

# 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 2: Creating High Quality Supportive Environments

### Step One:

## Teach Behavior Expectations and Rules

**EXPECTATIONS** brand positively stated guidelines that prepare children for success in life. They will apply to all children across all settings.

1. BE RESPECTFUL
2. BE SAFE
3. BE A TEAM PLAYER



**RULES** state specific behaviors in specific settings that are observable and measurable. Rules clarify expectations for all common areas.

1. TAKE TURNS (BE RESPECTFUL)
2. SIT TO SLIDE AND SWING (BE SAFE)
3. PUT AWAY PLAY EQUIPMENT (BE A TEAM PLAYER)

### Step Two:

## Design Environments that Promote Engagement

### ASK YOURSELF:

How the environment can be arranged to prevent problem behavior?

How can we minimize obstacles and other hazards?

Have we considered the needs of children with physical and sensory disabilities?

Can children use visual and environmental cues to know what to do?



Use photos with labels



Provide choices



Use visuals that show children what to do



Create clear boundaries and traffic patterns



Consider the size and location of centers



Use labels, color coding, verbal and visual cues



Consider organization of materials



Use child-size furniture that "fits"



Use predictable seating arrangements



Minimize large open spaces

### Step Three:

## Plan for and Teach Transitions and Schedules



Develop a schedule that promotes child engagement and success



Balance activities (active vs. quiet, small group vs. large group, adult-directed vs. child-directed)



Structure activities so there is a clear beginning, middle and end



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](http://getgeorgiareading.org)