**Active Learning: Encouraging Emotional & Social Development**

**Patty Obrzut, M.S., O.T.R./L**

*Definitions*

* Social Development – The gradual acquisition of certain skills, attitudes, relationships and behaviors that enable the individual to interact with others and to function as a member of society
* Social Skills – a set of learned abilities that enable an individual to interact competently and appropriately in a given social context.
* Emotional development – a gradual increase in the capacity to experience, express and interpret the full range of emotions and the ability to cope with them appropriately.

*The Core Features of Emotional Development*

A person must have the ability to:

* Identify and understand one’s own feelings
* Accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others
* Manage strong emotions and their expressions in a constructive manner
* Regulate one’s own behavior
* Develop empathy for others
* And establish and maintain relationships

*In Order to relate to others, you need to understand yourself. How well do you understand your Emotional Intelligence?*

*The Dynamic Learning Circle: emotional/social development*

Stage 1: A child becomes aware & interested in:

His/her own motor or sensory activities

The objects and activities in the environment

People in the environment – their social & communication activities

Stage 2: A child becomes curious & interested which leads to: Repetition of his/her own activity Establishing memories of his/her own activity Experimentation, exploration, and comparison with objects Imitation of the activity of others Responding to verbal/non-verbal communication of others Initiating activity

Sharing his/her experiences with others

Stage 3: A child completes learning with an activity

An activity is repeated to such a level that it becomes part of the child’s every day actions and patterns.

An activity or action becomes familiar enough that it presents no more challenges to the child

Stage 4: A child becomes ready for new challenges which leads to awareness and interest if:

The child is given opportunities to experience new motor/sensory activities

The child is given opportunities to experience new actions of others The challenges offered are within a child’s developmental level Other people have taken an interest in the child’s past activities

*Strong Emotional Development leads to:*

• Self awareness
• Social awareness
• Emotional regulation
• Responsible decision making and building

Those who are not given emotional guidance and support may struggle:

• Academically
• Physically
• Behaviorally

*Why is Emotional Development Important?*

Influences learning & all other areas of development.

It provides the foundation for how we feel about ourselves, and how we experience others.

A good emotional foundation supports executive function when well regulated. When not well regulated it interferes with executive function. Thus a strong emotional level supports the ability to learn.

*Executive Function: a set of mental processes that let us:*

• Plan

• Focus attention

• Remember instructions

• Juggle multiple tasks

• Link past to the present

Prefrontal cortex develops slowly, is influenced by experiences and doesn’t mature until our mid 20s

*Executive Function Skills*

• Working memory –
• Ability to retain and use information

• Mental flexibility
• Sustain or shift attention in response to different demands • Apply different roles to different settings

• Self control
• Resist impulsive actions and responses

\*Behaviors are just red flags for what is going on underneath the surface!

Stress Responses (Behaviors) Occur

• When activities, tasks, responsibilities, requirements do not match the developmental level of the individual (physical, sensory, emotional, social, etc.)

• When the world doesn’t make sense or is overwhelming

*Identify the difference between:*

Emotional Level vs. Intellectual Level

* At what age can a child work a six piece shape sorter? 3 Years

Intellectual level =

Teacher or parent sees the child

THE CONFLICT

At what age does a child bang objects on a tableorhis/herhand? 6-9months

Emotional level = Child sees himself

*Current gap*

Increase the intellectual level:

You increase the gap between the new I.L. and the E.L.

Increase the emotional level:

You decrease the gap between the old I.L. and the new E.L., typically raising I.L. as well.

*Emotional Development Under 5 Years*

* 0-3mo – clutch on, smacking lips (can be observed as biting, pinching, scratching)
* 4-6mo – babbling, consciously crying (can be observed as screaming, yelling)
* 6-8mo – molding body, snuggling
* 10mo – showing objects, shares interest, banging (can be observed hitting, headbanging, etc)
* 12mo- quick physical contact, moves away
* 15mo – gives objects with expectation to get back
* 18mo – lend cherished toy, building games
* 2yrs – interfere in adult activities, hiding/rough games
* 3yrs – domestic activities, joins groups non-verbally
* 4yrs – enjoys new things, creative, make-believe, would rather play with other children
* 5yrs – wants to please friends, likely to agree with rules, shows more independence, sometimes demanding/sometimes cooperative

*6 Types of Play (social interaction)*

* Unoccupied – 0-3mo. - random movements, no purpose
* Solitary – 3-18 mo. - independent play, occupy self
* Onlooker – 1-2 yrs - looks at play of others, does

not interact, may ask questions

* Parallel – 2 1⁄2 - 3 1⁄2 yrs - plays side by side with same objects, does not interact, mimics activity
* Associative – 3-4 yrs - interactive play between children, start doing what others are doing around them, no leaders
* Cooperative – 4-6 yrs - clear leaders and followers, more rules, teamwork

*Social Development*

0-3 mo – smiles, makes eye contact

4-6 mo. – cheerful around others, copies movements, awareness of surrounding

7-9 mo. – clingy with caregiver, shows anxiety around new people, peek a boo, mirror

10-12 mo. – repeats sounds to get attention, imitates people in play, displays independence

1-2 yrs. – can play independently for short periods of time, is around other children but does not share, thinks everyone is feeling like him/her, tantrums

2-3 yrs. – copies others, upset when changes in routine, variety of emotions displayed

*5 Phases of Educational Treatment Source: Dr. Lilli Nielsen: Are You Blind?*

Offering - no demands, build trust, initiate activity

Imitation - start to introduce new skills not in child’s ability level, no demands, build trust

Interaction - learn dependency & interaction, work on skill together

Sharing the Work - don’t have to be able to do everything yourself, learn dependence & interdependence

Consequences - sense of responsibility, can handle changing demands and changes in life, complete most of task

*Offering – Key points*

Absolutely no demands are placed on the child at all. The only request is that an adult be allowed to play near the child.

• Purpose
• To promote trust between the child and adult • To observe the child’s reactions
• To learn what the child likes/dislikes
• To learn about a child’s emotional level
• To introduce self activity

*Imitation – Key Points*

• Purpose:

* To increase the child’s interest in activities

nearby

* To increase the child’s ability to initiate
* To increase the child’s belief in him/herself
* To introduce activities and movements not as

yet performed by the child

• Start by imitating the child’s activity, even if this is stereotypical.

*Interaction – Key Points*

• Purpose:

* To help the child learn dependency on one or

several people

* To help the child initiate interactions
* To enhance the child’s development of self

identity

* To give the child the basis for social development

*Sharing the Work – Key Points*

* Purpose:
• To increase the child’s experience of success
• To involve the child in new social relationships • To increase the child’s interest in acquiring new

abilities

* The aim is to give the child the opportunity to learn dependence and interdependence; that to be one who does something does not necessarily mean that one must do everything or do everything perfectly.

*Consequence – Key Points*

This can be introduced once a child has an emotional development of approximately 2 years of age.

• Purpose:

* To help the child to endure meeting demands
* To help the child endure changes in life
* To help the child feel self-confident – which is

fundamental to make your own decisions about

your life

* To establish a sense of responsibility

*Implications for Programs*

All childhood programs must balance their focus on cognition with a significant attention to emotional and social development.

ED & SD capacities enable children to sit up, pay attention, and get along with other

Emotional Development supports executive function

Increasing emotional skills increases a child’s ability to developing the coping skills necessary to interact and learn from others, manage conflict and problem solve independently

*For More Information:*

• www.Penrickton.org

• patty@Penrickton.org

• Activelearningspace.org • Lilliworks.org