

# SUCCESSFUL PYRAMID FRAMEWORK STRATEGIES TO USE FROM THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

FOR THE FIRST 4-6 WEEKS, USE THESE TIPS TO CREATE THE FOUNDATION FOR THE REST OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

## I. It all begins with RELATIONSHIPS!

*If a child doesn't know how to read, we teach.*

*If a child doesn't know how to swim, we teach.*

*If a child doesn't know how to multiply, we teach.*

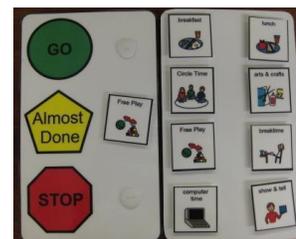
*If a child doesn't know how to drive, we teach.*

*If a child doesn't know how to behave... we need to teach!*

**Learn about your HOT BUTTONS!!! (handout 1.3) and practice REFRAMING (handout 1.4)**

- ◆ Use the *Inventory of Practices* to help guide you in Building Positive Relationships. Pick a few to work on for a month, and then pick a few more and so on... (handout 1.2)
- ◆ Make deposits into your “*relationship piggy bank*” with each child (handout 1.5 from website).
- ◆ Maintain 5:1 - positive to negative - comments (handout 1.7).
- ◆ Find alternatives to “No, Don’t and Stop”.
- ◆ Use positive descriptive acknowledgments – instead of “good job”, say “you really stuck with that and now look at the tower you created”. (handout 1.8).
- ◆ Greet all children when they arrive! Let them know you are glad they are there.
- ◆ LISTEN to all the children! If you are thinking of your response to them, you are not listening!
- ◆ When necessary, join play to expand childrens’ interactions and ideas.
- ◆ Use a calm and inviting tone.
- ◆ Use photos of children doing their favorite thing to create a “*getting to know you*” bulletin board.
- ◆ Create a *birthday bulletin board* with photos of children under the month of their birthday.
- ◆ Make “All About Me” books and share at circle for the first few weeks.
- ◆ Observe your classroom throughout the day to see if children are *connected* (engaged) or *disconnected* (disengaged).

- ◆ **Post daily visual schedule so children know what to expect and review it every day.**
- ◆ **Create Classroom Rules/Expectations and *teach them* every day with examples, puppets, role playing, etc.**



## II. FRIENDSHIP: HOW DO YOU TEACH OR HELP CHILDREN LEARN HOW TO BE A FRIEND?

### **Cooperative Use Toys**

- **Balls**
- **Puppets**
- **Wagons**
- **Two telephones**
- **Dress-up clothes**
- **Dramatic play materials**
- **Tire swings**
- **Rocking boats**
- **Board games**

~ Handout 2.3

Friendship skills to be taught:

- taking turns
  - including other children's ideas in play
  - sharing their toys
  - using compliments
  - using kind words
  - empathy: understanding how other children may be feeling
  - welcoming: being able to approach and respond to others positively (eg with a smile and greeting such as 'hello').
  - consideration: being able to say 'please' and 'thank you'
  - being able to lead and follow what others want to do
- play skills: being willing to take part in games and make suggestions for play
  - communicating: talking and listening to others in a friendly way
  - saying something to start a conversation
  - helping: being willing to help others

*Handout 2.3 – You've Got to Have Friends (Social Emotional Teaching Strategies) has an example of a schedule with embedded friendship opportunities.*

*Handout 2.2 and 2.9 allow you to create your own schedule of embedding friendship opportunities ALL DAY LONG!*

Teaching strategies:

- Modeling (teacher demonstrates the skill)
- Modeling with puppets
- Role playing (practice using the skill)
- Using flannel board
- Children's books on friendship
- Videos of examples of using friendships skills
- Songs (create lyrics with the skill to practice to a familiar song)
- Peer partners practice
- Using prompts (verbal and visual)
- Incidental teaching
- Giving Encouragement (specific feedback when child uses skill)

⇒ Teachers can prime children to use friendship skills before play time or an activity by giving them examples of what to say (teaching them what to do vs what not to do) or suggesting play ideas to help friendships/play be successful.

⇒ Replace "use your words" with suggestions of words to use. What could you suggest that would allow a child to practice the friendship skills you've been teaching without punishing or shaming them?

### **IF YOU WANT IT, TEACH IT ... ALL DAY LONG**

- 1. SHOW AND TELL**
- 2. DEMONSTRATE IT**
- 3. GIVE POSITIVE FEEDBACK**
- 4. PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE**

### III. HOW DO YOU TEACH OR HELP CHILDREN TO RECOGNIZE AND DEAL WITH EMOTIONS

*Emotional Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, and express emotions in a healthy way.*

#### WAYS TO TEACH ABOUT FEELINGS:

- Sing songs about feelings during circle
- Create a check-in visual chart with names and feeling faces
- Memory/Match Game with feeling faces during small group activity
- Feeling wheel/feeling dice game during small group activity
- Bingo game with feeling faces during small group activity
- How would you feel if...? during circle
- Bulletin board devoted to children's photos or drawings related to a specific emotion

*Talk about feelings whenever possible—notice and name them in yourself and help your children name them for themselves.*

*Expand your conversations about feelings:  
What makes you feel \_\_\_\_? When have you ever felt \_\_\_\_?  
What would you do if you felt \_\_\_\_?  
How would you help a friend if they felt \_\_\_\_?  
How do you think (character in a book) feels about what just happened in the story?*

#### BOOK NOOK

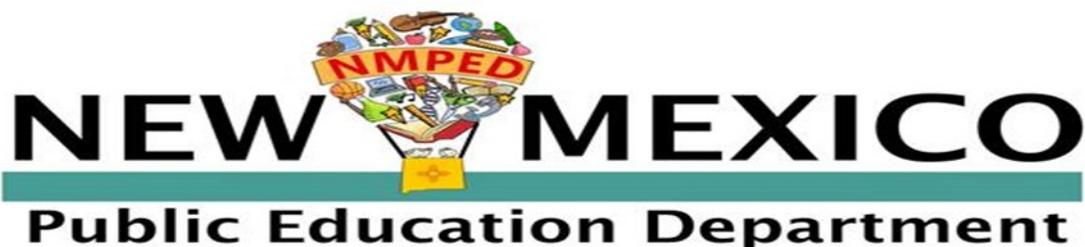
Each book nook is comprised of ideas and activities designed around popular children's books. Pick a book from the book nook list and use the suggested activities ... all week long!

<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html#booknook>

OR

Choose any book and ask yourself these questions:

- How might I use this book to support emotional development during large group/story time?
- How might I use activities related to this book to support emotional development in centers?
- How might I use this book or activities related to this book to support emotional development



## IV HOW DO YOU TEACH OR HELP CHILDREN DEVELOP SELF-REGULATION

**Create a cozy corner on day 1. During circle time, teach children that this is a place to go to when they are having big feelings and need a safe and quiet space to calm down.**

**Add the visual of the Turtle Technique to the wall or Dragon Brain or Smell flower/blow out candle so that they know what to do to self regulate.**

More visuals to use to teach social emotional skills: <http://headstartinclusion.org/teacher-tools#visual>

### TUCKER THE TURTLE: TECHNIQUE TO SELF REGULATE

During circle time, introduce Tucker the Turtle. Use a stuffed turtle puppet as you begin to read the scripted story Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think. Have children make their own turtle puppet, practice the 4 steps of the technique and sing Tucker Turtle song. Make cue cards to use as reminders for when they are needed.

Keep teaching this until they've got it!



- ⇒ Teach children to recognize how it feels in their body when they are upset and/or angry.
- ⇒ Where in their body do they feel it? Are they getting hot? Is their tummy tight? Do they clench their hands?
- ⇒ Teach them about the difference between feeling tense (like the tin man) and relaxed (like the scarecrow).
- ⇒ This can be done over and over during circle, large group activity or a small group activity.

Tucker the Turtle resources: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html#teachingskills>

## V. HOW DO YOU TEACH CHILDREN TO SOLVE COMMON PROBLEMS IN THE CLASSROOM

Just like every other skill, the skill of **problem solving** can be taught.

- Place a visual of the 4 steps of Problem Solving on the wall (what is the problem, think of a few solutions, would the solution be safe, fair and how would everyone feel, and then give it a try).
- Problematize everything: “we only have one apple and 6 children at the table. We have a problem—does anyone have a solution?”



- Have children offer solutions to problems that occur in children's stories.
- While teaching about problem solving, create a solution kit that the whole classroom can use.

Solution Kit and Problem Solving Steps: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html#teachingskills>

**In conclusion...**

**This is a year long process with several steps.**

**Start on DAY 1 and commit to teaching these skills for at least the first 4-6 weeks.**

**Take it one step at a time - embedding all these skills during your daily routines.**

**Then, reinforce the skills all year long.**

**IF YOU WANT IT, TEACH IT .... ALL DAY LONG ... ALL YEAR LONG!**

## Here are a few things to keep in mind that may guide you as you support children's social emotional development while also preventing challenging behaviors

- ⇒ Remember that **behavior is communication!** Ask yourself “what is this child telling me he needs me to teach him?” “How can I support her to be successful?”
- ⇒ Kids are not giving you a hard time; they are having a hard time!
- ⇒ Keep in mind the developmental level of your children. Most adults don't know how to share, use kind words, and tolerate disappointment.  
It is our job to teach children these skills.  
We are growing healthy adults!
- ⇒ When you notice that you are saying “No, Don't and Stop” a lot, catch yourself!  
Reframe and see what skills the child/children are lacking at the moment (entering play, turn taking, tolerating disappointment, etc.).  
Then work with your co-worker to systematically teach that skill...to all children ... throughout the day.
- ⇒ You do not need to create an entirely new curriculum to teach social emotional skills.  
You embed conversations, stories, role plays and visuals into what you are already doing.
- ⇒ Instead of always saying “use your words”, ask questions.  
If they could use their words at that moment, they would have.  
Find out what happened.  
Help the child problem solve.  
Narrate possible words/solutions to use that might help them be successful.  
They may not get what they originally wanted but, they will get YOU! You are helping them to manage their feelings and develop skills to handle situations.
- ⇒ Catch yourself saying general statements about “being friends” and talk about what makes a good friend ... and then teach those skills (listening, loyalty, kindness, helping, shared interests, etc.).
- ⇒ A tantrum is telling us that their feelings are too big for them to manage.  
We, as adults, have our own version of tantrums. When you understand the feeling underneath the behavior, you can have empathy and compassion for their struggle.  
At that moment, they need help calming down (self-regulation) not a conversation about how their behavior impacts others.
- ⇒ Whenever possible, reframe!  
Drop from your head (judgment) to your heart (compassion) and shift gears so that you can teach your children the skills they need.
- ⇒ Teach children what to do vs what not to do.

