
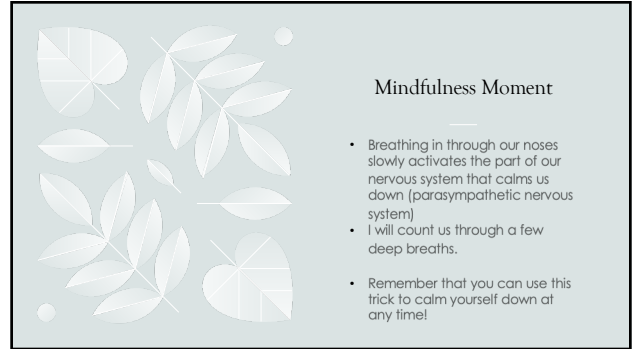


Supporting Young Children & Understanding Their Behavior

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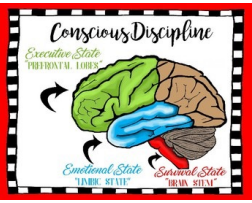
Mindfulness Moment

- Breathing in through our noses slowly activates the part of our nervous system that calms us down (parasympathetic nervous system)
- I will count us through a few deep breaths.
- Remember that you can use this trick to calm yourself down at any time!

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Brain States -Conscious Discipline Model

- Three basic brain states for children AND adults
- Each state uses different part of the brain
- Each state has its own question, skills set, and need
- Figuring out YOUR brain state as well as the brain state of the children in your classroom is the first step to solving a problem!



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Survival State  
Represented by the Brain Stem



**Functions:**

- Survival systems
- Modulate states of arousal
- Unconscious
- Online at birth

**Developmental need:**  
Safety

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Survival State:  
Am I Safe?

Fast reacting survival skills

Evolved to keep us safe when faced with danger

Skill set:

- Fight: Hit, push, scream, bite
- Flight: Withdraw, run away, hide
- Freeze: Surrender by complying; giving in; crying and giving up

Can you think of a time you have been in the survival state?

Can you think of a time that a child you know has been in the survival state?

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Tools to Support Safety:

Noticing when children are in the survival state - "Your face is red and you have an angry look on your face."

Providing safe routines for children's care that use pictures

Keeping YOUR composure


Being a safe keeper: "You are safe."

Providing a safe place: Use assertiveness - a voice without doubt

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### Emotional State

Represented by the Limbic System



**Functions:**

- Emotional tone, flexible or rigid, positive or negative
- Tags events as internally important
- Motivation system
- Attention system
- Attachment, relationships, territory
- Stores highly charged emotional memories
- Controls appetite and sleep cycles
- Unconscious
- Comes online with, "No!"

**Developmental need:**  
Connection

Conscious

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### Emotional State: Am I Loved?

- Emotional memories of our past that create our own personal "software" for how to handle situations.
- We become triggered into the emotional state when we think that things are not going well for us in any given circumstance.
  - Someone may be "pushing our buttons"
- These memories are based how we have perceived our life since childhood from our earliest caregivers and may be false messages

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### Emotional State: False Message Examples

- Do any of these sound familiar?
  - I'm not good enough;
  - My worth comes from taking care of others.
- We then use these types of false messages about ourselves to explain what is happening with others, like a misbehaving child. This creates more false messages:
  - Give children an inch and they will take a mile;
  - Children are manipulative and can't be trusted;
  - Their parents let them get away with too much.

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### Emotional State: How it affects us and children

- We begin to automatically respond to children based on our state and the false messages
- These thoughts keep us from seeing what the real needs of children are
- We model the behavior we are trying to eliminate
- We impart these false messages into children, which will start this cycle all over again.

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### What Happens in the Emotional State?

Emotional State Behaviors	Adult	Child
Name-calling	What is the matter with you?	You dummy!
Blaming	Now look what you made me do! Are you happy now?	Carlos made me do it!
Denial	I am NOT angry-leave me alone!	Not my fault.
Inflicting guilt	Can't you help? I'm in the middle of something.	Ms. Tara won't let me go to block center.
Manipulating relationships	You are just doing this to hurt me; I like the way Matthew is sitting; Do you want me to leave you in the play yard?	I hate you. You can't play dress up with us.
Making everything about you	Ms. Downice can't teach circle time if everyone isn't sitting criss-cross applesauce like we discussed.	You don't care about me. Stop picking on me!
Lecturing/trirades	I have told this class over and over again, only two friends are allowed in block center. Do you want to go to time-out again?	This isn't fair. Everyone else is using a bike.

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### Emotional State: Tools to Connect


- Rituals
  - I love you rituals
- Encouragement
  - "I know you can do this!"
- Jobs
- Empathy
  - "You seem sad today."
- Choices:
  - "You have a choice, You can choose (a calm down skill) and a get a high five and maybe feel a little better or you can choose to keep taking your friend's blocks and have to choose another center."

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**Executive State**  
Represented by the Prefrontal Lobes



**Functions:**

- Impulse control/self-control
- Empathy
- Working memory
- Sustained attention
- Planning, prioritization, initiation
- Organization, time management
- Goal persistence
- Online with, "why?"

**Developmental need:**  
Problem-solving in social settings

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**Executive State: What Can I Learn?**

- An integrated state of relaxed alertness.
- We can be aware of and regulate thoughts, emotions, actions and it all flows easily from us. We are beautifully self-regulated.
- We can take multiple perspectives, solve problems, have empathy.
- Our best selves!
- This is our inner voice that we can use to self-regulate or dysregulate.
- Children don't develop an inner voice until about **age 7**.
- They need adults to help them regulate themselves until then.

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**Executive State: Tools to Support & Grow Self-regulation**

- Finding solutions
  - *Class meetings to discuss*
- Positive intent
  - *"You wanted to play in blocks with your friends there."*
- Appropriate consequences
- Executive skills are enhanced when children can practice self-regulation with an adult and as a whole class!

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**ALL Behavior Has Meaning**

- Everything that PEOPLE do – children and adults – has meaning.
- Think about the different things that you do when you arrive in your classroom each morning.
  - *On a morning where everything is going well, you may walk in with a bright smile on your face.*
  - *You greet co-workers happily as you walk to your classroom and immediately start working with your co-teacher on your plans for the day.*

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**Or On a Different Day:**

- Now imagine you had a really difficult morning before you got to work. How might your arrival in the classroom be different?
  - *Maybe you need a few minutes to calm down (get out of your Emotional Brain)*
  - *On this day, you enter looking down and walk quickly to your classroom.*
  - *Instead of getting to work on plans for the day with your co-teacher, you briefly say "hi" to her and sit down.*
- What is the meaning behind your behavior? How might others interpret the difference in your behavior?

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Let's Consider, Jonah

- Jonah is 4-year-old boy who could pass as a first grader
- He seeks adult attention and enjoys interacting with teachers but does not seek out play with his peers
- Jonah becomes upset easily, and often hits, spits, screams, and scratches anyone who is nearby
- Jonah has been expelled from two child care centers and his mother is afraid she may lose her job if she does not find a place that can keep him
- **What might Jonah be telling others through his behaviors?**

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Jonah's Story

- Jonah's teacher meets with his mother and discovers that Jonah witnessed his father hit his mother and saw his father being arrested.
- Jonah's mother is struggling with how to explain all that has happened to him.
- As a single parent of two children, she is just trying to pay the bills and feels disconnected from her children and her friends.
- **After hearing Jonah's story-do you interpret his behavior differently?**
- **What brain state may Jonah enter into at school sometimes?**

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Attention seeking is really just connection seeking

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*Reframing*  
**"ATTENTION SEEKING"**  
by looking beyond behaviour to unexpressed needs

CONNECT WITH ME <i>(Connection Seeking)</i>	UNDERSTAND ME <i>(Attunement Seeking)</i>	PROTECT ME <i>(Attachment Seeking)</i>
SEE ME, HEAR ME, ACCEPT ME; SHOW INTEREST & DELIGHT IN ME; HOLD ME IN YOUR MIND	CONSIDER & RESPOND TO MY NEEDS; ORGANISE, VALIDATE & HOLD MY FEELINGS; BE CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING FOR ME	SEE MY EXTREME DISTRESS AND THE DIFFERENT WAYS IT IS BEING EXPRESSED; SUPPORT ME TO REGULATE; HELP ME TO FEEL SAFE

Hidden Treasure with Tracey Farrell

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Connection Seeking

**It Isn't "attention-seeking," It's "connection-seeking."**

IT'S NATURAL AND HEALTHY FOR CHILDREN TO SEEK OUR CONNECTION

Positive ways to respond when kids reach out...

what they say:

- "Pick me up"
- "Watch this!"
- "Can I tell you something?"
- "That's not fair..."
- "Tommy did this..."
- "Maisie said..."
- Kicking, hitting, grunting
- Defiance

Do this:

- Listen
- Make Eye Contact
- Play
- Do Special Time
- Hug
- Give kisses or raspberries
- Chase or wrestle
- Watch with interest
- Greet with a smile

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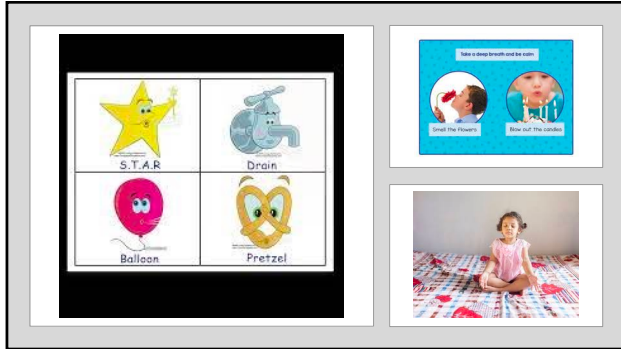
Calming Yourself First

- Sometimes you will realize you are in a survival or emotional brain state.
- Before you can support your children, you need to calm yourself.
- We can do this in many ways-luckily, we can use the same skills that we teach to children!!



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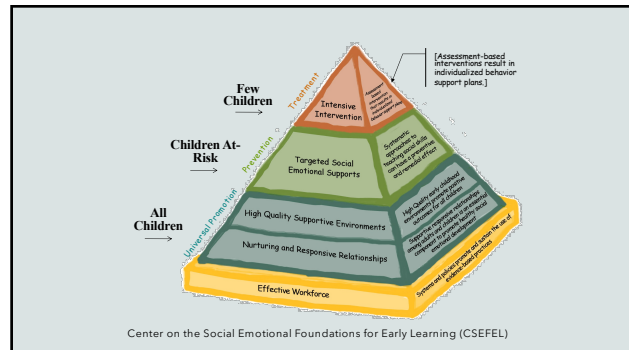
You may need some support

- Identify a co-worker ahead of time that you can call on to help you.
- Have a discussion and maybe the two of you can support one another when one of you is in an emotional or survival brain and needs a minute or two to calm. (You may need to discuss with director if ratio will be an issue).
- You cannot support your children until you move yourself into a relaxed brain state! Give yourself a moment to get there.

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Supporting Children Through Challenging Behaviors

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Promotion & Prevention of Positive Behavior = The MOST Important Behavior Management Skills

- You are key in the foundational level of the pyramid.
  - First step is supporting children is making sure you are ready to be effective-use those calming strategies

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Building Relationships as Prevention

- [I Love You rituals](#)
- Taking a few minutes to check in with all of your children each day
- For those children who need a little more, think about how and when to support your relationships

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### Strategies To Build a Secure Relationship

- Use a child's name
- Attempt to understand the child's behaviors, communication and needs
- Acknowledge and respond to a child's needs as soon as possible
- Use natural opportunities to be physically close and comforting (holding, rocking, sitting near)
- Use routines such as diapering and feeding as one-on-one time to interact individually
- Use photos, songs, stories and objects that reflect the child and family's language and culture



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### Characteristics of High Quality Environments

- Designed to enhance relationships and learning
- Offer a variety of experiences where children can freely move, make choices, and explore
- Be welcoming to everyone
- Be a place where everyone can easily interact with one another, share meaningful experiences and come together

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### Environmental Elements to Consider

- Visual supports throughout
  - Photo/line drawings for rules; schedule; center organization, etc.
- Cozy/private spaces/calm down corner
- Climbing structures/ lofts
- Accessible materials that are organized
- Adjustable lighting
- Sound
- Color
- People



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### Visual Support Ideas


- A new child or adult should be able to figure out flow of day, class rules, and help clean up/organize by visuals provided



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### What is Emotional Literacy?

- Emotional literacy is the ability to identify, understand, and respond to emotions in oneself and others in a healthy manner.



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### Children With Emotional Literacy:

- Tolerate frustration better
- Get in fewer fights
- Exhibit less destructive behavior
- Are healthier
- Are less lonely
- Are more focused, less impulsive
- Demonstrate greater academic achievement

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**Children with Positive Peer Social Interactions tend to have:**

- Positive social and emotional development
- Popularity among peers
- Stronger friendships
- More opportunities for classroom activity inclusion

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**Teaching Social Interactions & Emotional Literacy as Prevention**

- When children don't know how to hold a crayon, we teach them.
- When children don't know how to ride a tricycle, we teach them.
- When children don't know how to behave, we .....???


**• How should we finish the last sentence? Punish them? Or...**

- We TEACH them how to behave!
- Social-emotional skills are best learned when they are taught just like we teach pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills.

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**What Can Adults Do?**

- Express your own feelings
- Label children's feelings
- Play games, sing songs, and read stories with new feelings words



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**Feeling Activities**

- Pass the Hat
- Mirrors
- Feeling Face Collage
- Feeling Face Charades
- Checking In
- Singing, "If you're happy and you know it..."

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**Children with Positive Peer Social Interactions...**

- Display a limited number of the following negative peer interactions:
  - Grabbing
  - Pushing
  - Name calling
  - Engagement in negative social interactions at home

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**Positive Social Skills**

- Sample target social skills include:
  - Getting a friend's attention
  - Sharing objects
  - Asking a peer to share objects
  - Providing a play idea to a peer
  - Saying something nice to a friend
  - Entering group play

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### Direct Teaching of Social Skills

1. Explain the skill (e.g., teach greeting or sharing)
2. Demonstrate the correct way to use it
3. Demonstrate an inappropriate way and allow children to problem solve
4. Let a child practice the skill with an adult or with another child
5. Provide positive feedback and attention on use of the skills

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### Key Behavior Management Skills for All Children

- Teach skills you want to see
- Positive reinforcement when children use these skills
  - A LOT when they are learning and using new skills
  - Can fade back but never stop completely
- Redirection
  - When possible, try to recognize the brain state of children and encourage them to use calm down techniques
  - Best to not enter into a power struggle
  - Often this happens when the adult is in their emotional brain and not executive brain

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### When to Ask for Outside Help

- When a child is having difficulty the first steps are the same:
  - How is their relationship with their adults (teachers and family)?
  - How is the classroom setting supporting them in feeling safe and connected?
  - What can the child be taught to help them learn social and emotional skills that could help them learn self-regulation?
  - If there are areas where extra support is needed, provide it.
- Check in on yourself! Do you need to find outlets and support for you??

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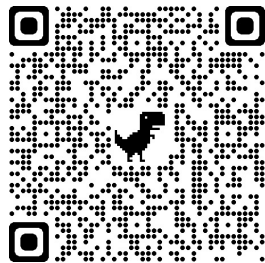
### Top of Pyramid Concerns

- For about 5%-10% of children, outside support is needed such as:
  - Individualized behavior support plans
  - Therapy or counseling
  - Occupational or speech therapy
  - Parenting supports

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### Where to go for Assistance

- Type III and FCC sites can reach out to TIKES mental health consultation
- Other caregivers and teachers can request a TIKES teleMHC
- TIKES can provide supports for children, families, teachers, and directors!



<https://medicine.tulane.edu/departments/clinical-sciences/psychiatry/research/tikes>

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### Time for Questions and Resource Links

- CSEFEL (<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html>)
- Conscious Discipline (<https://consciousdiscipline.com/>)

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<https://medicine.tulane.edu/departments/clinical-sciences/psychiatry/research/tikes>



TIKES Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation



tikesmhc




TIKES Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

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