2**	
Emotional Functioning	1.Expressions, Responses	a. Identifies emotions in a book, picture or person's face	SR25	
	2. Affect, Responses	Verbalizes own feelings and those of others	SR31 SR34	
Managing Emotions	1. Self	a. Begins to verbalize emotions	SR31	
	2. Activities	a. Sustains attention for brief periods in group activities	PI16	
Relationships	1. Adults	a. Interacts positively with familiar adults	AI11	
	2. Peers	a. Builds social relationships b. Enters into social play with peers c. Develops understanding of bullying	PI14 PI10 PI12	
	3. Problem solving	a. Suggests solution to problem and follows through with adult support	PI11 PI12	
	4. Empathy	a. Responds to emotions of others with comforting words or actions	PI9	
Identity and Belonging	1.Identify through play	a. Plays with preferred playmates	PI14	
	2.Exploration and persistence	a. Sustains independent play and planned group activities	PI16	
	3. Routines, rituals, and interactions	a. Willingness to be flexible if routines change in minor ways	SR10	
	4. Self-awareness and Independence	a. Uses words to communicate wants and needs	SR31	
		b. Begins to recognize preferences of others	SR34	
		c. Begins to use words to demonstrate knowledge of personal information	SR16 SR20	
		d. Begins to Identify self as a unique member of a group	PI13	

AI = Adult Interaction   PI = Peer Interaction   SR = Social Role and Responsibility

Summary of Recommended Best Practices for Teachers and Staff in Early Childhood Programs
- DEC – Division for Early Childhood (Council for Exceptional Children)
- NAEYC – National Association for the Education of Young Children
- CSEFEL – Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (Vanderbilt University)

Best practices should include levels of the Pyramid Model for preventing and addressing challenging behaviors, as well as promoting social-emotional development. The inventory of best practices includes the following:
1. Develop meaningful relationships with children and families.
2. Examine personal, family, cultural views of children's challenging behaviors. Examine the teacher's and staff's own attitudes toward challenging behaviors.
3. Design and provide high quality environments that support schedules, routines, transitions and engagement.
4. Provide monitoring, positive feedback, attention, encouragement.
5. Provide and facilitate engagement with peers and peer models.
6. Provide direct instruction in social skills.
7. Promote the recognition of emotions. Provide instruction and practice in self-regulation.

Reference and entire article: Smith, Crosswalk, 2008, www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/

Recognizing and Responding to Emotions

4 years - VPK		Social and Emotional		
Subdomain		**Standard**	**BDI2**	
Emotional Functioning	1.Expressions, Responses	a. Recognizes emotions and responds with empathy	SR25	
	2. Affect, Responses	Demonstrates cognitive empathy, use of words, gestures to respond appropriately.	SR29 SR34	
Managing Emotions	1. Self	a. Recognizes and names emotions, exhibits control	SR27 SR31	
	2. Sights, sounds, activities	a. Increases attention to preferred activities and begins to attend to non-preferred activities	PI16 PI17 SR30 SR43	

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. Add information by then discussing actions that could go with that face.
- 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 who have difficulties. Use real photos of the child combined with pictures the child has chosen to show self-regulation strategies.
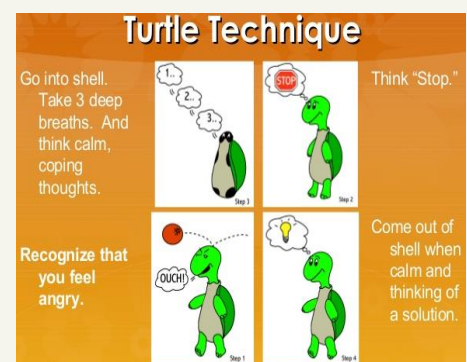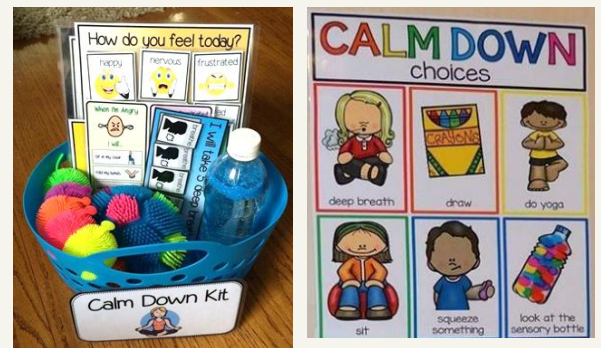
Resources from Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning:
- Teaching Children to Identify and Express Emotions:
  http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/teaching_emotions.pdf
- Scripted Stories for Social Situations: http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html
- Book Nook: Lesson guides to emphasize emotional skills and self-regulation in children's books:
  http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html
- Book List: http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/booklist.pdf

Building Relationships

4 years - VPK		Social and Emotional		
Subdomain		Standard	BDI2	
Relationships	1. Adults	a. Shows enjoyment in interactions with adults and has skills in separating from these adults	SR13 AI11 AI18 AI21	
	2. Peers	a. Plays with peers in a coordinated manner b. Maintains friendships, engages in prosocial behavior, cooperating, compromising, turn-taking c. Responds appropriately to bullying behaviors	PI12 PI15 PI16 PI19 PI21	
	3. Problem solving	a. Simple social problem solving, potential solutions appropriate to the situation	PI21 PI22 SR35	
	4. Empathy	a. Able to take the perspective of others and respond in a manner that is supportive	SR41 SR42	

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 at the beginning of the relationship. Children will cue in on the caring of adults and react to ensure more positive attention.
- Essential – Gain an understanding of children's preferences, interests, background, and culture.
- Take Time – Some children have experienced a negative history with adults and might have behaviors which interfere with new relationships. 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. It is important to remember that the children who have the most difficult behavior reactions are those who need the most positive "deposits"
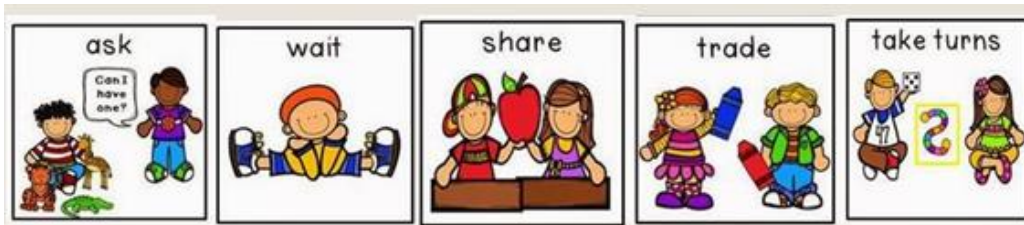
Resources:
- Practical Strategies for Building Relationships: http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/modules/module1/handout5.pdf
- Demonstration of Pyramid Model Practices in Preschool: http://www.pyramidmodel.org/resource/demonstration-pyramid-model-practices-typical-day-preschool-classroom/
- Universal Promotion – Nurturing and Responsive Caregiving and High Quality Supportive Environments: https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/pyramid-model.pdf

Building Relationships - *Relationships with Peers*

Various programs that address social skills are available. Some curriculum programs have a social component embedded. Many teachers develop their own social skills lessons. No matter what kind of program is used there are some components that 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

Resources:
- Building Positive Relationships: Frog Street Press (embedded Conscious Discipline) http://www.frogstreet.com/building-relationships-early-childhood-classroom/
- Fostering Healthy Social and Emotional Development in Young Children, https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/talk-read-sing/feelings-teachers.pdf
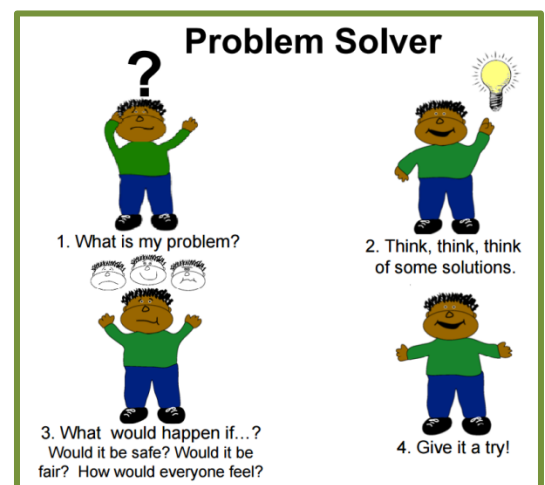- Social Stages of Play: https://www.encourageplay.com/blog/social-stages-of-play

Building Relationships - *Problem-solving*

Children learn best from everyday experiences. Teachers should 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.

Problem Solver

?
1. What is my problem?
2. Think, think, think of some solutions.
3. What would happen if…? Would it be safe? Would it be fair? How would everyone feel?
4. Give it a try!

Resources for Visuals for Problem-solving:
- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, Georgetown University Modules: https://www.ecmhc.org/tutorials/social-emotional/mod4_3.html
- Problem-solving Cue Cards and Social Scripts: http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html

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 discover what they have in common with other people.
4. Use literature and role playing to encourage cognitive empathy.
5. Help children with understanding facial expressions and non-verbal cues of others' emotions.
6. Help children develop a sense of self-control and social awareness that depends on internal self-regulation and not rewards or punishments.

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.
4. Group games of dramatic play – Skills addressed – Calming down, recognizing feelings – Lead children in playing games of make believe pretending to be animals, chefs baking a cake together, statues – lead them to make up problems and solve the problems.
5. Emotion Charade – Skills addressed – recognizing feelings – guess emotions shown by another and then think of reasons for the feelings shown

Resources for Teaching Empathy:

- The Center for Healthy Minds, University of Wisconsin shares their Kindness Curriculum free of charge. https://centerhealthyminds.org/join-the-movement/sign-up-to-receive-the-kindness-curriculum
- Evidence-based Tips for Fostering Empathy in Children: https://www.parentingscience.com/teaching-empathy-tips.html
- PBS Learning Media – Florida: Videos and lessons about kindness and empathy: https://florida.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/kindness-empathy-resilience-prek-5/

Self-identity and Belonging

FELDS			BDI2	
Subdomain		**Standard**	**BDI2**	
Identity and Belonging	1.Identify through play	a. Associative play cooperative with friends	PI10 PI11 PI12 PI15	
	2.Exploration and persistence	a. Persists at planned experiences directed and planned group activities	SR33 SR43	
	3. Routines, rituals, and interactions	a. Willingness to be flexible if routines change	AI24 AI25 SR31 SR38	
	4. Self-awareness and Independence	a. Uses words to communicate personal characteristics, preferences, thoughts, feelings	SR31 PI22	
		b. Recognizes preferences of others	PI19 PI21 SR41	
		c. Uses words to demonstrate knowledge of personal information	SR45	
		d. Identifies self as a unique member of a group	AI25 PI24 PI25	

Self-Identity and Belonging - *Play*
Young children practice and learn new skills through play. Play time is a critical time to support development.
- 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.

Joining In

Can I play?

Include mini-schedules to provide ideas for children who have difficulty with pretending or with initiating play.

Can I have a turn?

yes! 1 minute

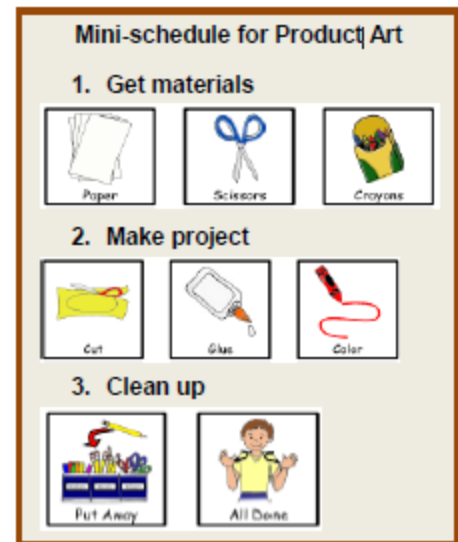when my friend finishes his/her idea

Resources:
- Making the Most of Playtime - http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/make_the_most_of_playtime2.pdf This is a good resource to share with families. The article includes a list of play skills by age ranges that is helpful for differentiating play skills.
- Head Start Center for Inclusion - http://headstartinclusion.org/. This site has visuals and lessons for teaching children interaction and peer relationships.

Self-Identity and Belonging - *Exploration and Persistence*
Children show social skills in these areas with behaviors such as working with friends 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.
- Provide additional time to engage in activities. Provide open-ended and child-directed play opportunities to build up attention span with activities that don't cause frustration.
- Recognize and praise children for working on a task or staying with a difficult activity.
- Model problem-solving strategies.
- Alert children that you are about to give a direction and tell them the expectations for listening to and following a direction.
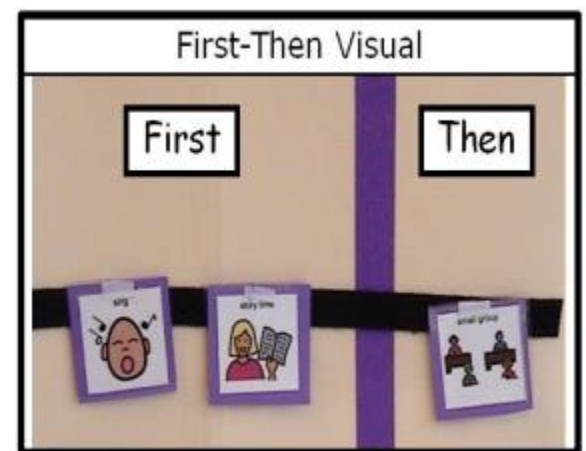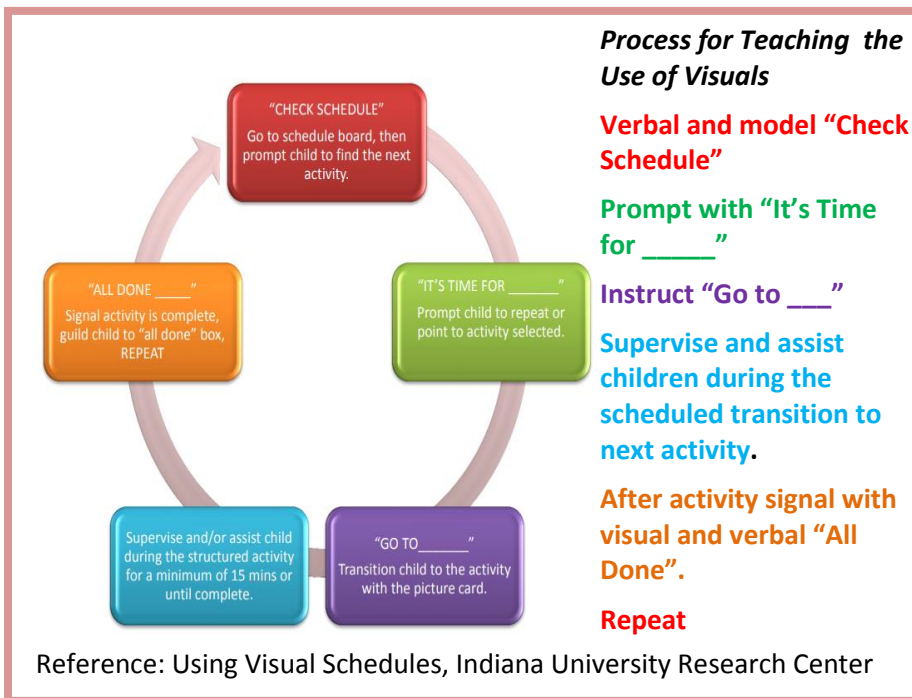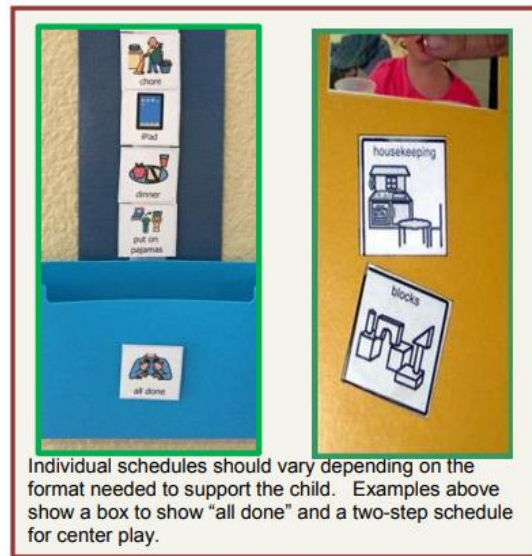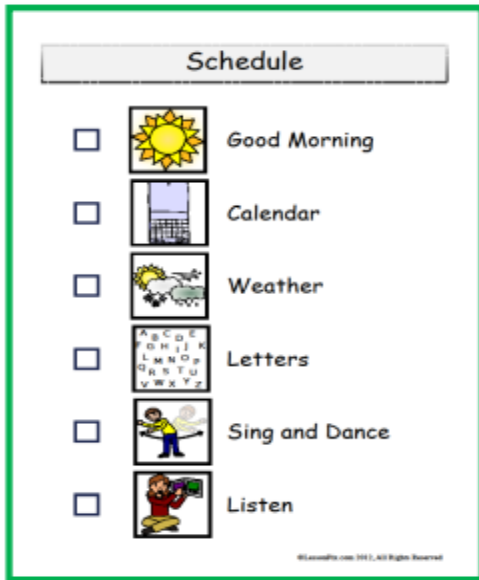

Mini-schedule for Product Art
1. Get materials
   Paper   Scissors   Crayons
2. Make project
   Cut   Glue   Color
3. Clean up
   Put Away   All Done

Self-Identity and Belonging - *Routines and rituals*
It is important to support children as they develop a sense of belonging and identity with the classroom by following routines and being flexible when there are changes or challenges in the routine. Teachers should 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
- Changes in the daily schedule
- Routines and rituals for social and behavioral skills such as self-regulation, peer interactions, and empathy when others have difficulties following routines.
- 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).

Teachers should combine the use of visual supports with instruction related to expectations, associated vocabulary, and communication modes and levels. It is important to share visuals used in the classroom with family members so that they can help follow up, reinforce, and provide generalization.

Schedule
- ☐ Good Morning
- ☐ Calendar
- ☐ Weather
- ☐ Letters
- ☐ Sing and Dance
- ☐ Listen

Individual schedules should vary depending on the format needed to support the child. Examples above show a box to show "all done" and a two-step schedule for center play.

Process for Teaching the Use of Visuals

Verbal and model "Check Schedule"

Prompt with "It's Time for _____"

Instruct "Go to ___"

Supervise and assist children during the scheduled transition to next activity.

After activity signal with visual and verbal "All Done".

Repeat

Reference: Using Visual Schedules, Indiana University Research Center

First-Then Visual

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
- Identifies self as part of a group (example: family, class)

Tips for Supporting Self-awareness and Independence
- Point out to children what their peers are doing. Use photos to follow up.
- Make a classroom booklet that shows interests of each child.
- Use stories and books and emphasize character's actions and interests.
- Model vocabulary and verbalizations throughout the day. Explain and describe vocabulary within routines.
- Establish a system of peer buddies and methods of facilitating social interaction during play.
- Provide ample opportunities for making choices and teach children how to indicate a choice.
- Model and teach skills such as "being a friend".
- Provide materials and books that emphasize diversity.
- Display photos of children and their families. Discuss varying cultures.
- Point out and teach careers and roles in the school, families, and society.

Visual supports for morning entry, cleaning up, and locating an assigned cubby can facilitate independence by helping children perform tasks without adult assistance.

Visual supports such as circle-time checklists assist children in learning to self-monitor and promote independence in self-regulation.

Resource: https://tats.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2018/08/Displaying-Classroom-Rules.pdf

Planning Social Lessons:

1. Refer to Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards (FELDS) for the age level of your students. In addition, refer to FELDS expectations for younger ages if you have students who have delays. FELDS also provides examples of skills in addition to suggestions for lessons and activities.
2. Consider developmental expectations and your students' observed needs and determine a likely sequence of skills for planning lessons.
3. Plan a time in the daily schedule when social lessons will be taught – about 10 or 15 minutes – as a separate lesson. Place a visual icon for "Social Lesson" on the daily schedule that is posted in the classroom.
4. Gather materials for the lesson:
   a. Photos and visuals
   b. Songs and rhymes
   c. Classroom books
   d. Role-play, puppets, "what would you do?" scenarios
5. Teach the lesson using materials and language that are developmentally appropriate for your students.
6. Provide guided practice for the skill that was taught by setting up an activity or role-play situation.
7. Repeat the lesson during the week or add a lesson from the same skill-set.
8. Observe, reinforce, provide re-teaching or additional guided practice if needed.

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