

Supporting Infants' and Toddlers' Cognitive Self-regulation

Gail Joseph: Hi, everyone, and welcome to "Teacher Time." I'm Gail Joseph.

Maria Alvarez: [Speaking Spanish] Hello, my name is Maria Alvarez.

And we are from the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. We're so excited to have you here with us today for this second infant-and-toddler episode of our new season of "Teacher Time." Welcome.

Gail: Welcome, and I'm so glad to be back with you, Maria. This is great. Now, I also want to call your attention to the Viewer's Guide. Hopefully you've logged on and have been with us before and have downloaded the Viewer's Guide. You'll find that in the resource widget. And you can download the guide, and we really encourage you to use it throughout our time together. It's a great place for you to take some notes, write down some ideas, maybe something – maybe an idea comes to you along the way that you want to make sure you don't forget. You can use it for reflecting and planning and just thinking a lot about how you're going to use "Teacher Time" practices in your own settings. Maybe we say something, and you think about a child in particular that you want to try that out with. Great space to kind of keep all that information together. The resource guide also has resources if you want to dive deeper into the topic, which is great. It's like the extended dance mix of this webisode in that Viewer's Guide.

All right. Now, I think that's it for logistics, so let's go ahead and get started, Maria.

Maria: Thank you, Gail. This season, we're talking about supporting young children's self-regulation and learning. Supporting self-regulation and learning is also referred to as Approaches to Learning, which as you may know, is one of the domains in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, or as we like to call it, the ELOF. Approaches to Learning domain focuses on how children learn, and it refers to the skills and behaviors children use to engage in learning. Approaches to Learning is comprised of just four subdomains of development: emotional and behavioral self-regulation, cognitive self-regulation or executive functioning as we also call it, initiative and curiosity, and creativity.

You might remember that in the November episode of "Teacher Time," we focused on emotional and behavioral self-regulation skills, but today we are focusing on cognitive self-regulation. Cognitive self-regulation skills are often referred to as executive-functioning skills.

Gail: That's right. Now, what exactly are cognitive self-regulation skills? Well, we're going to get into that today, but know that they include things like the ability to sustain attention; the ability to control impulse; showing flexibility in thinking, like being able to think differently about things, being able to use different approaches; and working memory, which is the ability to hold information and manipulate it long enough to perform tasks. Now, these skills are present in our youngest children, and our role as teachers and caregivers and home visitors is to support

learning to strengthen these skills in the context of consistent and responsive relationships, always what we're doing.

Maria: Exactly. Why are cognitive self-regulation skills so important? Children who can use cognitive self-regulation skills are able to focus on acquiring knowledge – new knowledge – learning new skills, and they can set and achieve those goals. Of course, this may look different for all children, but it's as simple as maybe a child who's learning to reach for a block or a more complex problem-solving in, you know, the heat of the moment. Cognitive self-regulation skills help children how to handle strong emotions in those challenging situations, tolerate frustration, and be a little bit more flexible, and persist and pay attention.

Gail: All right. Now, let's dive a little deeper and focus on infant and toddler cognitive self-regulation skills. This subdomain of the ELOF is made up of three goals. Goal one, or goal – It's actually listed as goal three, is that the child maintains focus and sustains attention with support. Now, notice this goal includes support, as this is something we wouldn't expect infants and toddlers to be able to do on their own. The next goal is that the child develops the ability to show persistence in actions and behaviors. Persisting at a task involves being able to sustain attention, and see how these goals are linked together? And then finally, the child demonstrates the ability to be flexible in actions and behaviors. And this is related to being able to adjust to something, like a change in a routine, a change in a hairstyle, or just nesting blocks that are not fitting together and being able to be flexible and try a different approach.

And today, we are going to focus on the development of the ability to persist. Persistence is about continuing to do something or to try to do something even though it is difficult.

Maria: That is right. But before we talk about children, let's think about our own behaviors and actions. To be able to teach self-regulation skills, adults must use the skills within themselves. But persisting can be hard, especially as an adult when we have so much information and many demands coming at us all the time, and nowadays even, that's even more important. It can be difficult to continue to do something or try something when it's hard. When you want to give up or start to get distracted or overwhelmed, what helps you to persist at a task? You enter these in the Q&A so we can comment on some of the things we notice in your Q&A answers. But yes, persisting can be something that can be very challenging, and sometimes we're very quick to give up, but there are strategies that we can use to persist and achieve our goals. Like, breathing exercises ...

Gail: Oh, I love that.

Maria: Yeah. Oh, "A list to break it down," yeah. Sometime tasks are too big, and it's great to kind of break it down into smaller tasks, smaller, doable baby-step tasks to make it feel more achievable, more attainable.

Gail: Mm-hmm. These are such great things. I'm seeing, like, "Taking small breaks" ...

Maria: Yeah, "Walking away and coming back to it."

Gail: "To-do lists."

Maria: That helps, too.

Gail: Yes, and I love, like, kind of putting little reinforcers in. Like, thinking about, like, "OK, I need to do this. I need to concentrate. What am I going to do that rewards me for doing that, too?" I don't know if people are doing that, too, but taking those little breaks, too, you know? Maybe I'll add some ...

Maria: Motivate to go – Yeah.

Gail: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I don't want to give away my reinforcers, but it's usually, like, it might be chocolate. It might be. It might be that I – [Chatter]

Maria: – bread and – You know?

Gail: Yeah, yeah, and this is kind of silly, but I have been totally motivated by some fun little stickers, and you can get so many stickers now for your – like, that are adult-oriented for your planners and things, so I just love it. Like, if I – to reward myself persisting at something I find difficult, I love these kind of fun little stickers on my planners I give myself.

Maria: Yeah. That's awesome. Thank you, everybody, for sharing all your strategies.

Gail: Oh, yes, and Andrea said, "Ice cream break." [Laughter] That's a good one.

Maria: Yes, yes. "Adult coloring books."

Gail: Grabbing coffee, yep.

Maria: The coloring books, yeah. I like those, too.

Gail: Yes. Yeah, I'm loving – I'm just, like – We could just keep going all day, like, because we all need this, right? We all need these ideas. And our Q&A support in the back, our wonderful colleagues, are helping to kind of push these out so everybody can see this great list as well. I love it.

Maria: Yes, I love it.

Gail: All right. Well, again, it requires that adults can do these things before we can help and support – to help support young children to do these things. Now let's get into thinking about what it takes to – Well, let's see how infants and toddlers start to learn to persist. That's what we're going to do. On this slide, what we've done is, we've listed – and remember, you can get access to these slides in our widgets there – but on this slide we've listed the developmental progression of one aspect of cognitive self-regulation, which is what we've just been talking about for ourselves, learning to persist. Now, for infants and toddlers, this looks like a progression from first – just continuing back-and-forth interactions as an infant, that is

persisting, to repeating attempts when faced with a problem as a young toddler – that kind of trying and trying again – to trying different strategies when faced with a challenge or problem as an older toddler.

We're going to watch videos, and we're going to start with this first video of an infant and caregiving interaction, and you can think about this in any kind of context. This could be in an infant room. It could be at home, and what do you observe? Use your Q&A. Get ready to keep working in that Q&A box. What do you observe about the infant's behavior that shows persistence? Make sure as you're watching the video to enter your observations into that Q&A. All right?

[Video begins]

Woman 1: Hi. Can you smile? Can you smile? Yeah? Oh. Hi. Do you feel better now? Yeah, you do? Feel better? What? What? Ooh! You want to see Papi for a second? You want to see Papi? Yeah, while I wash my hands? Yeah? What was that? OK.

[Video ends]

Gail: All right. I love this video. I just want to keep watching it. We watched it before the show, and I just could keep watching it. It's so lovely, just that interaction was lovely. The care provider's voice was lovely, but you all were very – like, we just have so many astute observations coming in, into that Q&A, in terms of what they saw the infant doing that was demonstrating persisting. All these great things. "Making eye contact," that's come in a lot. The cooing, just the, like, persistent following of the adult, the little vocalizations the baby is making. And that adult, I don't know if people are feeling the same way, but that adult does such a nice job of narrating what they're doing, asking questions, responding to the baby's vocalizations in order to support that interaction. That's what we mean in that first goal about support, right? Infants and toddlers learning to persist with support. It is that adult's responsiveness that is continuing that interaction for a longer period of time. We really love that.

Maria: Yeah, and I think it's been studied how when infants vocalize and they don't get any reaction from adults, then they don't continue to persist. That's how important our support is to foster these skills. Now moving on, as infants get older, they become more independent, and we hope to see them make repeated attempts in their actions or communication when they are faced with a challenge or a problem. Let's watch a video of this young toddler working on a puzzle. And I'm sure a lot of you will find this particular scene relatable, whether it's in your own house with your kids when they were growing up or in your place of work. I know I see a lot of kids persisting through puzzles. Think about what you do notice that the toddler is doing, and start writing those thoughts in the Q&A as you watch this video. Let's get ready. OK. There we go.

[Video begins]

Woman 2: Come on! Can you help me pick them up?

[Chatter]

Woman 2: Thank you, Avery. Thank you. Thank you. OK, come pick them up. Put them in here. Mason, you want to help pick these up?

[Chatter]

Woman 2: [Inaudible] some more, Avery. Good job, Avery. Good job. Way to pick them up.

[Video ends]

Maria: I love to see her just persist. She did it for quite some time, actually, so I was in awe of her and just trying to find that right spot in the puzzle. She didn't even try to put it in the triangle or the circle. She knew – She saw some similarities of those attributes for that square that she was trying to fit in that puzzle. Tell us some observations that you saw in terms of how she was persisting through this task. She was trying to turn the puzzle piece around. She just kept trying, and she – Even when it fell under the puzzle, she tried to gather it again, and, "I want this piece, and I want to see if I can fit this piece." She didn't cry. She – she could have – she kind of threw the puzzle piece on the puzzle a couple of times, but she didn't give up. She for sure didn't give up. I was pretty in awe of her because at that age, it takes a lot of skills to sustain your attention in that task, even if it's hard, for that long.

Gail: I love it. She's inspiring me. I try and do the crossword puzzle every morning. She's my hero for persisting during that. That's great, and what a great example of exactly what we kind of mean in that age time frame about that persistence. All right. Now, finally, older toddlers show persistence by staying engaged in something they set out to do and trying different strategies, even when they face challenges. Let's watch a video of an older toddler, and get your fingers ready for that Q&A. Just think about what you're observing them doing that demonstrates persistence and put those observations into the Q&A. What is the child doing that's [Indistinct]?

[Video begins]

Man: Huh? All the way to the top, look how tall that is. You want to put something else up there?

Boy: Yeah.

Man: All right. I have two more pieces. I don't know if we're going to be able to reach it. Are you going to reach it?

Boy: Yeah.

Man: Oh. Wow, what are we going to have to do, huh? You got to get that high.

Boy: Hmm.

Man: Hmm, what are we going to do? You want me to put it up there?

Boy: Yeah.

Man: Do you want to help me?

Boy: Yeah.

Man: All right. Help me put it up there. There we go, really – tip, tiptoes.

Boy: Go!

Man: Good job. All right.

[Video ends]

Gail: All right. What are some of the observations you made about that child working on putting that last block up there? I'm seeing some of these things coming in. "Looking for other solutions." Yes. "Keeps trying putting it on top multiple times." "Using the bench." Yes. People are noticing that it seems like first the child tries to put the block on top, then steps back down, actually turns the block, tries again, tries again a few more times, and then even tries another solution which is, "Let me get this, like, incredibly responsive teacher to help me with this, too." And many of you are noting the support the educator is providing, and I love it. I love how that teacher was there to support the child, staying engaged. Right? What would happen – I wonder what would happen in that situation if that adult or a not-so-responsive adult was there at that moment. What would happen with that child's persistence? But that teacher demonstrates exactly what we're hoping for in terms of the emotional support, staying with the child, providing encouragement just by staying with the child and labeling what they're doing and letting them try and try again on their own, persisting at that problem solving. It's just excellent. "Asking questions." Yeah. I love what our viewers are putting in here, and I know our Q&A support are pushing these out because there are just such great comments coming in here. All right, Maria.

Maria: All right. Now that we've seen the progression of how young children learn to persist, let's talk about teaching these skills through using the basics. This might seem familiar to some of you from our last "Teacher Time" about behavior self-regulation, but now let's see how we can apply the basics to help children develop cognitive self-regulation. These basics are a collection of strategies that can be used in any setting interacting with infants and toddlers. But first, remember that you can download the Viewer's Guide so you can write down your own ideas or the ones you learn as we go talking about the basics. Let's jump in, Gail.

Gail: All right. B. B in BASICS stands for Behavioral Expectations in Advance, and this is one of my go-to strategies always when I'm interacting with young children. As you can read, here are just some examples of the ways in which we're thinking about behavioral expectations in

advance that might support a child learning cognitive self-regulation skills. Talking about routines and behaviors in advance such as, "We're going to go change your diaper and get ready for a nap," are helpful. Right? They're helping infants and toddlers know what to expect and to have predictability, which then supports their ability to continue their interactions and persist when there is a problem. These examples use a lot of language in them. I want to just point that out. If you have children with a language delay or children who are learning multiple languages, you can use shorter sentences, and repetition is helpful to them. But the idea here is to give children some advance warning about what behaviors we're expecting or what behaviors we're doing even, and that that ability to provide that predictability can help increase their persistence at tasks.

Maria: That's right. Moving along to the A. The A in BASICS is for Attend and Encourage Appropriate Behavior. And one sure way to help children learn cognitive-regulation skills is to help them know just what to do. When an infant or toddler is showing continued interaction or persistence, acknowledge what you see them doing, like that little toddler girl that we saw working on her puzzle. This might have been a good time for the caregiver to come and give her some encouragement on how she was persisting. This might sound something like also you – in this picture, if we see this picture, you both are taking turns and doing such a nice job of keeping the water in the tub. When you provide interesting and meaningful opportunities to play and attend to positive play behaviors, it helps children sustain attention to what they're doing and to persist at the task.

Also, when you're encouraging children, remember to match their affect and temperament. Some infants and toddlers startle if we get too excited, and sometimes I tend to get very excited, very loud, so I have to match that affect and temperament to an infant or toddler that maybe doesn't respond to that so well. And some like it when we show great enthusiasm. Sometimes you might try nonverbal cues, like maybe coming closer to the infant or toddler or joining in their play or touching a child can help them know that you see them, and you're there. You're present with them.

What nonverbal cues do you use to attend and encourage infants and toddlers to stay engaged and persist? Go ahead and write some of those down or type some of those in the Q&A, and tell us what you're thinking. "To talk with kids more quietly," yes. That's when we match that temperament, that affect. And you know your kids. You know your infants. You know toddlers. You know your students. You can tell when a student responds better to different methods or different strategies. "Thumbs up, nodding our head, eye contact," yep. All those things are great. "Get on their level." That's so important. A smile, oh, that's definitely – A smile goes a long way.

Gail: I love these. I just – Yeah. They're so great, and I love Anthony's suggestion or reminder that being aware of children who are really quiet, too, and making sure that we're just aware of – that we're giving everybody that support and encouragement, and sometimes we'll go to children that are louder or making bigger actions or something. Nice suggestion there to make sure that we are using our time and attention equitably.

Now, a very important part of helping children learn is scaffolding. Scaffolding is the S in our BASICS, and it's absolutely important. It's the helping that we give to a child to learn the skill that they're working on. We call it kind of just the right amount of assistance to help them reach the next level. Scaffolding can take all kinds of – it could be modeling. It can be using our voices to give cues. It can be using some physical support to give cues.

Look at this picture. In it, you see that the child is learning to feed themselves with a spoon, and the teacher is using gentle scaffolding, a gentle prompt at the child's elbow. Can you see that? You really would have to be attending to that, to look at that, but looking at that prompt at the elbow to help guide the spoon gently – to help guide the child's arm to guide the spoon gently to their mouth so that the child is successful. And when they're successful, just like when we were listening how we persist at things as we get a little bit of a reinforcer when we persist, this child persists, right? Because they are successful. They eat. They are successful. They – they'll stay engaged with it, and I think that the next time she might use even a gentler touch, a gentler touch, and eventually what we call fading out that support, like, letting that support fade away so that then the child does that by themselves, and then, of course, the celebration, the reinforcer in that second picture, there. I love that so much.

Maria: Another way we can support children's persistence is to increase active engagement. That's the I: Increase Active Engagement. There's so many ways we can increase engagement to encourage our infants and toddlers to sustain attention and persist for longer times when faced with a challenge. You see these two pictures. The infants have materials, or toys, that they find very interesting, and they're matched to their developmental age. They are at the right height, so they can reach them without any kind of obstacle or problems, and proximity to them is very close and the right size to hold for their tiny hands and fingers. By having these interesting and appropriate materials – key, appropriate – they can actively and independently engage with these toys. And while they play with the toys, they're also mastering their balance and ability to stay sitting, which is such a huge milestone, and providing engaging materials can help these infants persist in many skills that they are learning.

What are some strategies – get your Q&A typing ready – that you use to support active engagement? And let's see what you use currently in your classrooms. I love these toys. These are beautiful toys, and they serve so many purposes. And it's so important because once we get to know our infants and toddlers, we know what they like. We know what keeps them engaged for longer, and we choose toys more strategically for them. "Hand over hands," yeah. "Verbal prompts," yes. We do use a lot of verbal prompts sometimes to keep that engagement quite active. "Parallel talk, narrating what they're doing," yep. "Musical instruments," mm-hmm, "during circle time." "Variety of textures," oh, yes. That's a great one. Awesome. These are great.

Gail: They're so great. I love – Shout-out to viewer Rebecca, that parallel talk. I know that you commented on that one, too. That is such a great – I don't think we think about that in terms of active engagement, but that is a way to keep a child persisting, is to narrate that it's like you're

so fascinated by what they're doing, your narrating it. Builds their language, but it also builds their engagement. That was great. All right.

One of my favorite ways – I think I've said this one every time. Like, they're all my favorites, but – Again, another one of my favorite ways to support young children's cognitive self-regulation is to create a challenge for them. Don't forget that we want to create challenge. That's how we all grow and learn and especially for our infants and toddlers. Sometimes we can see that infants and toddlers have mastered a skill and to keep them engaged so that they don't just get bored or let their skills languish, we want to create a challenge for them.

I love this picture because what we can see is that the caregiver provided challenge very intentionally by placing a toy that the child really likes up on a higher surface just a little bit out of reach. And now the child is motivated to get to the toy that they want, but they have to use a new skill in order to get that toy. For this child, it might be that we would want them to persist, that pulling, twist, stand or letting go of holding with two hands to reach for a new toy. And we know that a caregiver is right there with them so that they are supported. But by providing these meaning full and appropriate challenges, that young toddler is going to stay engaged and persist at getting the toy that they want. Maybe we'll want them to persist and communication, so maybe it's visible but out of reach so that they are persisting to communicate for something.

And this one, I thought about this one, too. You probably did this a lot. I don't know if people can see it with our little background here, but I loved putting fun toys children loved in Mason jars so that the child had to persist at trying to open it to get – That was the challenge I provided. They had a really great – using some of their motor skills to coordinate and try and get to the toys, or maybe their communication skills. I just thought I'd put that one in there as one of my favorite extra challenge ideas for those toddlers.

Maria: That's great. All right. The second S in basics is to provide specific feedback, which is a must in every classroom. As a parent, also it is a must. And by providing specific feedback, infants and toddlers learn more of what to do so that they can stay engaged and persist with that activity. Let's watch a video and listen to how the teacher provides specific feedback to supporting keeping the toddlers appropriately engaged. In the Q&A, share some of the ways in which you see the teacher providing specific feedback, or share ways that you provide specific feedback in your classrooms as well.

[Video begins]

[Chatter]

Woman 2: That's great asking, Taylor.

Woman 3: One, two ...

Woman 2: Hmm, she's – Yeah, you can ask her again. Try again. She's not saying yes, so maybe we'll wait a little while. She didn't say yes.

Girl: Ooh!

Woman 2: Yes. You can ask her again later.

[Video ends]

Maria: I love that. Did you notice how the child in the striped shirt was asking the child in the yellow shirt for a turn? With the support of the teacher, I believe, they asked a few times, and I also noticed how the physical environment was set up for success. For example, the table wasn't too crowded. There were only two of them, and there were enough toys to play with, but maybe few enough to encourage asking for turns. And the teacher was always there supporting them and helping them persist. Exactly.

Let's see if we have any Q&A. "Positive tone in her speaking. The two children were working together." Yeah, and the teacher support, again, was key in helping them persist through this and avoiding any breakdown or any tantrums or any frustration. "The teacher was so positive with both of them." Yep. "The teacher does a great job," yes, "with each child." Yep, and, "Respect." There's a lot of respect in this conversation. This interaction was very respectful and very positive. Yes, all great thoughts. This is BASICS. We hope that you find the basics useful and will share them with your colleagues to support cognitive self-regulation with infants and toddlers, certainly useful across the board.

Gail: I agree. I love the basics. We can always get back to the basics when we're thinking about how to support young children, infants, and toddlers, and now it is our segment, "Small Change with a Big Impact," and here we highlight a curriculum modification or adaptation that can help a child who needs a little more assistance to fully participate in the classroom or a socialization activity, group routine or even some home activities. Maria?

Maria: Yeah, talk about communication boards as a modification. I used to use these in the classroom all the time when I was working in a preschool for special needs. And the biggest thing for me was to partner, if you have the availability or the resources of a speech therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, and the parents, you're all going to collaborate in creating this modification. But if not, this is something simple that you can just use the knowledge that you have of those children to be able to create the basic or the needs, the wants of the children in that moment. Foods and pictures of what they love, toys they love, things that you need them to do as well, those are all going to be part of your visuals. The child in this picture has a verbal-language delay. When they became frustrated with not being able to say words, what do we see? We see them frustrated. We see some tantrums. We see frustration and anger. This is all because they couldn't communicate. And the educators created this board with pictures of things that the child often wants or needs.

And again, key is that you get to know this child to see what they want and need through time. The objective basically is communication through pointing at those pictures. There are images of books, blocks, taking a break, food or more things, and by providing this modification and teaching the child how to use the board – because that's super important. They have to teach

the child how to use them. The child can communicate more effectively. And asking families for ideas of images to include is a great way to bring home into your teaching environment, too. And sometimes it's vice versa. Sometimes the home environment wants to bring some of those pictures to use in the classroom as well. We've found success using pictures, even with young toddlers, but if that is challenging, even, you can use signs. A lot of infants and toddlers learn quickly, signs.

Like, for example, my son learned quickly the sign for "more" when he was just an infant at his day care with his lovely caregivers. They taught him a couple of signs that he was able to communicate at a very young age. If the pictures and signs combined or the pictures or just the signs, but those are two very important strategies or modifications that you can apply. And gestures can also be some successful strategies. Using the board or signs also support vocabulary development. The child might learn a new word or new words, and since they are less frustrated because of having new strategies to communicate effectively, they might also be able to try to use verbal words. Anything with practice, anything with this modification in place can help the child ready to learn new skills, new things. Finally, by creating this modification, frustration is reduced, and a new way of communicating is offered, which can support the child's ability to engage and remain in an activity. We can do so much more when the child is calm, happy, and knows that they are successful at communicating effectively.

Gail: It's such a great strategy. I love that the pictures, the board, you can communicate, and a child can communicate with adults, but a child can communicate with their peers, too, using that board. And the pictures are really helpful because they're more universally recognized. If another child doesn't know the sign, that can get frustrating, but the children probably would know what the pictures were. I love that, and I know people will have questions about using communication boards. I encourage people to start writing those in or thinking about those because we'll have some time at the live Q&A, and it would be great for them to get your expertise on that, Maria, and I know we have some information on that in the Viewer's Guide as well.

Now, moving on – Keep your questions on that communication board. I know people had some questions. We want to make sure that they write those down, but we do want to move on to our segment on "Focus on Equity." And here is where we lift and we spotlight the value of equity. We are thinking about equity throughout everything that we're doing, but we also want to spend time to focus on it specifically, and we want to consider how we make our teaching practices more equitable.

Today, what we wanted to highlight in this segment is this phenomenal author, Mike Browne, who we are really lucky to call a colleague. He is the senior director of Community Engagement [Indistinct] learning, and prior to that, like, actually I think even this week, he's an infant and toddler teacher at Hilltop Children's Center. He's making a transition, and he's also their senior Community Engagement manager, so he's transitioning to work with us, but Mike Browne and his colleague, Amir Gilmore, wrote an article, and I happen to know there will be a series of articles coming out, but the title of his article that we really wanted to highlight today, and

you'll find the links to that in the Viewer's Guide, and you'll also find a video that we – when we interviewed Mike Browne. You'll find that video on MyPeers, and I highly encourage people to watch that video.

But the article that Mike and Amir wrote is called "Black Humanity and Black Boy Joy," and I read it. It's a short little article. You can read it really quickly, but when I read that and watched an interview of him and then also had a chance to talk with him about it, I found it was really, really powerful in thinking about how we make space for joy. I found that, and in particular for Black boy joy, and I found it really powerful to think about that and to put that in conversation, if you will, with this idea of cognitive self-regulation. Because when we think about cognitive self-regulation, one of the things is impulse control. One of the things is persistence, and I wanted to think about or reflect on – I know I was reflecting on my own teaching, and I encourage us all to think about just are there times that we maybe overregulate the, like – we overemphasize impulse control and maybe dampen some of the opportunities that young children have for just unbridled joyful exuberance that ... Do we unintentionally try and get compliance or even dampen persistence at something that they're finding joyful to have a little bit more control?

I want to – I just – We wanted to put that up there as a provocation for us to think more deeply about equity, and one of the things Mike Browne talks about is creating a pedagogy of yes. Thinking about how we can create more opportunities for a yes and joy while we're also scaffolding and supporting persistence, impulse control, other kinds of self-regulation skills but making sure that we are not unconsciously limiting opportunities for joy. I found it really powerful, and I think I just wanted to bring it to people's attention, encourage people to read it. Maybe it's something you read together as like a little article club with your peers and to actually watch the interview with him. Yeah.

Maria: Yeah, and then you can also reflect. Reflect on how if you have ever confused joy for an impulse-control issue, perhaps, and perhaps redirect it versus joined in the joy. Think about if there are some groups of children you're more likely to redirect for perceived misbehavior, and how can you redirect yourself to more yes, more of that yes pedagogy and more joy. Think about this and add some of your reflective thoughts in the Q&A. Yeah. "We make room for spontaneous joy in our practice." That's awesome. Yeah. You reflect on your implicit bias and think about how that's maybe – how you've shifted perspectives in the last few years or maybe recently as you've created more of a yes space in your classrooms. "I sometimes catch myself discouraging a certain type of play, and I have to ask myself, 'Why is this play inappropriate?'" Yeah, and think about that, but is it really inappropriate?

Gail: I love that reflection. That – Yes. Yes.

Maria: Yeah, and children can start to show joy in many different ways. It's basically that deep thinking whether, "Where is this coming from. Is this because they're excited about something?" This is – The special-ed teacher in me also thinks about what happened right before. Are they excited because they used a toy? Something exciting happen or something that really triggered strong emotions, and what kind of strong emotions are those? I'm always

reflecting on children's behaviors and actions and where it's stemming from, where it's coming from, and thinking whether this is a great thing that's happening right now, or is it something that needs my support because there's an issue here?

Gail: Yeah, absolutely, and Zipporah says, "Being mindful of my own bias," and that's – absolutely. That is what came to me. I was thinking for myself as a white teacher who was teaching thinking about, "Where was my bias coming in?" and what types of behaviors are regulated and which ones I inspired or encouraged more of. Thank you for putting that in there. All right.

"The Book Case," we're moving on to "The Book Case." We have some questions in there, just kind of logistic questions about where they can find the article on things, and I know we'll be addressing that. Our Q&A support is addressing that, but I want to move us on to our "Book Case," which is where we don't just feature some old favorites and maybe perhaps some new authors, but the book case is also where we're highlighting books by diverse authors and illustrators that is related to our episode's theme. And then we make what we call the CASE for it, but – and the CASE is an acronym, and what it stands for is – The C in CASE stands for connect, which means, "How can we connect something in the book to one of our ELOF goals?" And, of course, we're thinking about children's cognitive self-regulation in our ELOF goals and approaches to learning.

The A in CASE stands for advanced vocabulary. Books are wonderful ways to introduce these novel, new, exciting big words to young children, and remember to always provide a child-friendly definition to build children's language and concept development. Thinking intentionally about that advanced vocabulary books offer. The S stands for supporting engagement during reading so that children are active participants in the book reading, and the E stands for extending the learning beyond the book. Thinking about activities that you can plan that will help children make the connection to the content of the book or some activity in the book. And it's a way to also repeat that advanced vocabulary and to build concept development. I'm going to highlight some of the books that we've put on our "Book Case" again. Some are old favorites, and people probably already know them, and maybe you'll learn a new one as well.

The first one is "Stuck," and this one is very cute because for the toddler version, infant-toddler version, it's called "A Little Stuck." Some people know this one. This one is by Oliver Jeffers. I'm putting it right there in front of the video camera so you can see it. I love this book so much. It's an adaptive board-book edition of his, like, laugh-out-loud classic "Stuck," if you've read "Stuck" before, which I find to be a hilarious book with a wonderful ending, if you haven't seen it yet. And all throughout the book is the story of persistence. It starts with Floyd, love the name Floyd, and Floyd gets – he gets his kite stuck in the tree, and so the whole book is about persistence and different ideas to come up with how he's going to get that kite out of the tree. Great little book. Next one, also a classic, is, "Where's Spot?" I love this book. Who does love – Well, I'm sure there are people that don't know "Where's Spot?" but I love "Where's Spot?" You know, there's a whole series there, and this is where Spot – and we included this one because it's a classic, but it's also one of those classic lift-the-flap books, and if you don't know this one, I

would be surprised, but maybe you don't think about it in terms of encouraging persistence. This is a book that helps Spot, who is trying to find – it's Spot's mom who's trying to find Spot, and she's looking. She's persisting throughout the book to find spot, and, you know, she looks behind a door. She looks under the bed, inside the clock, and there's all kinds of fun surprises to reinforce that persistence. A great little payoff on that one.

The next one that you can see featured is "Ellie" by Michael Wu. Michael Wu is just, like, one of my favorite illustrators of the moment. I actually don't have "Ellie" with me because I lent "Ellie" to one of my –to my niece, who's a toddler teacher, and it's such a beautiful watercolor – it has watercolor illustrations. The illustrations are really different. It's written about adorable animals. It's written in Spanish, too, which we love, and it is about one painting elephant named Ellie who works hard and is persistent to save the zoo. And you can read about each of these books and more about these books in the Viewer's Guide, but today we're going to make the CASE for one book which is called "Baby Says" by John Steptoe.

Now, I've told you we sometimes bring you new, and we sometimes bring you some old classics, and this is an old classic. This is "Baby Says" by John Steptoe. You can see right there a photo of John Steptoe, and this is a very sweet book. It actually was first published in the '80s, but it's a lovely book with really lovely pencil-drawn illustrations, watercolor illustrations, about a little brother. You can see this little brother on there in the yellow. The little brother who is determined, he is very persistent, at getting his brother to pay attention to him. We can see the connection to the ELOF goal about persistence right away. That's the connect part. Now, there are actually very few words in "Baby Says," so if you have "Baby Says," there aren't very many words in there, which is great. It's one of those books that allows you to fill in a lot. The pictures really say a lot, and remember to be intentional in advance and so that you can introduce advanced vocabulary words, even though there aren't advanced vocabulary words written in here, but you might introduce words. Like, when I looked through this, I thought about the word "determined" to introduce, the word "attention," "angry." It's always a great time to label some emotions, persistent and kind, but you'll find lots of other great words to introduce as well.

And while reading, I think of the way that you can, S, support active engagement, is by reading with enthusiasm, of course, and exaggerating the, "Oh, no." "Oh, no," is something that's throughout the book. "Oh, no!" You could do that, and you could ask lots of open-ended questions and answer them depending on the child's language skill. And then finally, there are several ways you can extend the learning, and one of the ways I think I might do that is by having a lot of fun and bringing in some building blocks to play with just like the baby and the brother do, and then reinforcing those words, like persisting and persistence and determined along the way. If you don't already have John Steptoe's classic book "Baby Says," I would highly encourage you to get it from your local library and add it to your collection.

Maria: I love all those selections. All right. Let's turn our attention to you really quickly. We do our best caregiving and teaching when we feel well ourselves, and this applies to parents, like me. Engaging in self-care practices can help educators build greater social and emotional

capacity to deal with difficult times. Here is one quick strategy you can use to get back into that calm space.

Here is a fun tip. It is the 10-minute tidy, and I have to think about that tidy word. There's where my bilingualism comes in, because I was like, "Is it tid-ee? Is it ti-dee? [Speaking Spanish] No se," but it's tidy. This tip comes from a book called "The Happiness Project." I love the title. The idea is to proactively reduce morning stress by doing a 10-minute tidy the night before. I don't know if you do that. I do that. I set everything out before, the night before, so I don't have to think about it the next day, and that keeps me calm. Simply pick a time each night, or even just a few nights per week, that you will set a timer for 10 minutes and focus on picking up, doing a quick cleanup, or just prepping your work bag or your lunch bag for the next day that you wake up, and you don't have to stress about it. You don't have to stress trying to find your keys or your phone charger or your lunch bag, and that's just going to give you so much more peace. If you live with others, have everyone help. Why not? It's amazing how much you can feel on top of things when you use that 10-minute tidy.

And if you're trying to work on your cognitive self-regulation, that is, stopping, doing things you want to keep doing and start doing things you might not want to do but are good for you, then the 10-minute tidy can help. Put your running shoes by the door. Fill your water bottle. Put it in the fridge and have it ready to go the next morning. Try it out and maybe let us know later on how it goes.

Gail: And now we just – we have just a few minutes, but I'm wondering if there's some questions that are coming in that you want to ask Maria or I? I was thinking about if people maybe had questions about that communications board. I know we've had some questions just about where to locate some of the things we've talked about, and I know we're getting some of those answers with our support, with Heather and Katie and Becky helping on the back end there. We're just waiting for a little bit if we've got any questions ...

Maria: The communication board ideas.

Gail: Yeah. You want to talk about some of those ideas? Any places where you might get started with that? I actually have a question for you, Maria. What do you think about with a child that's learning to speak two languages? How do you work with the communication board for children who are bilingual learners?

Gail: If they are stronger in Spanish, I print out pictures and label it in Spanish. And if the caregivers only speak English, it's pretty easy to learn the pronunciation of some of those words in Spanish, and then we focus on those things. I wouldn't overwhelm them with a lot of pictures. Just start small with food or toys or an activity that you consistently do, but also not just stick to the communication board, but have those visuals around in other places in the setting so that you kind of reference it several times a day and be repetitive. And then you start adding some more. But I would definitely do it in their stronger language, in the home language, and then kind of slowly introduce those words in English as well. Depending on – it's

all depending on the child and how much the child can take at a time, but I would definitely honor that first language first, and always pair it with visuals.

Gail: That's great.

Maria: It's the immersion strategies that come in play as well, so always include those visuals, those gestures. You can use signs, but definitely have several areas of support so that the child can understand the language that they're receiving as well.

Gail: That's great. We had a question come in about how we can relate this topic to home-care providers, and I feel like everything we covered can be related to home-care providers, so whatever the context is, the strategies, the basic strategies we talked about. You can use, any adult with any young child. You can use those basic strategies no matter where you are, and then we also had another question about connecting this new knowledge with children with special needs, and I think that the basic strategies are also really helpful for children with special needs, children with disabilities or are suspected for delays, and always check out our – the section on "Small Change, Big Impact."

We are actually out of time, but as your questions keep coming in, we are going to move those over into MyPeers, and we'll be attending to those in MyPeers. It's been a joy. I love the interaction we've had throughout. We have a couple new things coming forward, or next episodes, so please – February 3rd, we are going to have a special edition of "Teacher Time," and you are all invited to come join us. We will have a special edition that is actually going to be focused on the new regulation around mask wearing. If you are interested in getting some really tried and true tips and strategies on supporting correct and continued use of masks to mitigate the spread of COVID, please join our special edition. And then on March 3rd, we will be focusing on supporting initiative and curiosity in preschoolers. And then we'll be back again in April with an infant-toddler edition. I'm going to sign off and thank all of our special support, our producer, Ryan, and Maria. It's been a pleasure to cohost with you.

Maria: Thank you, everybody. [Speaking Spanish]