



Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning



Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children's Social-Emotional Competence

Purpose of the Inventory: *The Inventory of Practices for Promoting Social-Emotional Competence* is designed to be used by individuals and/or teams to identify training needs and plan a course of action to address those needs related to four general areas: (a) building positive relationships, (b) creating supportive environments, (c) social-emotional teaching strategies, and (d) individualized intensive interventions. The Inventory encourages individual self-reflection, opportunities for teaming between classroom teachers, mentor coaches, supervisors, site directors, and other administrators, and promotes effective practices for direct service staff. There are two sections to this tool: the *Inventory of Practices* and the *Action Plan*.

Use of the Inventory: This tool is best utilized in a manner that encourages reflection and discussion. Each of the four general areas includes several *Skills and Indicators* reflective of practices that promote social-emotional competence in young children. The Indicators are detailed phrases that enable the user to “dig a little deeper” in identifying and pinpointing skills that may or may not be present. Three levels of skill, *Consistently*, *Occasionally*, and *Seldom*, permit users to record their perceived skill level for each Indicator by checking the appropriate box. Users should be consistent in their appraisal of skills across the three levels, *Consistently*, *Occasionally*, and *Seldom* (i.e., across all children in the classroom, target child or specific groups of children, environment of all classrooms, etc.).

The final column allows the team to indicate whether or not an indicator should be a *Target for Training*. Following each section is a space for writing additional comments. At the end of each section, *Observations/ Evidence* allows the user to write thoughts, suggestions, strengths, and needs concerning either the specific *Skills* or *Indicators*.

Use of the Action Plan: The *Action Plan* takes the users to the next step once they have determined what specific *Skills and Indicators* from the *Inventory* they want to target for training. In the middle column of the *Action Plan*, users should check those *Skills or Indicators* they identify as targets for implementation. Teachers and support personnel (e.g., trainers, mentor coaches, administrators) should work together to identify what strategies they will each use to help the teaching team implement the new practices. The third column allows users to identify *Resources and Supports* that will be necessary to successfully complete the activities or strategies listed in the second column.

Completion Dates: Users may complete the *Inventory* and *Action Plan* at different times as a way of determining their progress toward addressing specific skills targeted for training. Different color inks corresponding to the dates completed can be used when completing the tool in order to highlight changes over time.

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social-Emotional Competence

BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
	3	2	1	YES	NO
1. Examines personal, family, and cultural views of child’s challenging behavior	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Considers personal beliefs regarding the acceptability and unacceptability of specific types of child behavior					
b. Considers personal beliefs regarding the causes of specific types of unacceptable child behavior					
c. Acknowledges contrasting or conflicting beliefs held by others regarding acceptable and unacceptable types of child behavior					
Observations/ Evidence					
2. Examines own attitudes toward challenging behavior	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Understands the relationship between children’s social-emotional development and challenging behaviors					
b. Understands that children’s challenging behaviors are conveying some type of message					
c. Understands there are many things that can be done to prevent challenging behaviors					
d. Identifies what behaviors “push my buttons”					
e. Develops strategies for dealing with situations when children’s behaviors “push my buttons”					
f. Works together with a team to problem solve around issues related to challenging behaviors					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social-Emotional Competence

BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS (cont.) Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
3. Develops meaningful relationships with families and staff	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Establishes a warm and collaborative relationship with each child’s family					
b. Informal communication with families occurs on a regular basis (drop off/pick up, during parent visits)					
c. Uses a variety of strategies for building relationships with all families					
d. Teacher has a system for regular communication with families that includes celebrations of the child’s accomplishments					
e. Creates a communication system with families that is bi-directional, offering families a way to share information about the family or child with the teacher					
f. Offers periodic communication to the families from the school/program or teacher (newsletter, open house, parent conferences)					
g. Provides formal opportunities for families to visit the classroom					
h. Includes the culture of the family in the classroom (family photos on bulletin board, my family book, activities, language, materials)					
i. Provides directions or instructions to other team members about how to work within the classroom					
j. Staff have time to meet together for support and planning					
k. All staff contribute ideas for classroom planning					
l. Staff acknowledge one another’s efforts throughout the day					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social-Emotional Competence

BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS (cont.) Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
4. Develops meaningful relationships with children	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Establishes a warm and collaborative relationship with each child’s family					
b. Greets children on arrival; calls by name					
c. Communicates with children at eye level					
d. Verbally interacts with individual children during routines & activities					
e. Participates in children’s play when appropriate					
f. Shows respect, consideration, warmth to all children					
g. Speaks calmly to children					
h. Uses a variety of strategies for building relationships with all children					
i. Promotes child’s understanding of self and relationship to others (likes/dislikes, characteristics, similarities/differences)					
j. Attends to children in positive ways when they are engaging in appropriate behavior (not giving attention only when a child has challenging behavior)					
k. Creates a classroom that is a place that children and families like to be (i.e., feel comfortable, welcome, and safe)					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social-Emotional Competence

DESIGNING SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
				YES	NO
5. Designs the physical environment	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Environment is aesthetically pleasing to promote calm, focus, and attention and to avoid overstimulation (soothing colors, natural materials, soft textures, limited clutter)					
b. Maintains acceptable noise level for all children in classroom					
c. Arranges traffic patterns in classroom so there are no wide open spaces					
d. Removes obstacles that make it difficult for children with physical disabilities to move around the room					
e. Clearly defines boundaries in learning centers					
f. Arranges learning centers to allow room for multiple children					
g. Provides a variety of materials in all learning centers					
h. Designs learning centers so that children spend time evenly across centers					
i. Considers children's interests when deciding what to put in learning centers					
j. Makes changes and additions to learning centers on a regular basis					
k. Designs a system for children to monitor the number of children using each center					
l. Materials/centers are prepared before children arrive at center or activity					
m. Family photos are displayed or accessible to children					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social-Emotional Competence

DESIGNING SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS (cont.) Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
6. Develops schedules and routines	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Maintains a consistent but flexible daily schedule					
b. Creates a visual schedule (use drawings or photographs)					
c. Reviews the schedule with children and refers to it throughout the day					
d. Designs schedule to include a balance of large-group and small-group activities					
e. Designs schedule to minimize the amount of time children spend making transitions between activities					
f. Designs schedule to include a balance of child-directed and teacher-directed activities					
g. Implements schedule consistently					
h. Teaches children about the schedule					
i. Provides explanations when changes in the schedule are necessary					
j. Uses activity schedule or visual cues for children who need extra support					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children's Social-Emotional Competence

DESIGNING SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS <i>(cont.)</i> Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
7. Ensures smooth transitions	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Structures transitions so children do not have to spend excessive time waiting with nothing to do (has materials prepared to start circle or next activity as children arrive)					
b. Uses transition strategies that ensure children are actively engaged in transitions					
c. Teaches children the expectations associated with transitions					
d. Provides warnings to children prior to transitions					
e. Individualizes the warnings prior to transitions so that all children understand them					
f. Explicitly teaches children the steps and expectations of transitions					
g. Effectively guides individual children who need extra support during transitions					
h. Provides positive, descriptive acknowledgement to children during transitions					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social-Emotional Competence

DESIGNING SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS (cont.) Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
8. Designs activities to promote engagement	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Plans & conducts large-group activities with specific goals in mind for the children					
b. Varies the topics and activities in the large group from day to day					
c. Provides opportunities for children to be actively involved in large-group activities					
d. Varies speech and intonation to maintain the children's interests in the large-group activity					
e. Monitors children's behavior and modifies plans when children lose interest in large-group activities					
f. Plans and conducts small-group activities with specific goals in mind for each child					
g. Plans and conducts fun small-group activities					
h. Uses peers as models during small-group activities					
i. Assists individual children in selecting activities and becoming actively engaged					
j. Makes adaptations and modifications to ensure that all children can be involved in a meaningful way in any activity					
k. Encourages children to reflect on play (what is their plan, what are they doing, what did they do)					
l. Teacher-directed activities are shorter than twenty minutes					
m. Gives frequent positive, descriptive acknowledgement to children engaged in activities					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children's Social-Emotional Competence

DESIGNING SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS (cont.) Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
9. Establishes and teaches clear expectations for behavior	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Identifies appropriate classroom expectations with children					
b. Classroom or program-wide expectations with visual cues are posted					
c. Teaches expectations in developmentally appropriate ways					
d. Reviews basic expectations at least once per day (during large group, small group, transition time)					
e. Provides opportunities for children to practice classroom expectations					
f. States expectations positively and specifically (avoids "no" and "don't")					
g. Frequently reinforces children for appropriate behavior using expectations language					
h. When problem behavior occurs, the child is reminded of posted expectations					
i. Consistently makes connections between expectations and rules for children					
j. Uses a variety of ways to teach the expectations of specific activities so that all children understand them					
k. Facilitates discussions where children think about expectations and their importance in the classroom					
l. Makes sure all adults in classroom know expectations					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children's Social-Emotional Competence

DESIGNING SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS (cont.) Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
10. Gives clear directions	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Gains child's attention before giving directions					
b. Minimizes the number of directions					
c. Individualizes the way directions are given					
d. Gives clear directions					
e. Gives directions that are positive					
f. Gives children time to respond to directions					
g. Checks in with children to make sure they understand directions					
h. Gives children choices and options when appropriate					
i. Gives positive, descriptive acknowledgement to children as they are following directions					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social-Emotional Competence

DESIGNING SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS (cont.) Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
11. Engages in ongoing monitoring and positive attention	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Gives children time and attention when engaging in appropriate behavior					
b. Narrates children’s actions, behaviors and feelings for them during play					
c. Monitors adults’ interactions with children throughout the day					
d. Joins in children’s play to support their interactions and expand upon their ideas					
e. Responds to children’s comments and ideas by asking questions, giving positive, descriptive acknowledgement					
f. Has extended conversations with children during routines and activities about their interests and ideas					
g. Reinforces children’s choices and links their actions to positive outcomes					
h. Uses alternative strategies when communicating with children who are nonverbal, language delayed, English language learners or otherwise in need					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social-Emotional Competence

DESIGNING SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS (cont.) Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
12. Uses positive feedback and descriptive acknowledgement	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Frequently engages with children using positive, descriptive language					
b. Conveys enthusiasm while giving positive feedback and encouragement					
c. Gives positive descriptive acknowledgement contingent on child’s efforts (when the child tries or has partial success).					
d. Provides nonverbal cues of appreciation					
e. Recognizes that there are individual variations in what forms of acknowledgment are interpreted as positive by children					
f. Involves other adults and peers in acknowledging children					
g. Individualizes amount of encouragement and acknowledgement given to the child based on specific needs					
h. Gives positive feedback designed to reinforce engagement in appropriate behaviors					
i. Models persistence during challenging tasks and encourages child's efforts					
j. Balances praise with acknowledgement					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social-Emotional Competence

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL TEACHING STRATEGIES

Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
				YES	NO
13. Promotes friendship skills among children using deliberate teaching strategies	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Opportunities for peer interaction are embedded in daily routines and activities					
b. Intentionally teaches friendship skills such as: initiating social interaction, organizing play, sharing, taking turns, being helpful, acknowledging peers, and caring about others					
c. Uses a variety of strategies to teach friendship skills (role playing, discussion, scaffolding, modeling, acknowledging/ encouraging)					
d. Individualizes instruction based on children’s developmental needs					
e. Prepares the environment to encourage interactions					
f. Structures activities to encourage interactions, including peer partners/buddies					
g. Prompts children to initiate interaction or respond to peers					
h. Refers children to each other, instead of an adult, for assistance					
i. Gives positive, descriptive acknowledgement to children using friendship skills					
j. Supports children in reflecting on interaction with peers					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social-Emotional Competence

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL TEACHING STRATEGIES (cont.) Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
14. Characteristics of a classroom that fosters emotional literacy are visible	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Books are available that portray various emotions					
b. Uses photographs, pictures, and posters that portray people in various emotional states					
c. Other materials are included to support emotional literacy (check-in chart, feelings wheel, songs, art materials)					
d. The above items are used to promote emotional development through activities, games, and routines (book nook, check-in chart, feelings wheel, reading, songs)					
e. Classroom has at least one place for children to go to be by themselves					
Observations/ Evidence					
15. Promotes “emotional literacy” through identification and labeling of emotions in self and others	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Prompts children to identify their emotions throughout the day					
b. Assists children in recognizing emotions in self and others					
c. Assists children in recognizing and understanding how peers might be feeling by pointing out facial expressions, voice tone, body language, or words					
d. Uses real-life situations to practice identification of emotions					
e. Uses opportunities to reinforce when children state their emotions					
f. Models appropriate expressions and labeling of their own emotions and self-regulation throughout the day					
g. Shows empathy and acceptance when children state their emotions					
h. Individualizes instruction for children having difficulty identifying, understanding, expressing and/or managing emotions					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social-Emotional Competence

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL TEACHING STRATEGIES (cont.) Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
16. Promotes children’s individualized emotional regulation that will enhance positive social interactions	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Helps children recognize cues of emotional escalation					
b. Provides techniques and tools for regulating emotions (relaxation thermometer, <i>Tucker Turtle</i> story, counting to three, deep breaths)					
c. Offers opportunities for children to practice handling strong emotions (fear, anger, frustration, exuberance, disappointment)					
d. Offers opportunities for children to practice emotional regulation skills at times when they are not having strong emotions					
e. Recognizes emotional escalation and intervenes early to provide guidance					
f. Practices relaxation strategies with children (yoga, breathing, going to “be by myself” spaces)					
g. Provides frequent acknowledgement of children’s expression of emotion and attempts at self-regulation					
h. Gives positive, descriptive acknowledgement designed to reinforce engagement in appropriate behaviors					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social-Emotional Competence

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL TEACHING STRATEGIES (cont.) Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
17. Creates a planned approach for problem-solving	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Individualizes the planned approach for the developmental level of the child					
b. Uses problem solving in interactions with children and models problem solving steps					
c. Systematically teaches the problem-solving steps: 1. What is my problem? How do I feel? 2. Think, think, think of some solutions. 3. What would happen next? 4. Try out the solution.					
d. Takes time to support children through the problem-solving process					
e. Reinforces children’s problem-solving efforts					
f. Provides visual cues and tools for the children to use in learning to problem-solve (the “Solution Kit,” <i>Tucker Turtle</i> story, other scripted stories)					
g. Teaches a systematic method of conflict resolution such as the “Five Finger Method” (1. We have a problem, 2. What happened? How do you feel? 3. What solution can we try? 4. Give the solution a try. 5. Teacher, give them support/check back in)					
h. Reinforces children for conflict resolution efforts					
Observations/ Evidence					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social-Emotional Competence

INDIVIDUALIZED INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS

Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
				YES	NO
18. Teams with family to develop support plans	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Invites family to participate in behavior support process from the beginning					
b. Accommodates family schedule					
c. Encourages family to assist in the development of plan					
d. Ensures that the plan addresses family and other care setting issues					
e. Treats information shared from the family perspective with respect					
19. Teams use functional assessment	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Observations are conducted by multiple team members					
b. Observations are conducted in multiple settings at varying times					
c. Observations are documented on Behavior Observation Reports					
d. Observations supplemented with interviews and/or information from classroom staff, family members, and others who know the child					
e. The above items are used to determine one (or more) behavior hypothesis: setting, trigger, behavior, consequences, and function					
20. Develops and implements behavior support plan	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Prevention skills are developed to address triggers to the challenging behavior					
b. New skills are designed to replace the challenging behavior with appropriate behavior that will meet the function of the original behavior					
c. Adult responses to challenging behavior are designed to encourage the use of new behaviors and/or extinguish challenging behaviors					

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social-Emotional Competence

INDIVIDUALIZED INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS (cont.) Skills and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for training?	
21. Teaches new, replacement skills	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Replacement skills are taught when challenging behavior is not occurring					
b. Replacement skills are taught and encouraged throughout the day					
c. When the replacement behavior is used, the adults consistently provide positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior.					
d. There are opportunities for practice and self-management as the child transitions from the intensive level of support					
22. Monitors progress of behavior support plan	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. Team measures and monitors changes in challenging behavior					
b. Team measures and monitors acquisition of replacement skills					
c. Team meets periodically to review child progress					
23. Teams have safety-net procedures in place	3	2	1	YES	NO
a. A “safety-net” procedure is in place for times when a child is in danger of hurting himself or others					
b. For children who have a history of outbursts, all team members understand the appropriate safety-net procedures					
c. When a safety-net procedure is used, it is understood that it is used only to keep children safe; these procedures do not change behavior					
d. Safety-net procedures are appropriate only when there is also a full behavior support plan or intention to develop a plan					
Observations/ Evidence					