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Pyramid Model Practices Overview

Penny Cordera and Karen Neifer

Presented at the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) Early Childhood Education Conference, Stable and Secure: Supporting Children Through Trauma Sensitive Approaches

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Expectations for Learning Together

- ## We are safe and healthy
  - Take breaks as needed
  - Move if you need to
  - Stand up for micro-breaks
- ## We are respectful
  - Listen to understand
  - Value everyone's ideas
- ## We are friendly and kind
  - Step up/step back
  - Be kind

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Exploring the Pyramid Model Learning Objectives

- Reflecting on Social and Emotional Learning

- Supporting Each and Every Child

- Overview of the Pyramid Model

- Applying the Pyramid Model Philosophy

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Hopes and Dreams for Children

- Think of a young child who you know or teach. What are your hopes and dreams for the child at:
  - Age 6?
  - Age 18?
  - Adulthood?
- How important are social-emotional skills in getting there?

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Goal of the Pyramid Model

Ensure each and every child has the support, experiences, relationships, opportunities, guidance, and instruction to thrive in their social-emotional development and learning.

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Pyramid eModules

- Online training courses provided by the Pyramid Model Consortium (PMC).

- Offered FREE on www.papdregistry.org (through 7/21/2024)

Pyramid eModules

- Click on "Areas of Interest"

- Choose ePyramid Courses
- Click "search" button at bottom of page

Pyramid eModules – all self-paced

- ePyramid Birth to 5 Course

- ePyramid Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Families

- ePyramid-Culturally Responsive Practices to Reduce Implicit Bias, Disproportionality, Suspension & Expulsion

- ePyramid-Trauma-Informed Care & the Pyramid Model

- ePyramid-Wellness: Taking Care of Yourself

- Pyramid Birth to 5 Spanish - Del nacimiento a los 5 años - Paquete de Módulos ePirámide

We Can Make a Difference

"...there is increasing evidence that strong social-emotional supports, such as high family resilience and connection and the provision of positive childhood relational experiences, are associated with children who are resilient and flourish despite their level of adversity."

American Academy of Pediatric, 2021

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The Difference We Make is Lifelong

Children reported to have better social skills such as sharing, cooperating, and helping other children in Kindergarten are:

- More likely to **graduate from high school** on time
- More likely to get a **college degree** and have a **full-time job**
- <u>Less likely to be arrested, engage in substance abuse</u>, or be on a waiting list for public housing

Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, (2015)

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Pair-Share: How Do I Make a Difference?

- Pair with a partner

- What **practices do you use** to make a difference (e.g., addressing trauma, behavior, inclusion, needs of dual language learners)?

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How do We Get There?

Supporting Each and Every Child

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Our "Must Haves"

Prevention Focus

Trauma-Informed

A Caring Community

Anti-Biased Practice

Commitment to Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Data-Informed

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Ready for Every Child

When we adhere to these values, it means we are ready for *each and every child* including children who have experienced trauma, children with disabilities, children who are Dual Language Learners, and children with persistent challenging behavior.

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Overview of the Pyramid Model

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Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children

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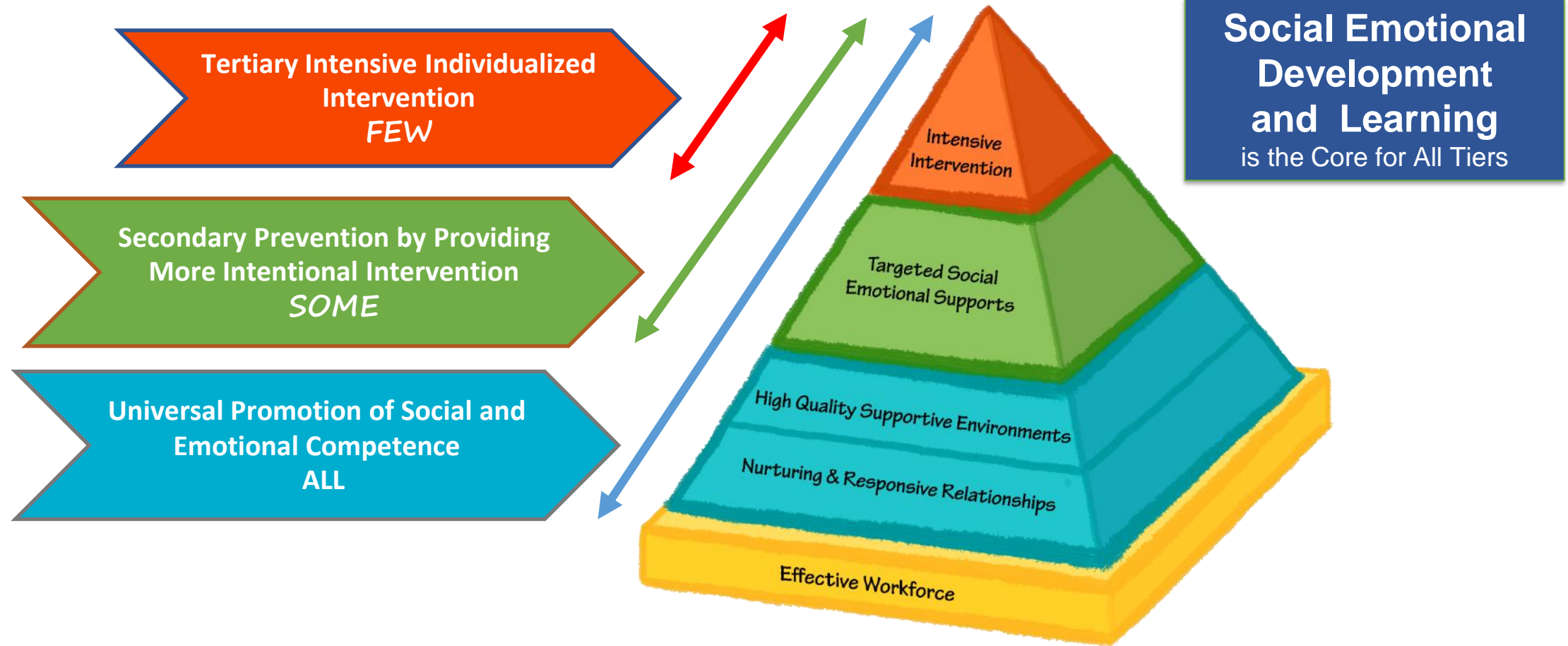
It's All About Relationships

- Relationships between children

- Relationships between staff and families

- Relationships between staff and children

- Relationships between staff

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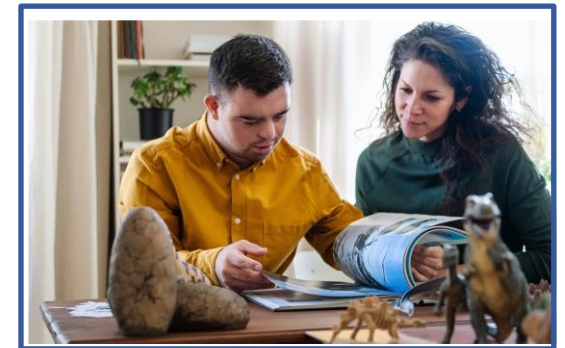
Designing Supportive Environments

- **When:**
  - Children are engaged
  - Children know the routines and expectations
  - Adults have time to have meaningful conversations with children
- **Children are less likely to have challenging behavior**

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Social-Emotional Learning

- Self-regulation, expressing and understanding emotions, problem solving, and developing social relationships - **social emotional learning for ALL**

- Explicit instruction for *SOME*
  - Increased opportunities for instruction, practice, feedback

- Family partnerships

- Progress monitoring and data decision-making

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The Meaning of Behavior

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Behavior is Communication

- I am scared

- I need help

- I don't want to play that game

- This activity is boring

- I don't understand what you want me to do

- I don't know how to play with those children

- I am frustrated

- I want to play by myself

- I don't feel good

- I am tired

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When Children Feel Those Things, They Might Engage in Behaviors that Adults Find Challenging

- Falling on the floor screaming.

- Crying for long periods of time.

- Walking away from morning meeting.

- Taking another child's toys.

- Not following directions.

- Hiding under a table.

- Knocking a friend down on the floor.

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Individualized Positive Behavior Support

- Convene a team

- Conduct functional assessment

- Identify hypotheses

- Develop a behavior support plan for all relevant environments

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Remember, It All Rests on an Effective Workforce!

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Why an "Equity Mindset?"

Experiences of race & ethnicity occur within a **social & historical context**, both shaping our nation's history

Equity issues may refer to biases based on a **variety of identity characteristics**…

These biases occur at 3 levels thru which racism occurs: **institutional, personally mediated**, and **internalized**

Addressing bias and promoting equity requires we **pay attention to interpersonal dynamics** and **systemic influences**

Race & ethnicity shape our understanding of children's behavior **implicitly & explicitly** we must **understand its functioning to address its impact**

Implementing the Pyramid Model implies a **commitment to fairness and equity** (Implementing PM w/o addressing equity is **NOT** implementing PM)

Adopting an *Equity Mindset* means paying attention to race and ethnicity (or other identifying characteristics) in analyzing problems, looking for solutions, and defining success.

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Applying the Pyramid Model Philosophy

It's Also a Philosophy About How We Support Children and Families

While you watch the video, consider the following:

- What do you hear or see that is prevention focused? What does it mean to support children's appropriate behavior?

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Philosophy Group Activity

- As we read each statement, decide if it aligns with the Pyramid Model philosophy

  - If it **aligns**, thumbs up 👍

  - If it does **NOT align**, thumbs down 👎

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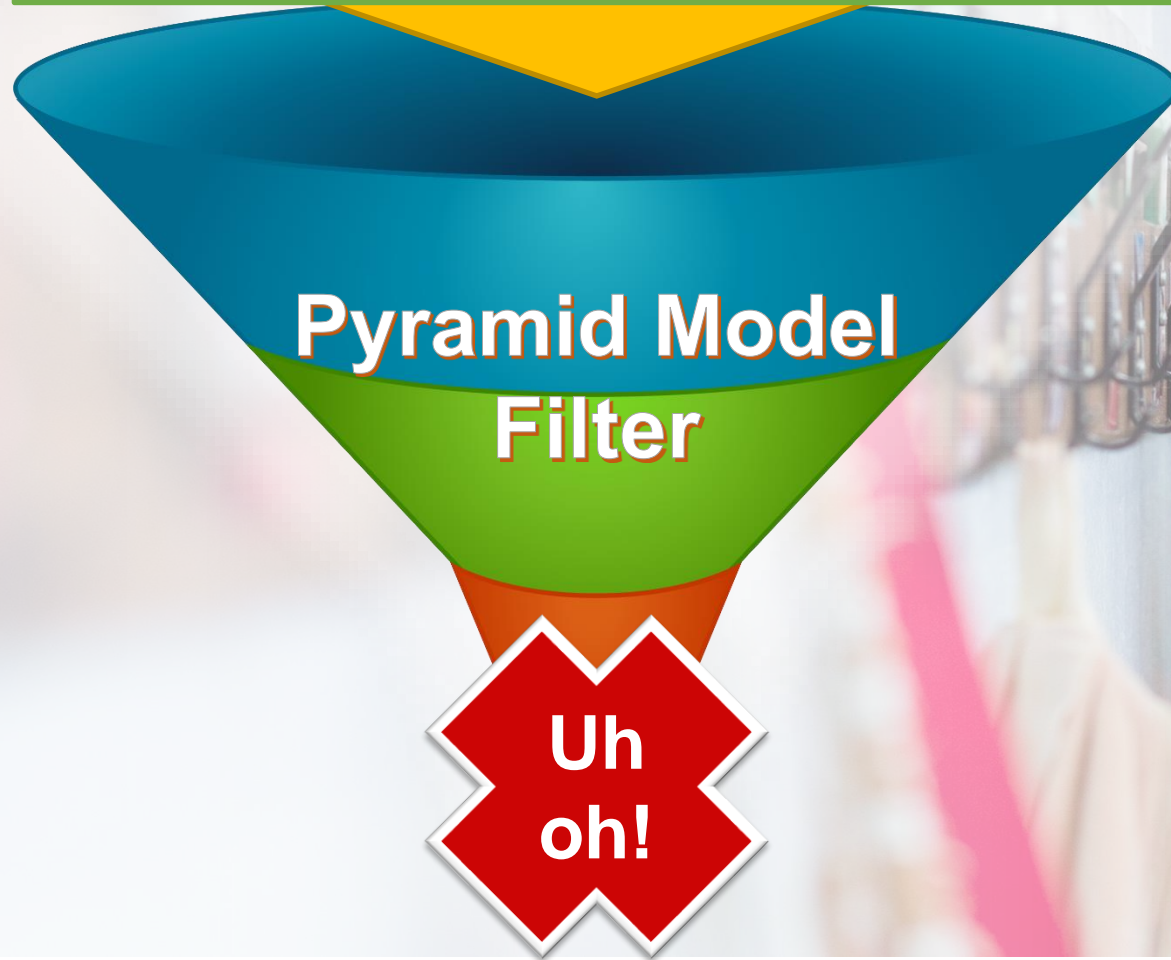They know what to do,
they just won't do it.

They might need more practice,
or he might not really understand
how to do it in all situations.
I need to help him practice in
different activities.

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It won't work in our classroom.
We have tried all those strategies.

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It won't work in our classroom.
We have tried all those strategies.

We have tried a lot of those strategies but not all together.
Also, It may take longer, but it is a long-term solution instead of a "quick fix".
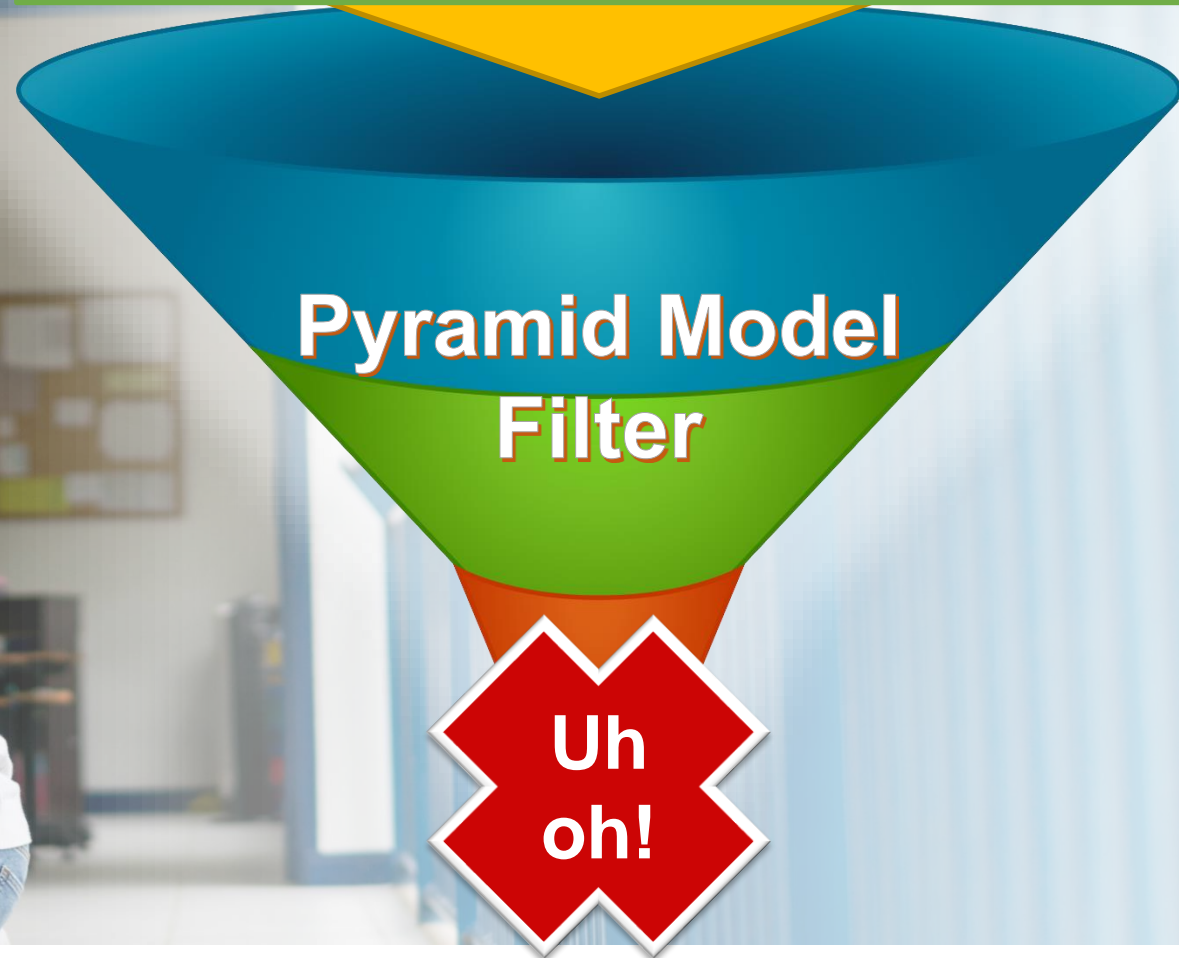
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My kids are always telling on each other. I need to teach them other ways to solve problems.

Pyramid Model Filter

Yes!

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The parents never follow through with the suggestions we give them.

Pyramid Model Filter

Uh oh!

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The parents never follow through with the suggestions we give them

Maybe the child doesn't have challenging behavior at home. Or maybe we need to work with the parents to identify strategies that they think will fit into their daily routine.

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She's hitting her friends when she wants to play with them. Maybe I should teach her how to get her friends' attention and offer play ideas.

Pyramid Model Filter

Yes!

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All my assistant ever does is clean up after children. He never just plays with the children, nor does he engage in other classroom activities. I don't think he likes being in my classroom.

Pyramid Model Filter

Uh oh!

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All my assistant ever does is clean up after children. He never just plays with the children, nor does he engage in other classroom activities. I don't think he likes being in my classroom.

My assistant is always the first one to start cleaning up. I want everyone to be engaging with children more. I wonder if he realizes that he doesn't have to be the person to clean up all the time. We need to have more regular team meetings to ensure everyone is learning to do all roles in the classroom.

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Reflecting on Behaviors that Challenge Us

What behaviors push your buttons? These could be behaviors of a child, a family, or a staff

1. _____   2. _____   3. _____

Responding to These Behaviors

- How do they make you feel?

- When you feel that way, how do you respond?

- How might it impact your relationship with the child or family or staff?

- How does your response make the child feel?

- What does the child learn about relationships from your response?

- How might it impact the tone of the classroom?

- How might it impact children's relationships with other children?

Reflecting on Responses to Behaviors that Challenge Us

What is the impact of your feelings? How do you respond to each of these behaviors?

1.	2.	3.

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Reflecting on the Impact of Behaviors that Challenge Us and Social-Emotional Delays

How do these behaviors and your response affect:

- Your relationship with the child?

- Your relationship with the family?

- The child's relationship with his/her peers?

- The quality of instruction in your classroom?

- Your stress level and mood as a practitioner?

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Research and Wrap-Up

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Research on the Pyramid Model

Research on implementation of the Pyramid Model shows:

- **Children** have **better social skills** and less problem behavior in Pyramid Model classrooms.

- **Teachers** are able to **implement Pyramid Model practices better** if they receive training and practice-based coaching.

Hemmeter, M. L., Snyder, P. A., Fox, L., & Algina, J. (2016). Evaluating the implementation of the Pyramid Model for promoting social emotional competence in early childhood classrooms. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 36*, 133-146.

Hemmeter, M. L., Fox, L., Snyder, P., Algina, J., Hardy, J., Bishop, C., & Veguilla, M. (2021). Corollary child outcomes of the Pyramid Model professional development efficacy trial. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *54*, 204-218.

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Successful Pyramid Model Early Educators

Connected,
Confident,
and Competent

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Teacher Testimonial

"I am more patient than I was before. I have so many tools to use with any child, not just major behaviors. I'm also so much more confident in my abilities which then makes caring for the children and knowing their needs so much easier."

"My student with…the most challenging behavior. When he would first walk in the door in the morning he would start hitting. It would be hitting and kicking. And to now where he, first thing he walks in is he starts hugging. So, just a huge transformation."

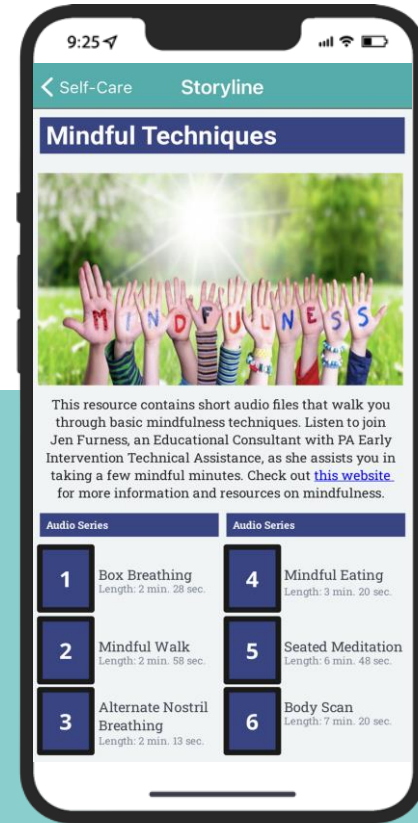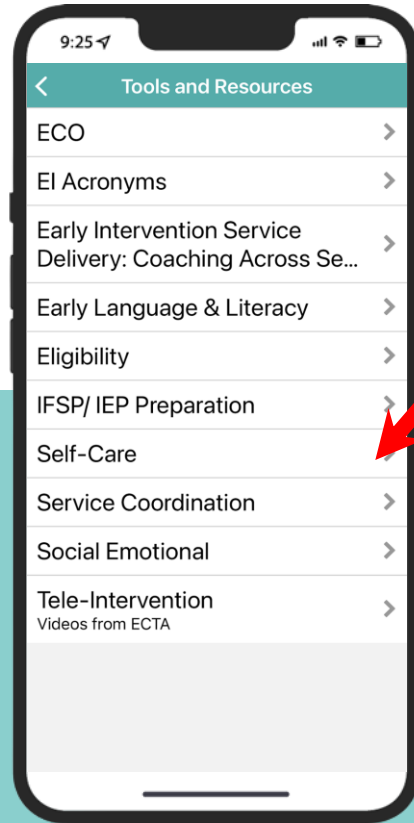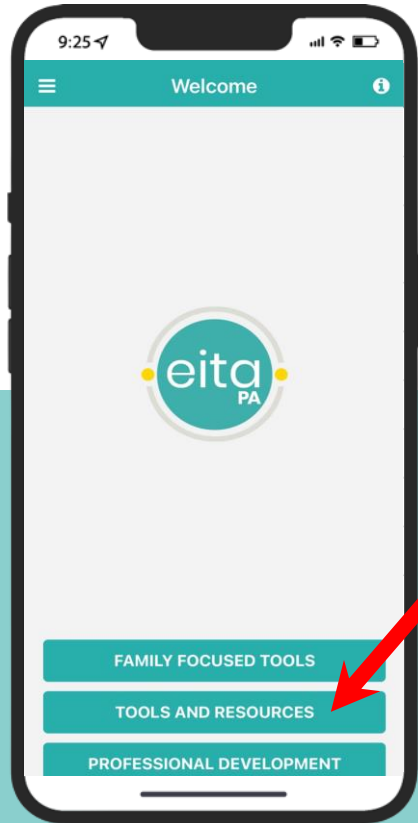"Children are learning to express their feelings and needs with words rather than aggression."

What questions do you have?

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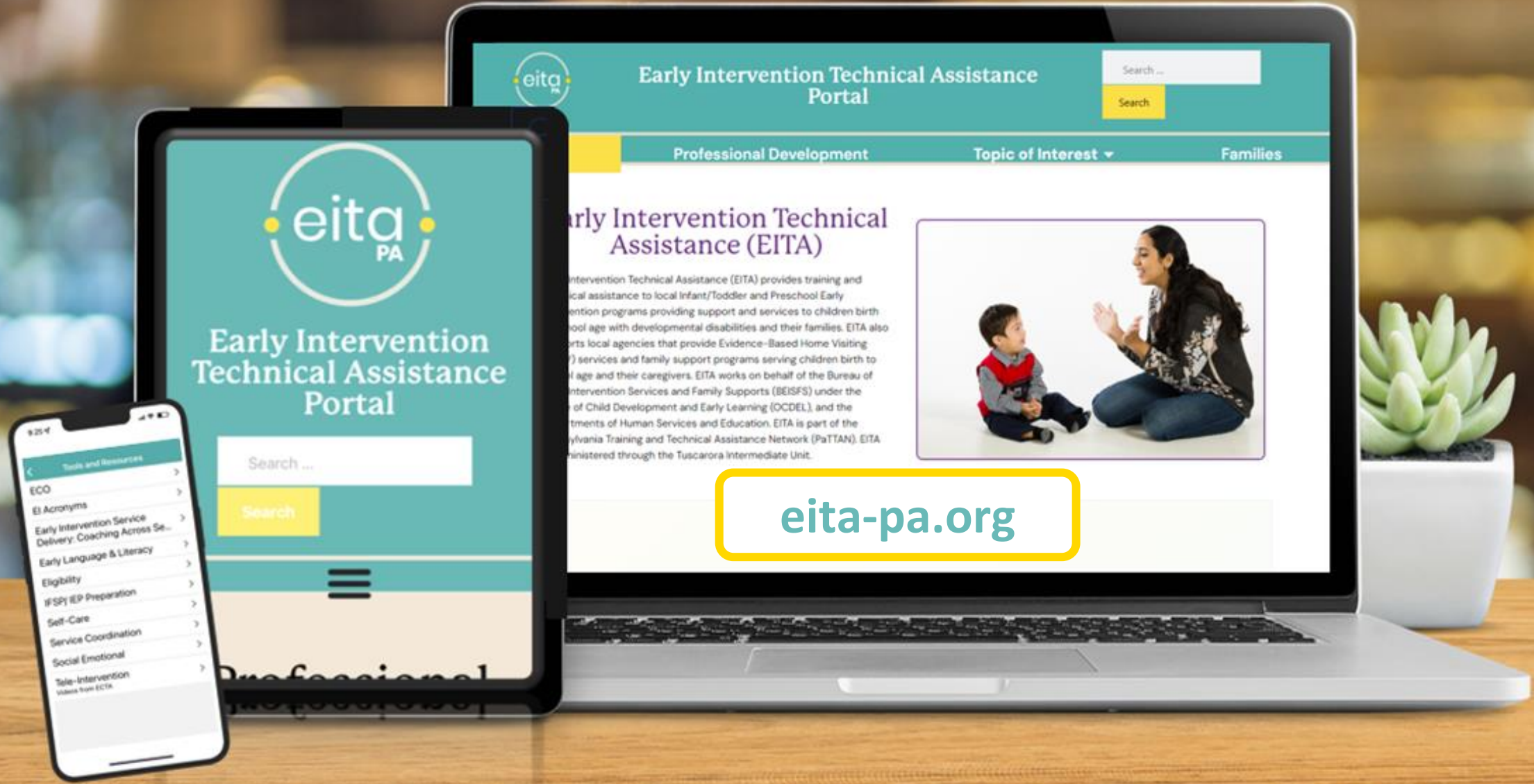
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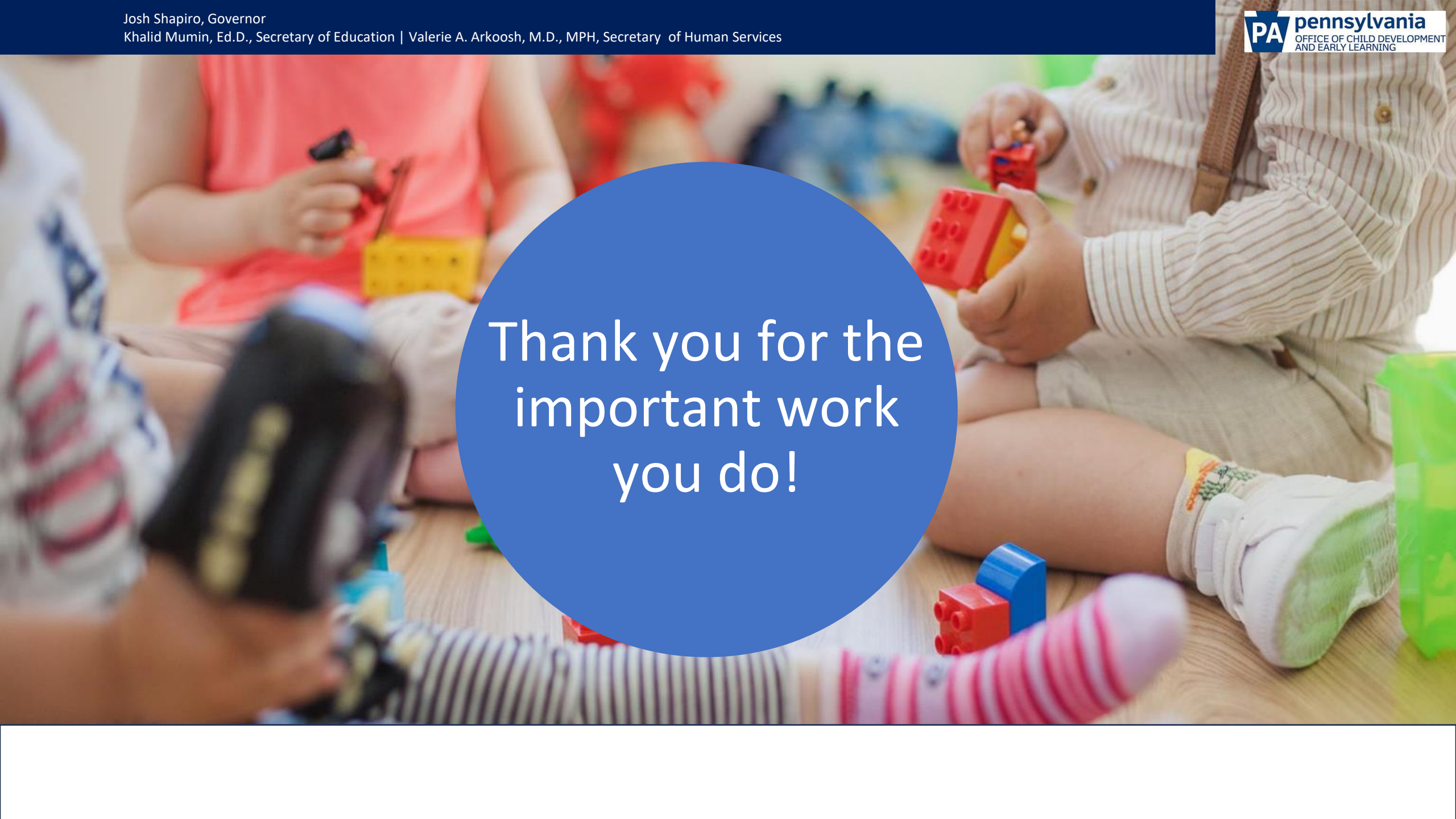
Bright Start: Supporting Social-Emotional Development

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Thank you for the important work you do!

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