

Viewer's Guide

This viewer's guide provides ideas for creating joyful and engaging learning environments for all infants and toddlers. The reflection questions, cut outs, and activities promote and highlight the joy in teaching and learning. Helpful resources are found in the resources section of this guide.

Try this breathing exercise!

"Teachers who engage in mindfulness-based practices have been shown to have lower cortisol levels and to be more responsive and compassionate towards their students, less emotionally reactive, and more intentional in their teaching practices."

— Robles, Meghan

"How Mindfulness Can Benefit Preschool Teachers." *Edutopia*, George Lucas Educational Foundation, 9 Mar. 2021

4-4-8 Breathing

Take a moment and focus on your breathing.

Breathe in through your nose for a count of 4, taking the breath into your belly.

Hold your breath for 4 counts.

Release your breath through your mouth with a whooshing sound for 8 counts.

You can repeat this exercise 3 or 4 times for a full minute of mindful breathing.



4 breathe in



4 hold



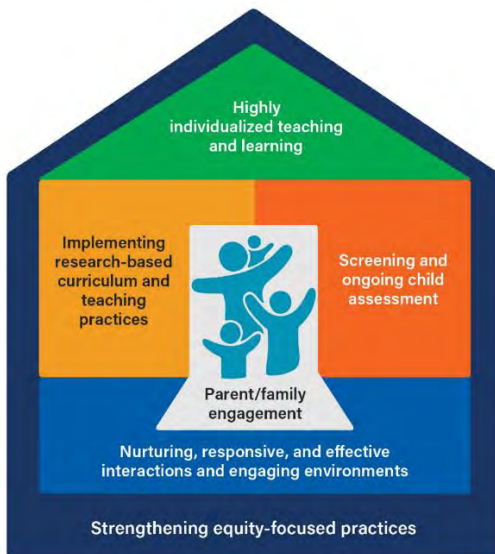
8 breathe out

Reflecting Together

What does joyful teaching and learning look and feel like with infants and toddlers?

Framework for Effective Practice

The National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning (NCECDTL) uses a house to represent six integral elements of quality teaching and learning for children ages birth to in all program options. The six elements of the House Framework include:



- **Foundation:** Providing nurturing, responsive, and effective interactions, and engaging environments
- **First Pillar:** Implementing research-based curriculum and teaching practices
- **Second Pillar:** Using screening and ongoing assessment of children's skills
- **Roof:** Embedding highly individualized teaching and learning
- **Center:** Engaging parents and families
- **Siding:** Strengthening equity-focused practices

When these elements are connected, they form a single structure—a house—that surrounds the family in the center. The family is at the heart of the house because each house element is implemented in partnership with parents and families in their cultural and community context. Infant and toddler educators may use this House Framework to understand how each element contributes to children's development and learning.

Playful Learning



Free Play: includes child-led play involving exploration, imagination, and investigation.



Guided Play: is where adults or older children interact with younger children. It involves allowing the child to lead where the conversation and the play goes, and then the educator layers opportunities for extension of learning through learning goals.



Games: includes board games, group games, and other rule-based play help children develop cognitive and social-emotional skills. This type of play is typically seen in the preschool years, and since every child develops in their own unique way, you might work with some older toddlers who find joy in game play!

Reflecting Together

When you think of guided play, what comes to mind?

In the next few weeks, we invite you to notice moments of guided play in your learning environment. Record the moment below.

Reflect on the moment above, record the joy from the moment below.



Video Reflection: Sensory exploration with cars

Centering Families



Families are...

- The first and most important teachers of their children
- Our partners with a critical role in their family's development and children's ongoing support
- Experts about their child and their family
- Valuable and important contributors

How are you currently centering families in your learning environment?

What are some new ways you are going to center families in your care and education practices in each of the following areas?

Environment:

Communication:

Engagement:

Teacher Toolbox

Write down one way you follow the child's lead.

Video Reflection: ¡Más Agua!

Write down one way you set up the environment for joy and engagement.

Video Reflection: Setting up the environment based on children’s interests

Write down one way you give individualized attention.

Video Reflection: Large motor play



Small Changes – Big Impact

Young children vary widely in their development, skills, and abilities. Effective educators respond to children’s individual abilities and adjust their level of support “in the moment” by carefully observing children’s behaviors. Educators can modify the curriculum, embed learning opportunities, or design and use highly individualized, intensive teaching strategies.

Curriculum modification: A small, individualized change to a planned activity can allow a child to participate more fully and maximize learning.

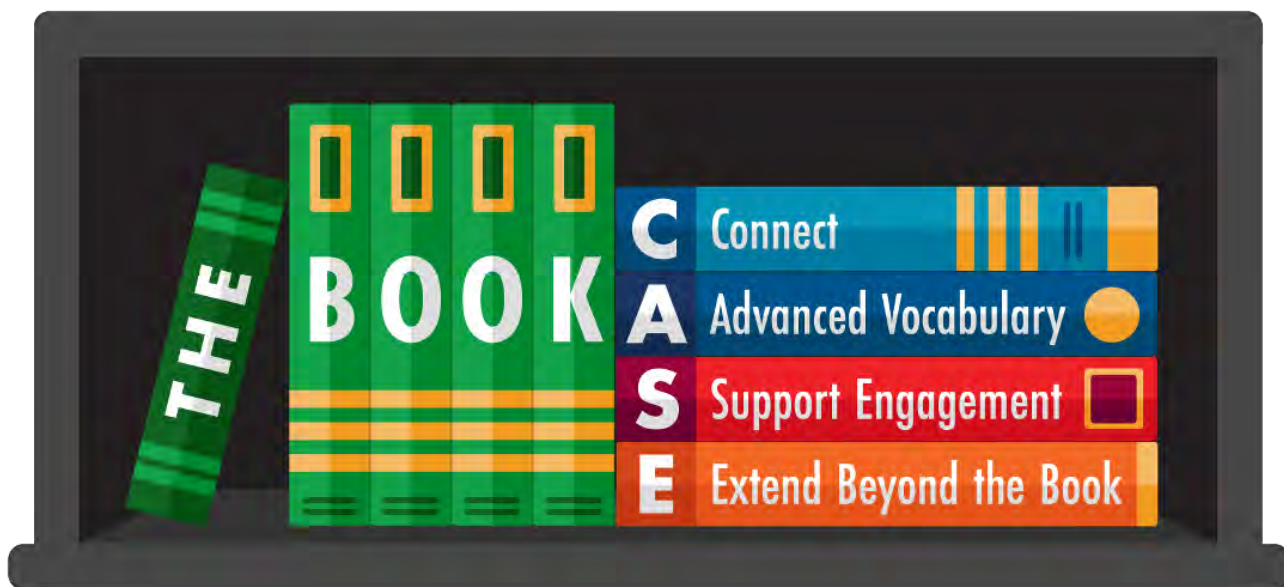
Embedded learning: Multiple learning opportunities embedded throughout the day can give a child added practice to make progress on learning objectives.

Highly individualized, intensive teaching: Teachers use more intensive teaching practices as needed, increasing, and decreasing levels of support in response to the child’s learning.

Video Reflection: Child preference and adult support

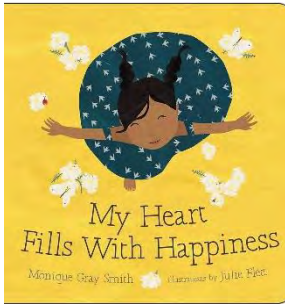
Write down one way you modify curriculum for a child in your care.

The BookCASE



Books are a great way to engage with children. There are books about many things in our world. So, matching books with your curriculum themes and activities helps with meaningful learning experiences. Choosing books on topics that infants and toddlers are interested in is another way to help them feel included and that their interests are important.

Making the CASE and Book List



My Heart Fills with Happiness

By Monique Gray Smith, Illustrated by Julie Flett

What fills your heart with happiness? This board book, written by Monique Gray Smith with illustrations from celebrated artist Julie Flett, reminds young children and adults alike to think about and celebrate what brings us joy.

Available in Spanish — *Mi corazón se llena de alegría*

	For Infants	For Toddlers
Connect	This book relates to our theme of joy by focusing on what brings children and their caregivers happiness. This connects to the social and emotional ELOF domain, specifically relationships with adults and with other children.	This book relates to our theme of joy by focusing on what brings children and their caregivers happiness. This connects to the social and emotional ELOF domain, specifically relationships with adults and with other children.
Advanced vocabulary	The simple text of this book introduces a variety of vocabulary words, including words such as drum, sing, bannock, baking, barefoot, and dance. Think of the ways to use these words throughout the day.	The simple text found in this book presents the opportunity to add descriptions of what is in the illustrations. Spend time talking about what you observe on the page, noticing where to include specific and descriptive details.
Support engagement	You are invited to take time with each page as Julie Flett’s illustrations are beautiful and full of details. Observe what the child is focusing on and describe what they are seeing.	Ask open ended questions while reading, some examples are: “what fills your heart with happiness?,” “whose hand do you love to hold?” If the children in your care are not yet verbal, include their names and describe things they enjoy. For instance, “Julia loves to play the drums,” “Martin’s heart is filled with happiness when we play with play dough,” “Josúe’s heart is filled with happiness when we play outside.”
Extend	Throughout the day, point out when you see children enjoying specific activities or interactions. You might say something like, “Jordan is smiling, that shows me their heart is full of happiness when they are eating broccoli.”	Invite families to bring in pictures of them and their child doing things that bring them happiness. Display the images on walls or shelves visible to children or make a photo book that is accessible to the children



JUMP!

By Tatsuhide Matsuoka, translated by Cathy Hirano

This fun interactive book for babies and toddlers will get readers off their feet and bouncing up and down. With funny anatomically correct animal illustrations by award-winning Japanese illustrator Tatsuhide Matsuoka.

Impossible to read sitting down and designed to read sideways so that the animals jump vertically up the page, this simple story is a perfect book to share with young children. (from www.bookshop.org)

	For Infants	For Toddlers
Connect	Jumping brings smiles and joy! This book connects to the joyfulness found in teaching and learning as well as the Gross Motor sub-domain of the Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development section of the ELOF.	Jumping brings smiles and joy! This book connects to the joyfulness found in teaching and learning as well as the Gross Motor sub-domain of the Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development section of the ELOF
Advanced vocabulary	This simple text is great for adding additional vocabulary. Add words such as stripes, wings, round shell, and the colors of the animals.	This simple text is great for adding additional vocabulary. Add words such as stripes, wings, round shell, and the colors of the animals. Invite discussion about the size of the font used, and what it lets the reader know, like how loud they should be reading the words on the page.
Support engagement	Turning the pages of books helps infants develop their fine motor skills so they are ready to grasp objects. In this book they'll be turning from bottom to top instead of side to side, a new way to explore board books!	Encourage action while reading this book. Invite the children to jump for each animal, introduce the word "boing" and encourage them to say it while they jump!
Extend	Introduce photographs into the learning environment of the animals found in Jump! to help infants make connections with the world around them.	Introduce photographs into the learning environment of the animals found in Jump!, to help them make connections to the world around them.

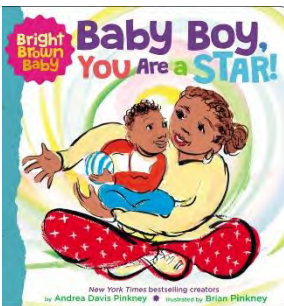


Baby Play/Jugando con bebé
Skye Silver

Invite babies and toddlers to build social-emotional skills through interactive play activities like dancing, laughing, splashing, and building through the images and words in this book.

***Bilingual English and Spanish**

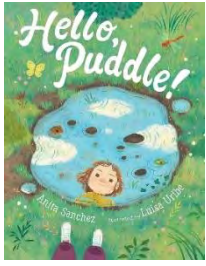
	For Infants
Connect	The photographs in Baby Play/Jugando con bebé depict joy between a child and their caregiver as they participate in various activities. This relates closely to the ELOF domain of Approaches to Learning: Initiative and Curiosity.
Advanced vocabulary	There are many simple rhymes found in this board book. Mention the rhyme as you read, for example say, “tall and fall rhyme!,” by doing this children are provided an opportunity to start to hear the different sounds that make up language.
Support engagement	Pause while reading the book to act out what you see on the page. Play peekaboo, clap your hands, pretend to pop bubbles, and wave hello or goodbye.
Extend	There are so many activities to think about with this book! When blowing bubbles with infants, use descriptive words such as up, round, falling down, and pop!



Baby Boy, You Are a Star!
By Andrea Davis Pinkney, Illustrated by Brian Pinkney

A celebration of Brown baby boys! This joyful book gives positive affirmations to the littlest learners.

	For Infants
Connect	This relates to the Social and Emotional Development ELOF domain Sense of Identity and Belonging.
Advanced vocabulary	Promise, bubbling, bundle, reaching, and precious are examples of some of the advanced vocabulary found in this title.
Support engagement	Follow the children’s lead and pause as you read allowing and inviting them time to point at the illustrations. Describe what they are pointing to. Consider ways to alter your tone of voice and cadence while reading to emphasize the joy expressed in this book.
Extend	Take key phrases from the book and use them throughout the day with the children!

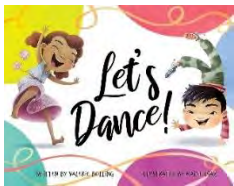


Hello, Puddle!

by Anita Sanchez, illustrated by Luisa Uribe

Hello, Puddle encourages young learners to explore the world around them. The book features playful illustrations and interesting facts about animals and the outdoors.

	For Toddlers
Connect	Being engaged in learning includes observing the world around you. In this nonfiction picture book, we see a child’s interest in a puddle and are given a glimpse into its ecosystem. This book connects to the Exploration and Discovery subdomain of the ELOF Cognition domain.
Advanced vocabulary	This book is full of animals and their actions! Words such as wiggle, loop, scratches, and nibble are just a few of the actions we see creatures doing.
Support engagement	Each double page spread features two text options, a short simple sentence and more detailed information about what is seen in the illustration. Depending on the ages and interests of the children, educators can read a brief description or a longer description when children show more interest.
Extend	Pause and look at a puddle next time you see one with the children in your care. Ask them questions about who they think comes to visit the puddle, making space for their ideas and explorations.



Let's Dance

by Valerie Bolling, illustrated by Maine Diaz

Let's Dance features people and dances from around the world. This book encourages children to leap, step, dip, and dance!

	For Toddlers
Connect	Dancing not only makes people happy, but it helps build connections with those around us! Featuring children and dances from around the world, this joyful book keeps everyone in your learning environment moving. This connects to the Gross Motor sub-domain of the Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development section of the ELOF.
Advanced vocabulary	Dance, twirl, tap, jig, wiggle, dip, groove, leap, and pose. Be ready to act out or explore the meaning of these words with children
Support engagement	No need to sit still while reading this book, make this an action-packed story time. Provide children with props such as scarves to dance with while you read.
Extend	Make a music playlist that reflects the dances and places around the world featured in this book. Think about adding dancewear to your dramatic play items.

Explore the BookCASE on Your Own

The infants and toddlers in my learning environment love this book:

Make the CASE:

Connect:

Advanced vocabulary:

Support engagement:

Extend:

Books I would like to add to my learning environment:

Helpful Resources

Teacher Toolbox

- Framework for Effective Practice
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/teaching-practices/article/framework-effective-practice>
- Interactive Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/interactive-head-start-early-learning-outcomes-framework-ages-birth-five>
- Playful and Fun Learning Environments for Infants and Toddlers
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/playful-fun-learning-environments-infants-toddlers>
- News You Can Use: Play
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/curriculum/article/news-you-can-use-play>
- Play Promotes Early Development: It's Time for Play!
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/curriculum/article/play-promotes-early-development-its-time-play>
- News You Can Use: Environment as Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/learning-environments/article/news-you-can-use-environment-curriculum-infants-toddlers>
- The LEGO foundation: Learning through play a summary: a review of the evidence
 - https://cms.learningthroughplay.com/media/0vvjvscx/learningthroughplay_areview_summary.pdf
- How Mindfulness Can Benefit Preschool Teachers
 - <https://www.edutopia.org/article/how-mindfulness-can-benefit-preschool-teachers/#:~:text=Teachers%20who%20engage%20in%20mindfulness,intentional%20in%20their%20teaching%20practices>
- Guided Play with Roberta Golinkoff, Ph.D.
 - <https://sesameworkshop.org/resources/guided-play-with-roberta-golinkoff-ph-d/>
- Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age 8, Fourth Edition
 - <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/books/dap-fourth-edition>

- The Power of Playful Learning in the Early Childhood Setting
 - <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/summer2022/power-playful-learning>
- Building Partnerships: Guide to Developing Relationships with Families: Strength-Based Attitudes
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/building-partnerships-guide-developing-relationships-families/strength-based-attitudes>
- Matching Classroom Content to Learning Goals and Interests
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/iss/managing-the-classroom/design-activities-match-content.pdf>
- Following Children's Lead 15-minute In-service Suites
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/following-childrens-lead>
- Curriculum Modification: An Overview
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/iss/curriculum-modifications/mod-intro-teacher-tips.pdf>
- Training Suites on Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities: Curriculum Modifications
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/training-suites-infants-toddlers-disabilities/curriculum-modifications>
- Curriculum Modifications: An Introduction 15-minute In-service Suites
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/curriculum-modifications-introduction>
- Curriculum Modifications: Adult Support 15-minute In-service Suites
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/adult-support>
- Curriculum Modifications: Child Preferences 15-minute In-service Suites
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/child-preferences>

Mobile Apps

- ELOF2GO Mobile App
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/article/elof2go-mobile-app>
- Text4Teachers
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/teaching-practices/article/text4teachers>

- Ready DLL Mobile App
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language/article/ready-dll-mobile-app>

Online Communities

- MyPeers: Teacher Time Community
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/mypeers-collaborative-platform-early-care-education-community>