

Learning Materials That Promote Inclusion for Infants and Toddlers

Treshawn Anderson: Hi, everyone, and welcome to “Teacher Time.” I’m Treshawn Anderson.

Gail Joseph: And I’m Gail Joseph, and we are here from the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, which we fondly call DTL, and we’re so excited to have you here with us today to talk about learning materials that promote inclusion for infants and toddlers. This season we’ve been explaining the concepts of inclusion and belonging. Most of you may already be familiar with the term inclusion. But the idea of belonging and making sure children and families feel like they’re reflected in and a part of the learning environment is a big part of inclusion, too. We’ll be talking about both of these concepts a little more as we go along in this episode.

Each month we’ve been talking about what inclusion and belonging looks like in the learning environment through the learning materials and ways to support families through inclusion. We have three episodes dedicated to infants and toddlers and three for preschoolers. We’ve already done one episode on infant and toddler and one preschool episode on inclusion and belonging in the learning environment, so join us on MyPeers to see a replay of those episodes. If you’ve been with us on “Teacher Time,” you know that we encourage you to download the Viewer’s Guide more than once and use it to follow along with us during the episode. We use that Viewer’s Guide to reflect on the content that we’re covering and to write down new strategies or ideas that come to us along the way. And we’ve also tucked a take-home activity in there that you can use in your learning environment today, along with some resources if you want to dive deeper into the topic. I think that’s it for the logistics talk. Let’s get started.

Treshawn: Yes. When we think about inclusive learning environments, these are places where children with and without disabilities and their families experience a sense of belonging, positive social relationships, and development to reach their full potential. Now, if you’ve been with us for our previous “Teacher Time” episodes, you’ve heard that inclusion is an act or a teaching practice. You know, it’s the things we do, like individualizing learning opportunities for infants and toddlers, providing books that represent the children and families in our learning spaces, and making sure that materials are accessible to all children. On the other hand, we have belonging, and belonging is more of a feeling. It’s a feeling that your authentic self is welcomed and celebrated so that you can thrive and that you can be yourself and that you can see yourself reflected in the classroom. And we create this feeling of belonging through inclusive practices, where individual differences are both recognized and accepted.

Gail: Yes, we all want to feel like we belong, right? We all want to have someone say, “Come sit with us.”

Treshawn: Yeah.

Gail: All children, regardless of ability, have the right to fully engage in learning opportunities and typical activities and routines across home, educational, and community environments. In

quality inclusive environments, educators create spaces that bring people together and really promote that sense of belonging for every child. Educators intentionally arrange the physical space so children can access it in different ways, adapt or modify materials so that every child can participate, set schedules that are responsive to the needs of children from diverse backgrounds, support social engagement among all children, and select toys and materials that are highly engaging for all learners. Education staff also modify their interactions, not just the environment, with children to be responsive to their needs. For example, teachers might modify the amount or the pacing of the language that they use with children. They might provide more time for a child to respond, or they might spend more time talking with a child who may be having some difficulties with daily routines and expectations or especially when there's a change, like washing your hands a little more often.

The act of being intentional about providing all children with access to the learning environment and materials is rooted in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA. IDEA is the federal law that makes a free and appropriate public education available to all eligible children with disabilities. And we understand the challenges of individualizing when programs may be operating a little bit differently than before. Thank you so much for following the appropriate guidelines and meeting children's needs even though it might feel a little bit difficult.

Treshawn: Yeah, so true. We've provided some definitions and terminology for some of these words that we'll be using throughout the episode in your Viewer's Guide, so be sure to download that so you can follow along with us, as well.

Now that we've covered a definition of inclusion and belonging and briefly discussed education laws related to children with disabilities, we're now going to turn our attention to what inclusion and belonging, using the learning materials, look like in the infant-toddler environment. The National Association for the Education of Young Children and the DEC or Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children, that is a mouthful, they have written a joint position statement on early childhood inclusion and have stated that "The defining features of inclusion can be used to identify high-quality early childhood programs and services," and those are access, participation, and supports. Now, if you want to see this full joint position statement, go ahead and check your Viewer's Guide because we've included that in there for you.

But when we think about access, quickly, we say that educators provide children with access to a wide range of learning opportunities, activities, and settings and environments. Then we think about participation. This is where education staff have individualized supports in place that allow children to fully participate in play and learning activities both with their peers and meeting their developmental goals. Then when it comes to support at that program level, this includes support systems for education staff, like yourselves, to help you implement high-quality inclusive practices, and these supports include resources and trainings, like you're joining here today, and other professional development opportunities. Now, in our previous episodes, we talked about access and how infants and toddlers are better able to learn and feel

included in their environment when they have access to a wide range of learning opportunities. And for this episode, we're going to focus on participation. And so then next month, we'll dive into support, so be sure to stick around for that episode.

Gail: What do we mean by participation? Well, participation means using a range of teaching practices that are individualized to a child's learning characteristics, needs, strengths, and they help all children engage in and learn from the learning activities. When children are able to engage and fully participate, this supports their opportunities to learn and grow and develop. However, it's interesting to note that some children can be engaged and participating in the learning activity but not necessarily learning important skills.

Treshawn: Yeah, so what does that mean? In terms of adults, think of yourself. We've been doing lots of trainings online which have been fantastic and ways for us to get lots of information in, in a very convenient time and space. But have you ever joined a webinar, and you were there, you know, sound was on. Your camera was even on. You know, you dressed up from the top up, and you had your paper and your pencil out to take notes, but everything the presenter was saying was going in right one ear and out the other. You know, you were participating, like we said, but you weren't really gathering any information or learning the main topics or any takeaway points. I know I've been there a few times, and so this is what we want children to be able to learn while they're participating. Gail will talk a little bit more about that.

Gail: Yes, I feel like you were describing an experience I had earlier today. I feel like I've been kind of outed with that. But, no, absolutely.

Treshawn: No judgement zone.

Gail: No judgments. We really want to make sure that children are learning when they're participating. While it's important for children to participate in the learning activities, we absolutely want them to be learning, thriving, meeting developmental goal such as those outlined in the Early Learning Outcomes Framework or ELOF or the specific goals for infants and toddlers on their Individualized Family Service Plan or IFSP. We do this through planned intentional interactions, providing the right amount of meaningful learning opportunities and the right amount and type of support during those learning activities, and that's what we mean by individualized instruction. Let's watch a video of infants and toddlers participating in their environment. This is a great time to use your Viewer's Guide to write down some ideas that you would like to try. And after this video, we'll take a deeper dive into ways to promote infant and toddlers' participation.

[Video begins]

Teacher 1: [Speaking Spanish]

Celeste: [Speaking Spanish]

Teacher 1: [Speaking Spanish]

[Music plays, children and teachers dance]

[Video ends]

Gail: Wow, did you see the many ways that Celeste was able to participate in her learning environment? First, she used her walker, or what we might call an assistive device, to access the books on the shelf. And she was able to enjoy listening to the stories with her classmate. And then her teacher did a really great job of prompting her to unbuckle herself so that she could participate freely in other activities. And then her teacher also supported her by walking with her to the different learning spaces in the environment. I love that little impromptu dance party happening over there, great little music they turned on. And I just – You just get the sense that there was no place in the room that this child could not participate. Let's take a deeper look into the ways that we can promote infant and toddlers' participation.

Treshawn: Yeah, I love that video. And one thing I really love is that she used the child's home language the entire time, you know. And I really feel like that made the child feel included and belong, you know, like she belonged there in the classroom, and it was her space.

Gail: Yeah, great point.

Treshawn: If you know the child's home language, yeah, and if you can use it in the classroom, I mean, it just makes it feel so much like home. Participation happens when education staff provide children with individualized supports that allow them to fully and independently participate and play in learning activities with their peers, like you saw in the video. One of these individualized supports happened through modifying materials. And when we modify materials, we really just make them easier to use or for children to play with. Modifications are described as small changes that make a really big impact. Modifications support children's independence and participation by ensuring that they can engage as fully as possible with lots of different materials. Modifications are individualized for each child and help children participate and learn in ways that work best for them. For example, this child here in the picture has a visual impairment and is participating in this wonderful obstacle course set up by her teacher. To help the child successfully navigate this portion of the obstacle, the teacher is holding the bridge steady, holding that bridge there steady while the child can feel her way under it.

When infants and toddlers are in an environment that is responsive to their needs and strengths and where education staff ensure that children can participate and learn, this really builds that sense of belonging that we've been talking about. It's important to note that modifications are more than just this one-time fix. It's really an ongoing process as we continue to observe the infants and toddlers in our environments, determine what their needs are, and then make changes to accommodate them to make sure that they're participating as fully as possible. When education staff modify materials to meet children's needs, they provide access to the planned activities and materials. We talked about access. We promote higher levels of

participation. When things are modified and made easier for children to use and play with, that increases their level of participation. It provides meaningful interactions, and we support greater learning opportunities for all children.

Modifications are used when education staff observe that infants and toddlers are interested in the activity but may not be fully participating. As an example of this, you might have a young toddler who, you know, kind of quenches up a little bit when you offer finger painting as an option. I know my daughter didn't really enjoy grass when she was little. She would screw her little toes. You know, we had to make some modifications by putting socks on in the summertime, but that's OK. But, you know, maybe a modification for this child could help, like offering a large Q-tip or maybe a cotton ball to paint with instead so that they can still have that sensory experience, you know, exploring different textures, but not having to put their fingers in the paint. The Head Start Center for Inclusion website offers a number of resources and even planning sheets that would be helpful in your observations and your implementation of modifications so that we can keep them ongoing and not just have them take place one time. Take a look at your Viewer's Guide for a link to that website and the handout that you'll see there.

Gail: Absolutely. Now it is, we have a little section that we like to provide here called Small Changes – Big Impact. It's one thing for us to talk about material modifications, but it's really exciting when we can show some of that to you. I'm going to show you just a few example, more examples, of some modifications to the learning environment that you can use to make a big impact.

Here's one. This is a toddler kneel or tabletop time. And the modification here is that you can see every child has a seat, and then every space where their seat is, there's a picture, a photo of the child with their name. And that's a really easy modification to make so that the toddler can walk over and find their photo and then know where their seat is. It really prevents that kind of jostling around, trying to find their spot. And because toddlers are just starting to look at their names, too, the name is under there, as well. What I also love about this is that in the center there, in that clear plastic bin, there are topic cards or conversation cards. They're actually a piece of paper with lots of different pictures that might inspire toddlers to point to or talk about. You know, what's your favorite book? What's your favorite character? What's your favorite food to eat? A great modification to help support children who are just starting to talk.

Here's another modification. This is a teacher that is showing a toddler an individualized schedule to show her a picture of what is coming next, right, where will we go to next. When children can hear it, but when they can visually see it, too, it helps to decrease some stress and resistance that you might experience in making that transition.

Here, we have another one. This teacher is helping children who are having to wait a turn to wash their hands. She has a few tricks up her sleeve there. She has some picture cards of some songs that she can sing while children are waiting, and then she has – the little girl there is also actually holding a picture of the sign so that she can, of the picture song, so she can participate

in that way. And she might be having a harder time waving so that, giving her something to hold onto and something to keep her engaged in, is a nice way to modify that wait time for her.

Then lastly, this is one of my go-tos. I love this one. This is the First-Then card, a great modification. This is where a teacher is helping to reinforce with visual information what the child needs to do first before something else can be accessed. It might be something like, “First, wash your hands,” with a picture of a sink, “Then, snack,” and a picture of some food or, “First, put on your coat, and then, you can go outside.” Those are just a few ideas of how we can make some modifications to support children, Small Changes – Big Impact.

Treshawn: Ensuring that learning environments are inclusive of all children can be a lot to think about and remember. I know we’ve given you guys a lot of information, but luckily, there are just five key aspects of quality inclusive learning environments that you can use as a checklist to get you started or to check off for your learning environments. For this episode, we’re going to highlight some strategies providing inviting and interesting materials in the learning environment. We’ve included these in your Viewer’s Guide, along with some reflection questions so be sure to download it to follow along with us.

For infants and toddlers, they learn by actively manipulating the objects in their environment, from dumping out the blocks and filling it back up again to mouthing a textured ball or dropping food or utensils off the side of the chair. Exploring materials supports infants’ and toddlers’ creativity and their curiosity, believe it or not, so – and that really invites them to explore even more. They might drop the spoon off again just to see if something new happens after learning. Also learning from families helps to create a culturally responsive environment that are filled with children’s home language, some artwork, maybe some music that represents their culture, and meaningful learning experiences.

When you think about learning materials in your learning environments, look at them from the infant-toddler perspective. Take a moment to answer these questions. They’re also in your Viewer’s Guide, from the eyes of the infant and toddler in your learning environment. From the eyes of the infant, is there something that I know how to use and can use independently in each learning area? And then, are there objects and material that reflect my interests and make me excited about learning? If you answered yes to these questions, great job. Give yourself a pat on the back for that one. If you may have answered no to any of these questions, that’s OK because we are so glad that you’re here. This is the time now where we’ll talk about how to modify materials in your learning environment so that every child can participate and engage with interesting materials as independently as possible.

Gail: I love that, just that little subtle switch of thinking about your environment from the child’s perspective. It really can just change, you know, like once you get down on the level where they might be at physically and just see what, you know, catches your eye and what I might be able to access. It’s just a ... That’s just such a great way to really think about the access and the level of interesting materials in your room.

There are four strategies to consider when adapting materials to increase a child's participation and engagement. One is to have materials at the optimal position for the child. The second is to stabilize the materials. The third is to modify the response to lessen the physical demand on the child. And lastly, make materials attractive.

Infants often spend their time on the floor, both at home and in the learning environment. Materials should be placed nearby so that they can be reached independently or maybe even just a tiny bit out of reach if we're trying to encourage some of that reaching behavior. Additionally, family pictures, children's artwork, and other visuals should be lower on the walls, right? When you go into infant-toddler rooms, things are down lower. You can also prop up books at an angle rather than laying them flat to make it easier for infants to look at. And you can also help parents think about the materials that are placed on their floor at home. During a virtual meeting, you can have them hold up some of the items that their infant is interested in and make and offer some suggestions about placement.

Now, for toddlers, lower placements of tools such as art supplies or blocks makes them accessible to a child who has difficulty standing. Also placing materials on a lap desk while toddlers are sitting on the floor or playing, and this helps for children who might need some balance while sitting, as well. And you can put a paper – I love this picture here. You can put paper on an easel in front of a child to help keep their attention on the activity. This little – It's, like, a small easel on a tabletop, and it does a couple things. It kind of, you know, raises the optimal positioning of the material so that they can see it. And it also, when we put that on a table, if the child has some difficulty standing, you can put more kind of weight on a table. The table can take more weight than, like, a fully standing easel so great modification there.

We can also stabilize materials using tape or Velcro. I feel like I just had endless reams of Velcro that I needed to use as a teacher, or nonskid backing so that objects don't slide or slip away if the child has difficulty holding them in place. Adding Velcro to trays for arts and crafts and to objects that go with that tray is really helpful. And Velcro can also stick to the carpet, too, so nice way to just kind of stabilize material on the carpet. Try putting small pieces of Velcro on the bottoms of toys, like on a ring stacker where a child might need to use both hand or a shape sorter so it's more stable when the child is playing with it. And make sure that shelves and water tables are secure so that infants that are pulling up to stand or cruising around the furniture or couch at home are safe to explore. And provide parents with bowls that have grips or suction on the bottom, so we've all seen those types of bowls, you can see one in the picture there, to help stabilize materials at mealtimes. It really can help the child to start eating independently and during all of their remote learning that they might be doing.

Treshawn: Yeah. For toddlers with motor difficulties, make objects easier to manipulate. We can do that by adding large foam grips or wrapping a big wad of masking tape around crayons, markers, and brushes and maybe even the handles of eating utensils so that they're a little easier to hold. And when you're using puzzles, try to get those ones with the big knobs or handles to easily grasp on. And you can add tabs to books to make page-turning a little easier. Provide some of these recommendations to parents, too. Children are both at home. Someone

mentioned that children both at home and in school. If you give some of these recommendations to parents and send home some resources for making these adaptations of materials at home, children will have access to learning during both home and virtual learning and both in the classroom, as well.

If you have a child with a vision impairment, when we're thinking about making materials attractive, or if they show just little interest in exploring the objects, make things more visible and interesting. You can attach pieces of Mylar or other shiny textures or add mirrors to attract the child's attention. We can use objects and books with bold yet simple designs that feature high-contrast colors, like red and blue or black and white. But don't think you have to fill your space with all these colors and primary colors and bold colors because sometimes that can be a little overstimulating. It's all about strategic placement of materials, like placing darker colored items on a lighter colored or white shelf so that the materials kind of pop out, and you don't have to use so much color. We're going to watch a video of how a teacher uses one of these strategies for adapting materials, and the material is music. And this increases the child's access and participation in this fun environment, in this fun learning activity. As you watch, use your Viewer's Guide to write down some things that she says or does that you would like to try in your environment.

[Video begins]

[Teachers and children dance]

Teacher 2: Clap.

Teacher 3: Happy!

Teacher 2: Uh-oh, real slow. Stomp, come on! Stomp, stomp. Stomp. Stomp, stomp.

Teacher 3: Getting happy!

Teacher 2: Jump!

Teacher 3: One, two!

Teacher 2: Reach!

Teacher 3: Reach!

Teacher 2: Sway!

Teacher 3: Sway! Shake it! Clap, clap, clapping, happy.

All teachers and children: Yeah! Uh-huh! Yeah! Uh-huh!

[Video ends]

Treshawn: What a fun music time that was. I mean, if it didn't make you move just a little bit, then you might have to watch it again. [Inaudible] playlist. In this video, the teacher used the strategy making materials larger or brighter to attract the children's attention or interest and to help them engage in this music activity. Did she just have the music playing? No, she had them up and dancing and listening to the music and the dance instructions. And on top of that, she added these large, wonderful scarves. You can use scarves for so many things, and she used that to help them explore while they were dancing.

Think about how much fun this would be for a child who has a hearing impairment and maybe has a hard time listening to the music. They would surely still participate in this learning experience by waving their own scarves. Or think about a child who has a visual impairment. They can still hear the music, but maybe just feel the wind and the movement of the scarves, that the scarves are making. For infants and toddlers who are not yet walking, no problem. You can still add scarves to music time, and that still allows them to participate in their own way. There's so much you can do just with colorful scarves.

Gail: I know. I wanted to – I was looking like, do I have a scarf? It just made me want to dance around with a scarf. I'm just – I know what I'm going to do tonight. That's so great.

Treshawn: Yeah.

Gail: So the – Lastly, we're so excited about this feature in our episodes here. This is The Bookcase. Books are just a great way to engage with children and provide meaningful learning experiences, and there are books on just about every topic. Coupling a book with a specific learning theme or activities is a great way to provide meaningful learning experiences. Also, choosing books based on things your infants and toddlers are interested in is another way to help children feel included in a sense of belonging that their interests are important.

This season on "Teacher Time" we have been exploring The Bookcase, and this is what we think about with The Bookcase. We think about the ways in which books can connect or extend or deepen learning on some of the goals in the ELOF and the ... And we also think about the A is for ways in which the book can provide some advanced vocabulary for young children. We think about the ways that teachers can support engagement during that book reading, supporting that participation. And then how teachers and family child care providers can extend children's learning beyond the book. What activities might that book prompt? Let's take a look at a few books for infants and toddlers on our bookcase right now.

Treshawn: Yeah, so first, we have the "See, Touch, Feel" by Roger Priddy, and I'm going to talk about that one a little bit later. But really, this is a sturdy board book, and it has bright photographs of happy babies. It's specifically designed to stimulate curiosity through sensory play. It's kind of one of those touch and feel books. Each page has a colorful picture activity that invites the babies to touch and explore, and there's different raised textures to feel with your fingers, with your whole hand, and even a shiny mirror to look into. I'll show you that in a little bit.

Then in the middle, we have “Baby Touch,” and these come in lots of different topics, vehicles, airplanes, cars. Oh, well, this is a vehicle. Flowers, colors, lots of different topics so choose ones that your toddlers are interested in. Your infants and toddlers will love this interactive touch-and-feel tab book. You can use the vehicle-shaped tabs with the babies to help them turn the pages and find the names of the different bright vehicles throughout, from cars to trains to helicopters, diggers, all kinds of things that children would be interested in. And they’re also big stimulating touch-and-feel areas, too, to stroke and talk about on every page. This is great for children that have different impairments.

Then we have cloth books for babies, and you can find them with just about any brand. These ones are by Baby Bibi. These help infants and toddlers learn the fundamentals of reading with these bright and colorful learning books, and so they’re constructed from soft plush material. Sometimes, they’re kind of this washable material you can just throw in the washing machine on gentle cycle and have it sanitized for the next day. It includes a set of toddlers’ toy books. They’re safe for newborns, infants, babies, really, children of all ages, but it really gives them that sensory feel.

We’re going to explore The Bookcase a little bit with this “See, Touch, Feel” book. I love it. It’s a huge board book, easy to hold onto. It’s got some paint. It’s raised surfaces. Infants and toddlers can feel what it looks like. When we think about connect, toddlers love to see other toddlers. Babies love to see other babies doing things that they love, and this book has great pictures of babies playing with paint, and then you can feel the different splotches. There’s another little guy with his umbrella. You can talk about the rain. And these are some raised areas, too. I really love this little guy, and he’s playing with the xylophone there. This book helps infants’ and toddlers’ sense of identity and belonging. You can pick out a child and, you know, “That looks like me” or “That looks like our friend Annie over there.” Children will show awareness about self and how to connect with others. I know that’s one of the infant-toddler social-emotional goals in the ELOF.

This book also promotes children’s vocabulary and development and supports the emergent literacy ELOF goals. When we think about advanced vocabulary, that’s the A, there’s so much vocabulary in this book. They’ve got “Bang, bang.” We’ve got “drum.” We’ve got “Let’s make some noise.” We’ve got “xylophone,” and you run your finger against the xylophone, you can kind of hear it making a noise. That’s pretty cool. We’ve got bumpy and smooth so we can learn about opposites with children. You can have the toddlers say the words after you. You can say the words to the infants to encourage language development. Toddlers will point and identify to the familiar objects in the books, like snails. You can ask, “Have you seen a snail before?” And try to include children’s home language when you can, if possible. You can even put a little sticky note if you do learn one of the children’s home language or one of the words so you have quick access to it.

When we think about the S, supporting engagement, you can ask children questions about what the babies are doing in this book and if they’ve ever done that before. You can say, “What’s this baby doing? Is he building with blocks? Can you show me the blocks in your

classroom?” Children will, you know, just relate to the other children that are in the book. You can also ask children to tell you how the different textures feel. You know, does it feel smooth? Does it feel bumpy? You can label colors and shapes and things of that nature to really engage children.

Then finally, after reading the book, have children do some of the things they saw, like maybe add sand to the paint for some finger painting, maybe have the children collect their favorite stuffies. This one has a fluffy tummy. That’s one of my favorite ones. And then at the end of the book, there’s a mirror there, and children can look at themselves in the mirror, and maybe bring some other mirrors to the classroom so they can, all children have a mirror to play with. You can play musical instruments and march around the room like the little guy playing the xylophone. Maybe even go outside on a rainy day like the little guy with the umbrella. I mean, this book provides endless opportunities for extension, engagement, vocabulary. It provides children with opportunities to make connections from what they read to the world around them. It’s a wonderful book that I love, and I’m glad that I have it.

Gail: I love that book so much, great vocabulary in that book and so many ways to engage, and I love that idea of going outside and using the umbrellas. When I used it sometimes at circle time, I would bring out just a little squirt bottle, and I’d, with just water in it, and I’d say, “It’s raining. It’s raining, get out your umbrellas,” and kids could pretend to use their umbrellas. I just thought about that when you were saying that.

Treshawn: That’s cute!

Gail: It was pretty fun. I don’t know why children love that so much because we’re spraying water, but they really do. It’s pretty fun, love it. I love this last part. This is all about you because we know that we do our best caregiving and teaching when we can feel calm and well ourselves. It’s really hard to have those effective good teaching moments when we might be feeling upset or just out of sorts. Engaging in self-care practices really is important to be the best teacher that you can be, to be the best educator, home visitor, family child care provider that you can be. We really want to focus a little bit of time each episode of “Teacher Time” to say it’s all about you. What can you do to get into that calm space and to stay in that calm space?

This is a really fun one. We’re not modeling it right now because we’re inside, but here’s the tip, is that research shows that having access to green spaces, being outdoors improves well-being. In fact, access to nature has been found to improve sleep, to reduce stress, to increase happiness, reduce negative emotions, promote positive social interactions, and even help generate a greater sense of purpose and meaning to life. I mean, that is a pretty great list of things we can generate by being in some green environments. In fact, there’s been some research that even says being in green environments can boost thinking and attention, memory, and even creativity. Our suggestion is to try and safely, clearly, go on a walk at a nearby park or a neighborhood garden, anyplace where you can surround yourself in some nature and enjoy being outdoors. In fact, in some cultures, they call this forest bathing and actually go out and do that as a practice to retain a sense of calm.

Now, if you don't have access to being able to go outside or any kind of green spaces nearby, you can also bring nature indoors. Just seeing a plant and even just doing some indoor gardening with some house plants can have the same effect as taking a walk, and, of course, we also want to make sure and check out what plants are safe to have around infants and toddlers, children, and pets. A spider plant comes up on the list pretty often as being a pretty safe one, and I'm just holding this up because I'm so proud, Treshawn. This is the first plant I have, like, actually nurtured and kept alive.

Treshawn: Yay!

Gail: I'm really bad at that. I've named it Spidey, Spidey the Spider Plant, and I will tell you that just having this Spidey in, just around, on my desk, inside just really does make me feel calm. You can also have some plants inside, as well. There it is. That's our tip for it's all about you.

Treshawn: That's awesome, and I am so proud of you, and I do not have a green thumb. That's a bit inspiring. I may have to go look for a spider plant, and maybe I'll name it Itsy Bitsy.

Gail: You can do it. This one has been easy.

Treshawn: I'll name her Itsy Bitsy, and that'll be my plant. But you know what? My husband does walk around the house and open up the windows because we have, you know, some greenery around us. We have trees and things near our window. He does go open up the windows every day and kind of bring the outside in. You know, if you're not in a space that you can be safely outdoors, bring the outside in. Why not? Thanks for that tip. That's awesome.

Thank you, guys, so much for joining us today. Before we go, though, it's been great to be with you. We want to leave you with a few resources that you can use to create quality inclusive environments for the infants and toddlers that you work with. First, we have MyPeers. We talked about that a little bit. It's a virtual informal social community used to exchange ideas and share resource and just lend a helping hand to the early childhood community. If you haven't joined MyPeers already, you can join via the ECLKC. We'll also post a link in the chat box for you, and you can find us there in our "Teacher Time" community. Come by and say hello. We'll be posting some more videos, replays, sharing some strategies that are related to inclusion and belonging.

You might also think about joining the Head Start Disabilities/Inclusion Network in MyPeers, and that group will give you more tips on inclusive practices specifically. In our apps and our phones and devices, since we're using those more frequently, we have our Text4Teachers app, and this program sends you two free text messages a month with information and tips and research and resources to help strengthen and support your teaching practices.

Gail: Nice!

Treshawn: And then we have our ELOF2GO app, and this give you on-the-go access to the ELOF goals for children and effective teaching practices, as well, so you don't have to carry the book

around anymore. Then, we have our Ready DLL app, and if you work with children or are dual – that are dual language learners, in this app, you can access resources and even learn some key words and phrases that would be helpful for those children and even discover some implementation strategies. Then finally we have our Head Start Resource app, and this is where you can search for and save all of your favorite resources that are up on ECLKC so no longer do you have to go to the website. It's right there on this small app for you. How helpful is that? All these apps are free, which is awesome, and they're available in English and Spanish.

We appreciate you.

Gail: And we'll see you on MyPeers.

Treshawn: Yeah, let's continue the conversation. Bye, guys!

Gail: Bye!