

How to Build Positive Social Emotional Engagement with Early Learners

Children who have a strong social emotional foundation experience:



More Academic Success



Fewer Negative Interactions with Adults



More Friendships with Peers

Without quality early interventions, children who exhibit challenging behavior, especially aggressive behavior, in preschool tend to continue this pattern of behavior throughout school.



Part 1: Nurturing and Responsive Relationships

The essential foundation to healthy social development: relationships that are responsive, consistent and nurturing benefit the developing child in many ways:



Influence emotional, cognitive and social development



Help reduce the frequency of behavior problems



Develop secure relationships with other adults



Develop good peer relationships



Develop positive self-esteem

“ A growing body of evidence points to one common answer: Every child who winds up doing well has had at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult. ”

—THE SCIENCE OF RESILIENCE

Step One:

Create Positive Adult-Child Interactions



Engage in one-on-one interactions, at eye level



Listen to children and encourage them to listen to others



Follow the child's lead and interests during play

Step Two:

Maintain a 5:1 Ratio of Positive to Negative Interactions

Make lots of positive interaction “deposits”



Greet every child at the door by name



Give hugs, and high fives for accomplishing tasks



Praise a child to their parent in front of them



Using a loud voice



Giving negative commands



Making demands or giving directions

Step Three:

Reframe Challenging Behavior

Instead of saying:



“She's so clingy.”

Reframe the child's behavior as a response to her environment:

“She might be slow to warm up to new people, especially in a new setting.”

Instead of saying:



“I have to watch him like a hawk.”

Reframe with:

“He is very active and may not understand my expectations about staying with the group.”

In framing challenging behavior, do not come up with the solutions but rather restate the behaviors to make them more manageable.



Strategies here provided by SW-PBIS and PW-PBIS frameworks.

Start with the Heart represents an approach to implementing one of the critical pillars of the Get Georgia Reading Campaign: positive learning climate. To see how all four pillars help children on a path to reading proficiently by the end of third grade visit getgeorgiareading.org