

# Self and Co-Regulation Instructional Strategies for Young Children

***2025 OCDEL Conference  
Stable and Secure: Supporting Children  
through Trauma Sensitive Approaches***

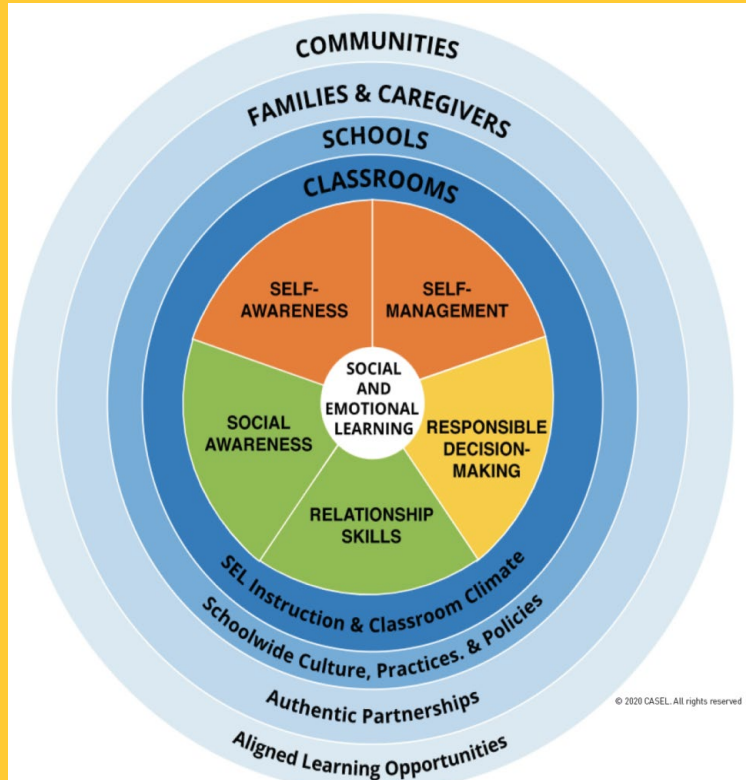
Kelly Fisher, M.Ed.  
Early Intervention Technical Assistance



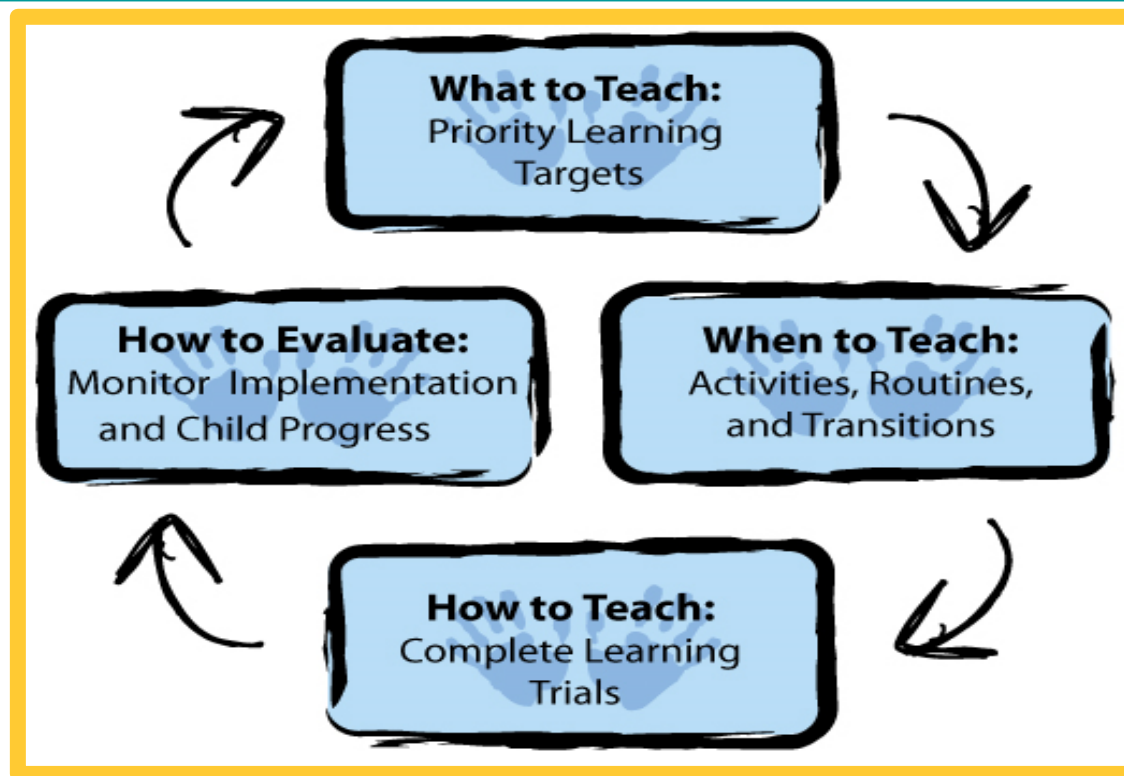
# Agenda

- Social Emotional Development
  - Self Regulation
- When and How to Teach
- Trauma and The Brain
- Cultural Competencies
- Communication with Families

# Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and the Pyramid Model



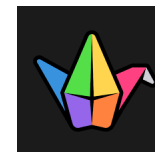
# What are Embedded Instruction Practices?



Source:

Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies at the University of Florida.

<http://embeddedinstruction.net/learn-more/about-embedded-instruction/>



# 3R's of Early Learning

## 3R'S OF EARLY LEARNING: Foundation for Embedded Instruction



**RELATIONSHIPS**  
*Serve-and-return interactions*



**REPETITION**  
*Making neural connections by  
embedding learning in everyday  
activities and routines*



**ROUTINES**  
*Predictable activities in everyday  
routines that engage and motivate*

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**Embedded  
Instruction**  
for Early Learning

<https://ceecs.education.ufl.edu/atoz/3rs/>



# How to Teach

## How to Teach

**A**ntecedent → **B**ehavior → **C**onsequence

What do you do to  
elicit the  
behavior?

Show the smell  
the flower/blow  
the pinwheel  
visual

What do you want  
the child to do?

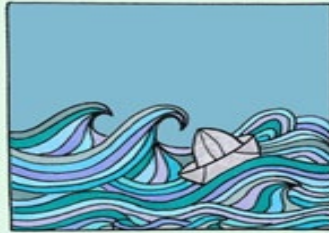
Take a belly  
Breath

What do you do  
if the child does the  
behavior?

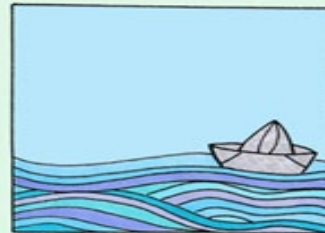
Say, you took  
a good deep  
belly breath!

# What is Self-Regulation?

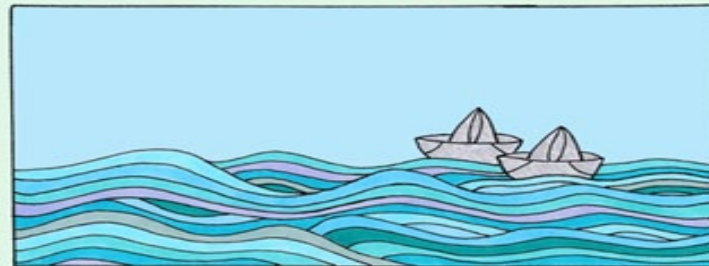
WHEN THEIR STORM



MEETS OUR CALM



CO - REGULATION OCCURS



@kwiens62

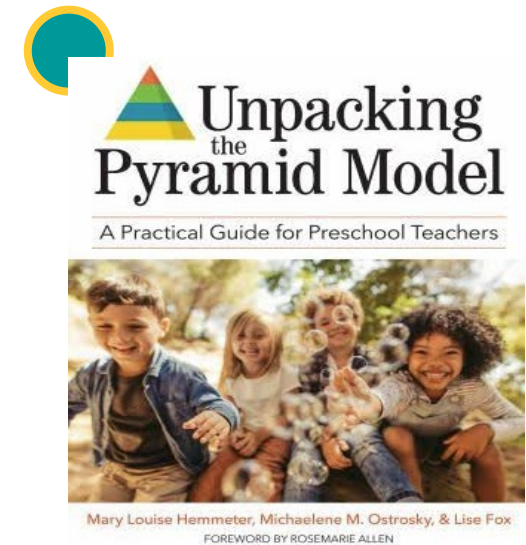
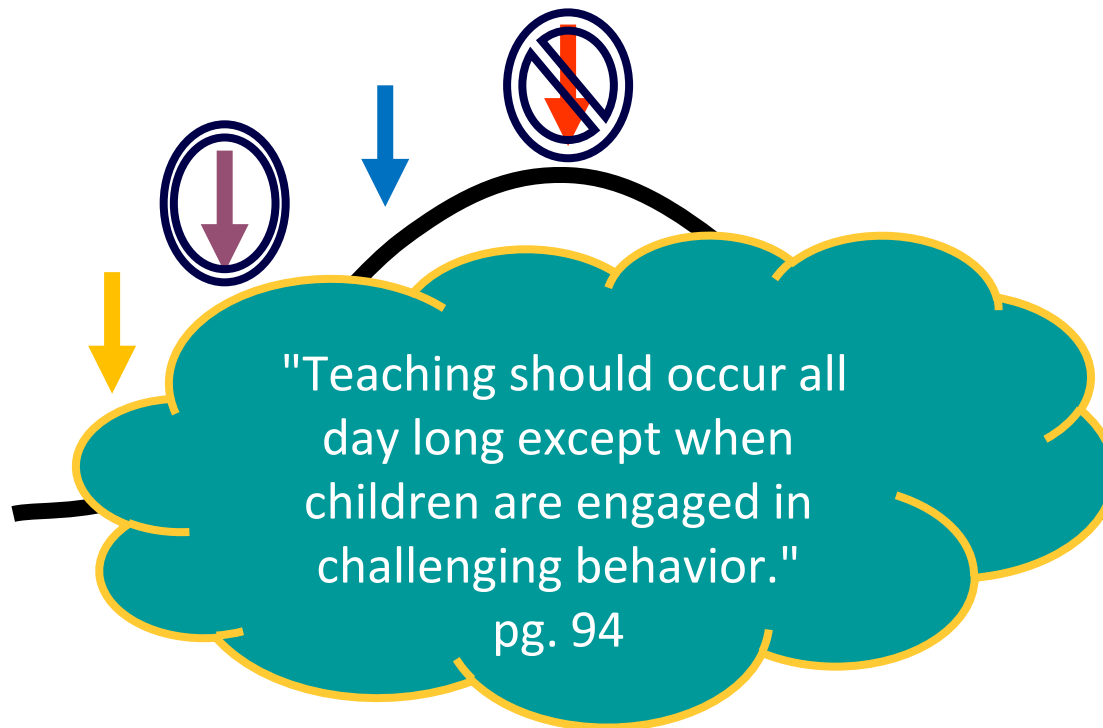


# When to Teach: Embedding Schedules





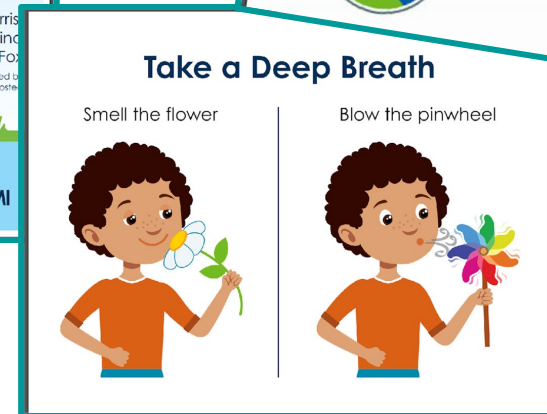
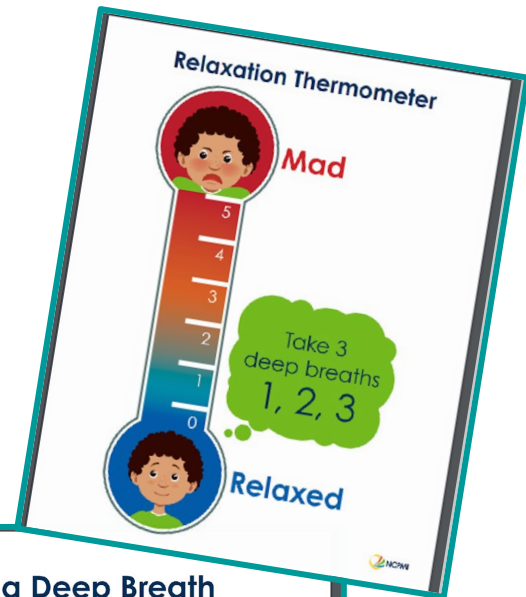
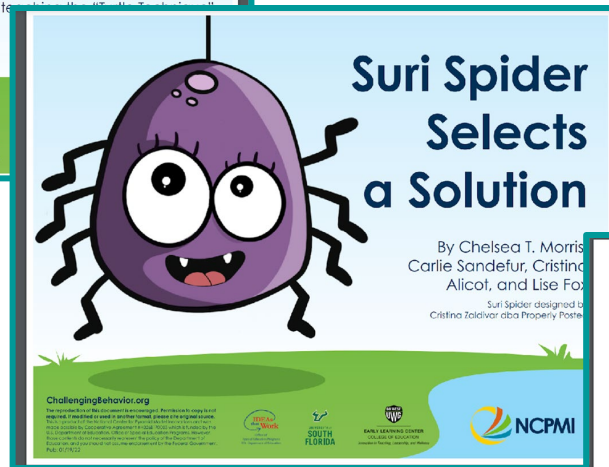
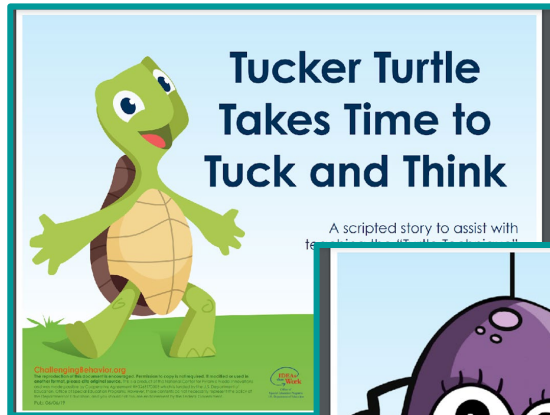
# When to Teach: Identifying Teachable Moments



# How to Teach



# Favorite Resources



# How to Teach: Tucker Turtle Small Group



# How to Teach: Tucker Turtle Individual



# How to Teach: Tucker Turtle Large Group





# Breathing Strategies

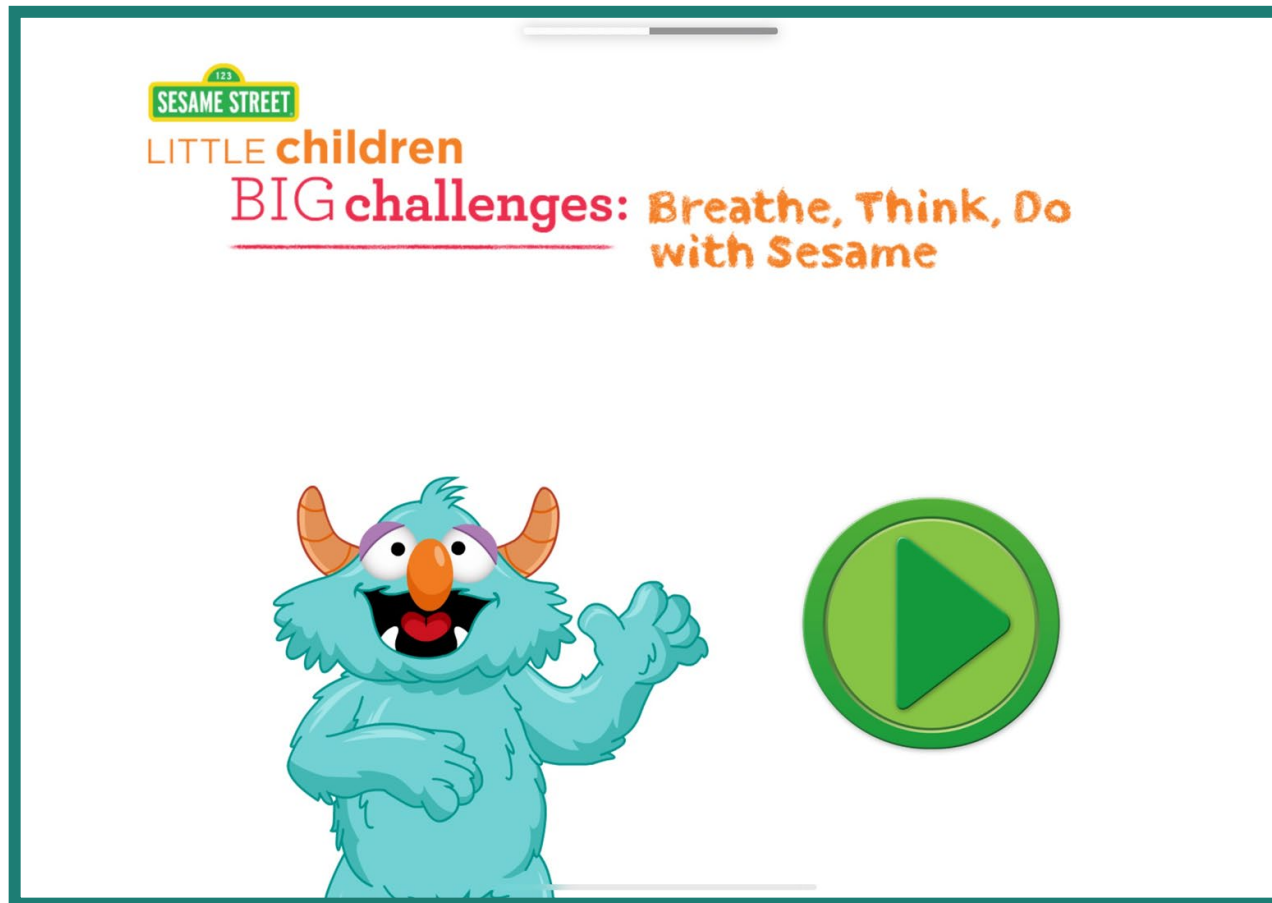
**The Big Idea:** Practice belly breathing anytime, and use it as a calming strategy before, during, or after tantrums.

## Teaching Belly Breathing

Handling Tantrums   Age 2 to 6   1-4 Min



# Breathing Strategies



# Controlled Breathing

## Take a Deep Breath

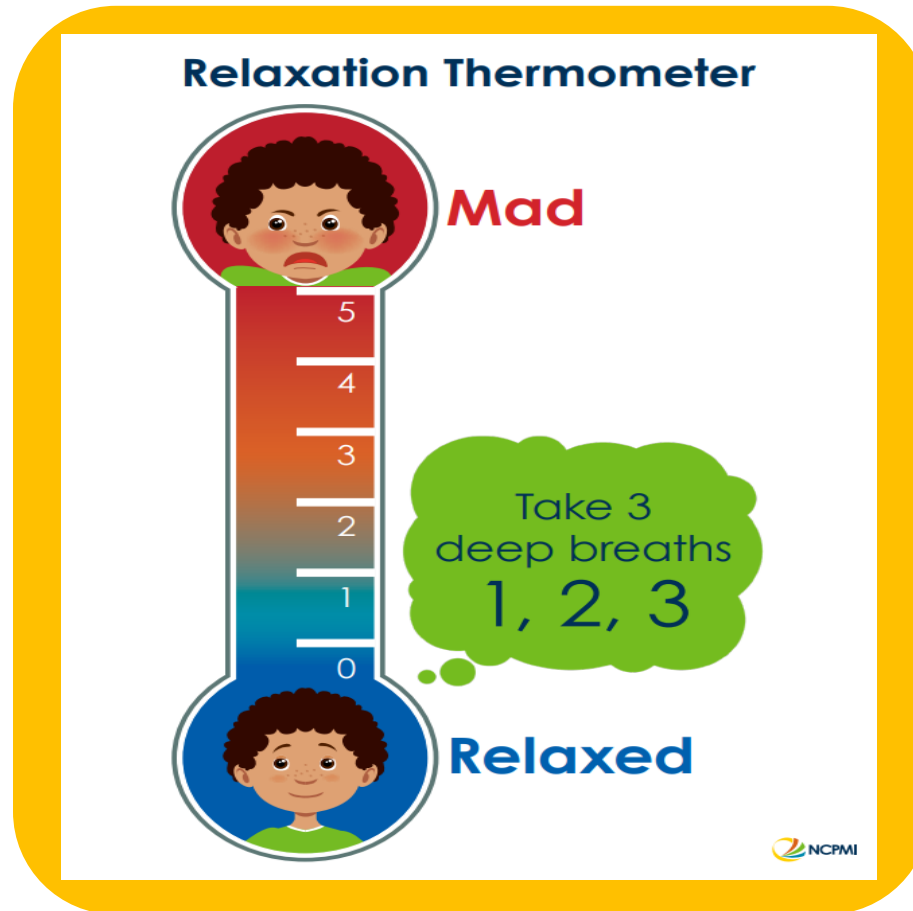
Smell the flower



Blow the pinwheel



# Relaxation Thermometer



# Trauma Considerations



# Social Emotional Development







# Top and Bottom Functions of the Brain

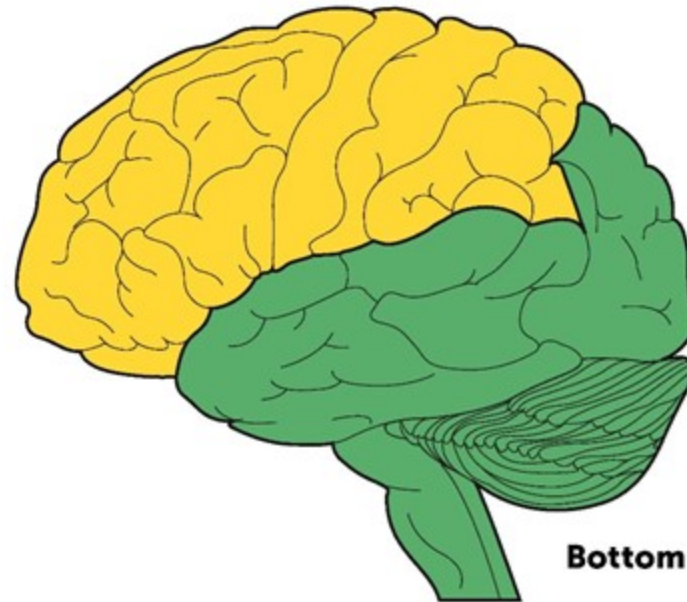
## Bottom Functions

- Receive signals from the senses and use memories to interpret their meaning
- Feeling and perceiving functions (Siegel & Bryson, 2011)

## Top Functions

- Take in and process information, then take action
- Adjust a plan
- Thinking and problem-solving functions (Siegel & Bryson, 2011)

**Top Functions**



**Bottom Functions**

# Hand Model of the Brain

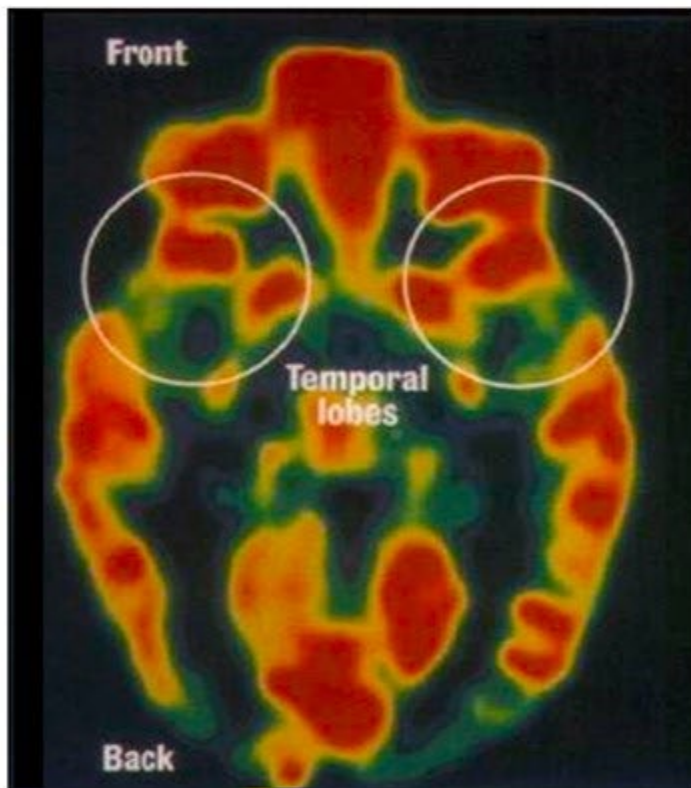




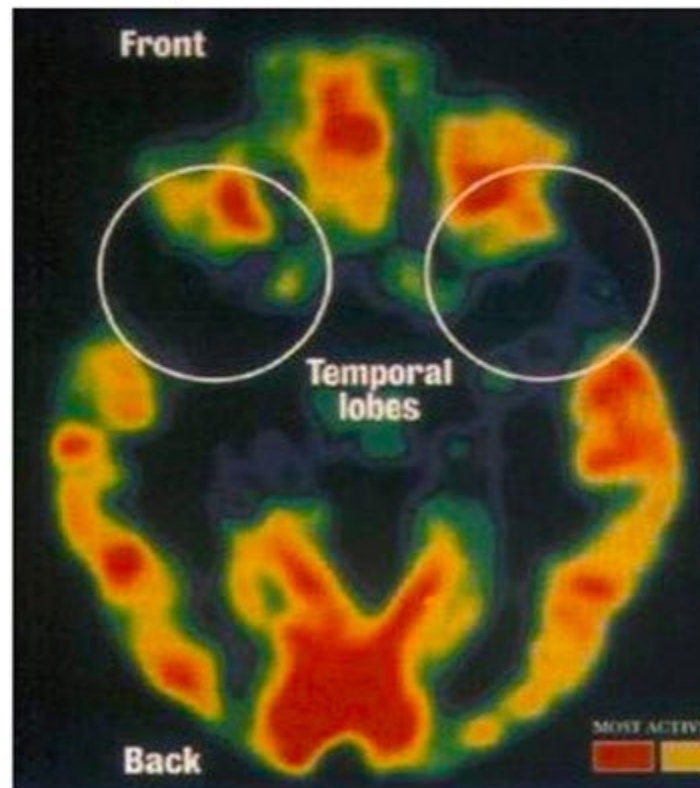
ZERO TO THREE

## Brain Scan: Effects of Toxic Stress

Typically Developing Brain



Brain of Child Exposed to Neglect, Trauma, and Abuse



*Used with permission from Dr. H. Chugani*

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# So, What Can I Do?



“Don’t just do  
something –  
**STAND  
THERE!”**

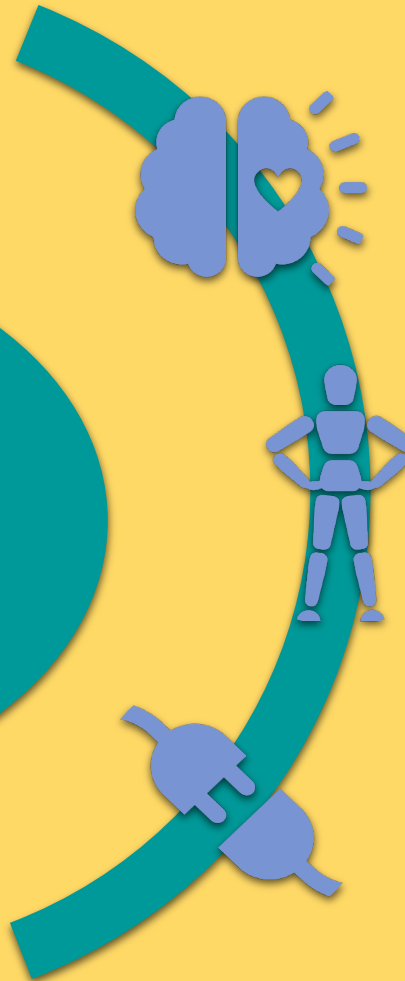
Dr. Jeree Pawl



# Cultural Competency



## Reflecting on our Beliefs about Self- Regulation



I can control my  
feelings and  
desires.

I can control my  
actions.

Do my actions  
match my desires  
or the rules and  
norms?



# Individualistic vs. Collectivistic Culture



# ‘Marshmallow Test’

## Debunking the Marshmallow Test

Studies show a child’s  
ability to wait for the  
2<sup>nd</sup> marshmallow is  
shaped by social and  
economic background.

The Ma

# Communication with Families



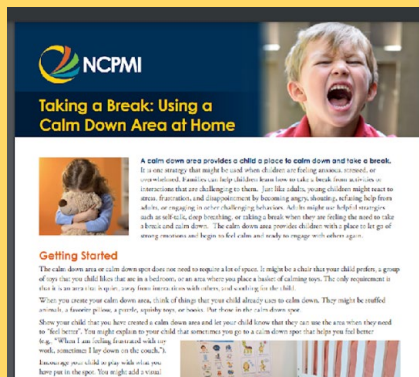
## Dear Families,

An important part of kindergarten readiness is having strong social-emotional skills. This includes knowing how to regulate emotions and calm down when upset or angry. Our classroom uses a self-regulation tool called the Turtle Technique that helps teach children to recognize their feelings, stop their bodies before they get "tuck in" and take deep breaths, and calm down so that they can problem solve. These visuals are available in our room as reminders.

## You can support your child's learning at home by:

- Pointing out when you notice that your child is getting upset—"You look like you are getting frustrated, what would 'tucker cool' let's take 3 deep breaths!"—and walking them through the steps of calming down.
- Posting this handout somewhere visible (on the refrigerator, on the child's bedroom door, etc.) and talking about cooperative ways to express feelings when upset or angry.

Please ask if you have questions about the Turtle Technique or how we address social-emotional development!



## Help Us Stay Calm

Strategies that help you and your child during challenging behavior

### Stay Calm | Reflect | Re-Connect

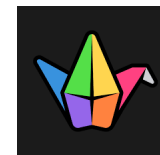
When your child is engaged in challenging behavior or experiencing anger, stress, sadness or frustration, it is important to stay calm. If you express your anger and frustration, it might result in more challenging behavior from your child. Remaining calm will provide the safety and support your child needs as they learn how to calm themselves.

#### Step 1: Calm Yourself



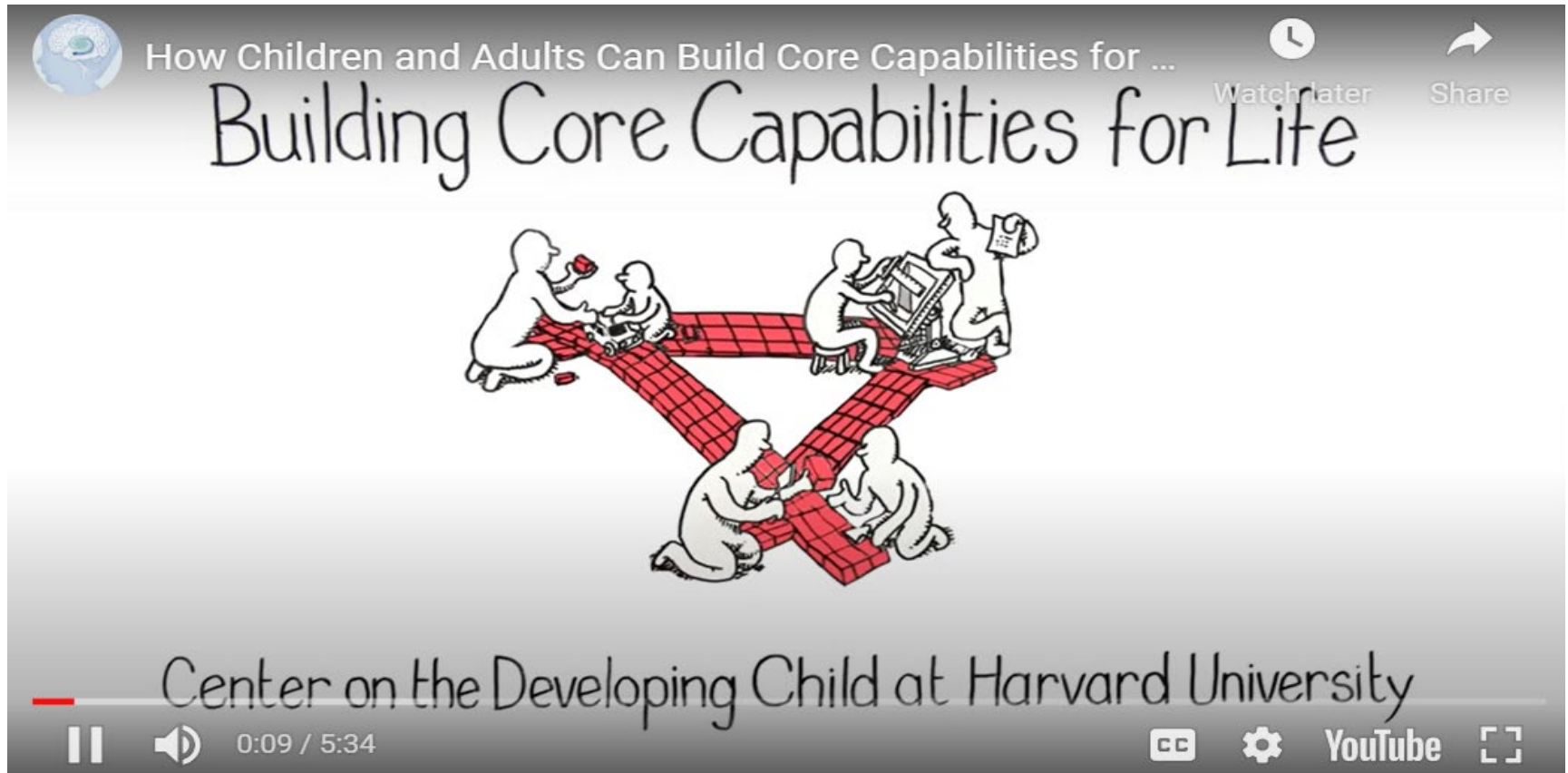
<https://www.ecmhc.org/relaxation.html>

# Building the Skills Adults Need for Life





# Core Capabilities



# Early Intervention Technical Assistance Portal (EITA)

[www.eita-pa.org](http://www.eita-pa.org)

**Topic of Interest: Social Emotional**

Bits About Behavior Principles

Supports for reducing expulsion  
and suspension

National resources/websites





# EITA Portal: Developmental Milestones

## Developmental Milestones



This interactive tool is designed to help Early Intervention professionals, families, and other early childhood professionals explore developmental milestones for children ages 0-5 by domain or by age. It may also be used as a reference to guide discussions about child development. It is not meant to be used for evaluation, screening, or diagnoses.

### Social/Emotional: 4 years

Social/Emo  
Recognizing their  
emotions of other

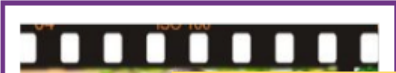
Physical

Adaptive

0-12 months

- ☐ Smiles/Laughs at funny pictures
- ☐ Tells you that they are happy, sad, afraid, etc.
- ☐ Points to self in photo
- ☐ Enjoys doing new things and be a helper
- ☐ Plays "Mom/Dad, superhero, dog," etc.
- ☐ Is more and more creative with make-believe play
- ☐ Would rather play with other children than by themselves
- ☐ Plays well with other children
- ☐ Often can't tell what's real and what's make-believe
- ☐ Talks about what they like and what they are interested in
- ☐ Comforts others who are hurt or sad
- ☐ Calls attention to what they can do
- ☐ Is aware when an adult is happy or sad
- ☐ Initiates play or conversation
- ☐ Avoids danger (i.e. does not jump from tall heights)

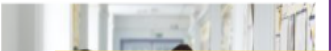
# EITA Portal: Professional Development



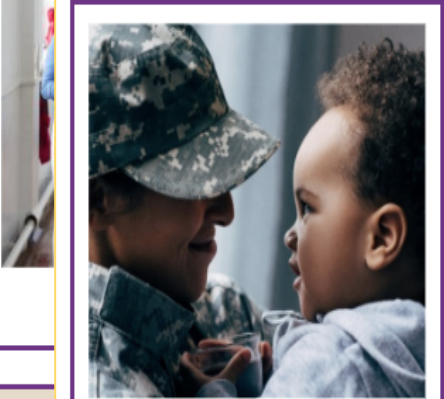
**An Overview of Embedded Instruction for Early Learning in Pennsylvania (Self Enrollment)**



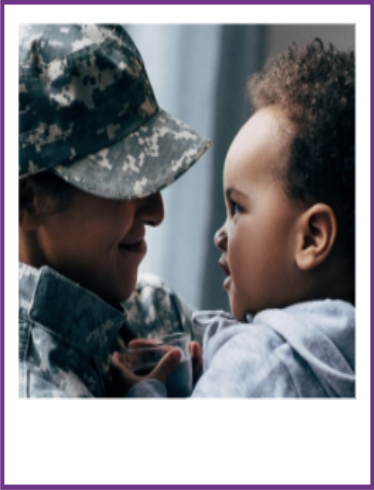
Start or Continue Course



**Collaborating for Inclusive Classroom Practices in Early Childhood: Working Together (Self Enrollment)**



S



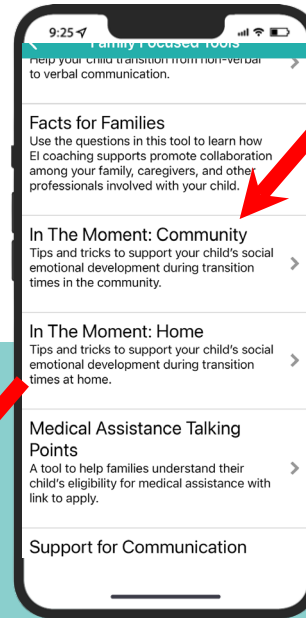
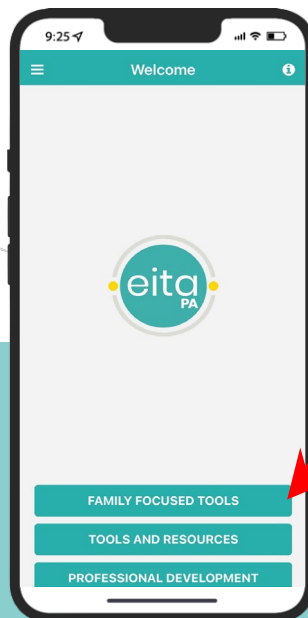
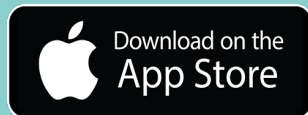
Start or Continue Course

**Toward Cultural Competence**

Take a look at the concept of family culture and how a family's culture, beliefs, and values impact Early Intervention services and supports.

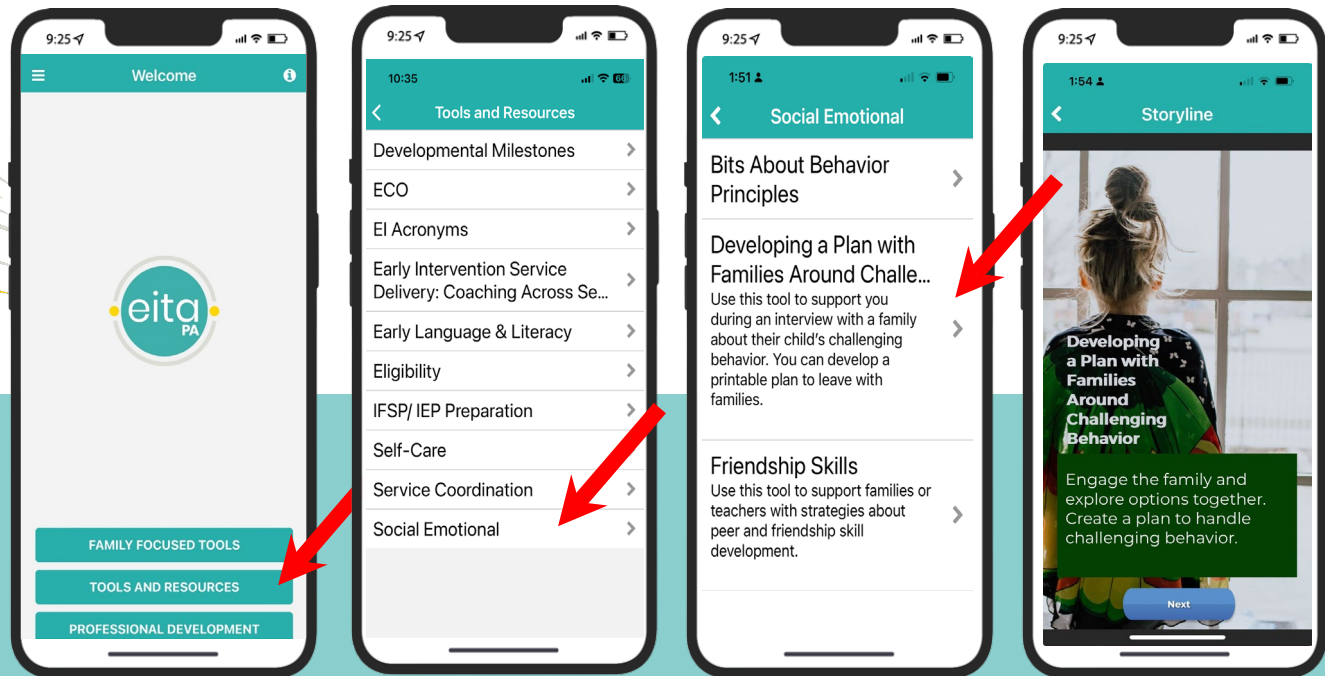
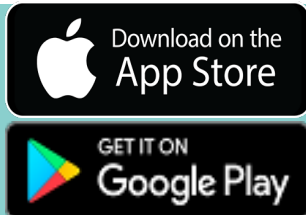
# EITA Mobile

Search “EITA Mobile” to download from your app store

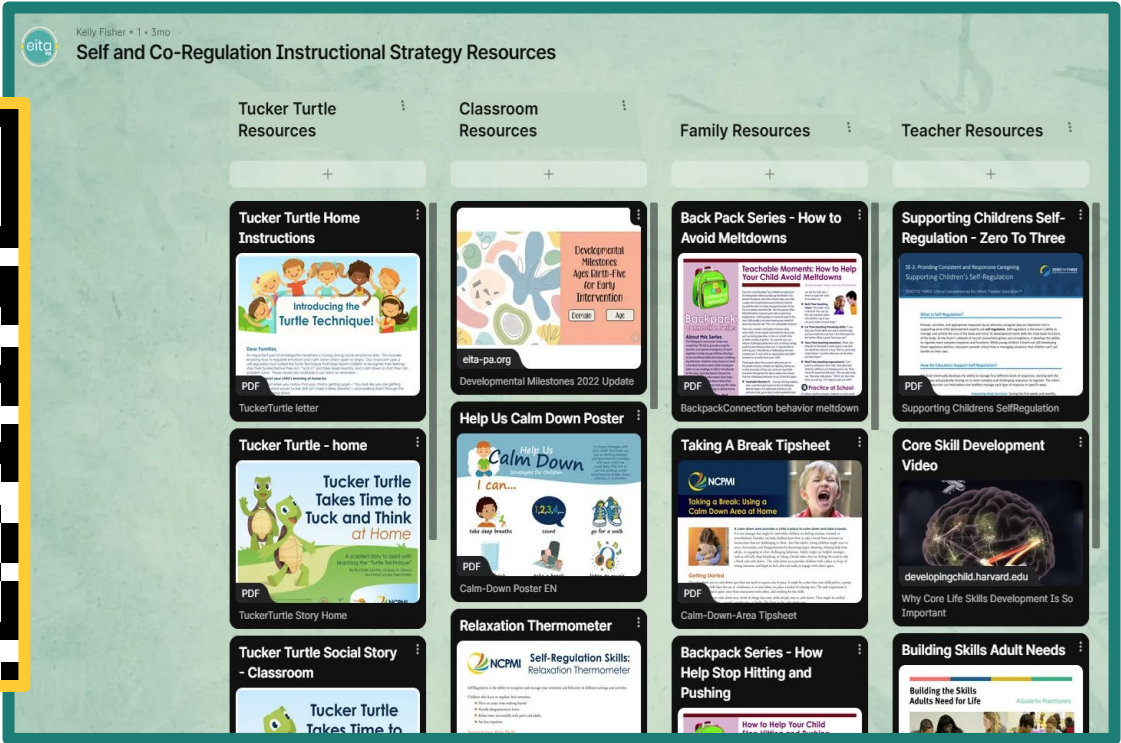


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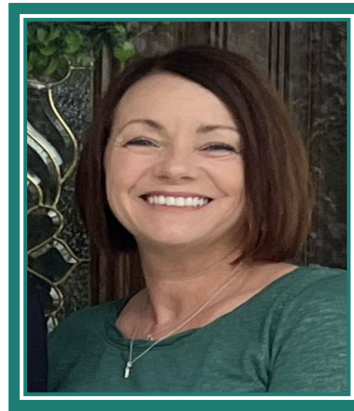


# Padlet



<http://tinyurl.com/self-co-regulation>

# Contact Information



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# References

Hemmeter, M. L., Ostrosky, M., & Fox, L. (2021). Unpacking the pyramid model: A practical guide for preschool teachers. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Dunlap, G., Wilson, K., Strain, P., & Lee, J.K. (2022). Prevent teach reinforce for young children: The early childhood model of individualized positive behavior support (second). Brookes Publishing.

Zero to three. Early connections last a lifetime.  
<https://www.zerotothree.org/>

Cultivate learning. Washington state university, College of education.  
Trauma informed practices national pilot, 2024