

Building Relationships with Infants and Toddlers

Girl: Places, everyone. Are the lights ready? Three, two, one.

Becky Sughrim: I'm ready.

Mike Browne: Ooh-whee! [Speaking Spanish] Estoy aquí! Estoy listo!

I am here. I am ready. And let's rock and roll.

[Music plays]

Group: [Singing] Teacher Time

Teacher Time

Teacher Time

Teacher Time

Mike: I kind of like that jingle. Welcome. Hello everyone. Welcome to our first episode of the new season of "Teacher Time." I'm Mike Browne. My pronouns are he/him. And I'm joined by the fabulous ...

Becky: I'm Becky Sughrim, and my pronouns are she/her.

Mike: And of course, we are from the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. We're so super, super excited to have you here with us virtually and in community with us. This season of Teacher Time is going to be super special, super exciting. We hope that you join us for all the episodes. And this season, we're going to be focusing on positive behavior supports, starting with relationships.

Becky: Yeah. Thank you, Mike. I also really want to call your attention to the viewer's guide. This season of "Teacher Time," we have a new viewer's guide that includes information for children, birth to 5, with specific information for each age group. And it is packed full of information about development, teaching practices, a couple quick tips, strategies, and even some reminders you can cut out and post in your learning environment.

And like Mike said, you can download the guide through the resource widget, and you can use it during our time together to take notes and reflect on how you're going to apply these Teaching Time strategies and practices in your learning environment. And we really, really hope that you will share it with colleagues and coaches, teammates, supervisors, anyone you think that would benefit from it please share. OK. I think, Mike, that's it for our logistics.

Mike: Our time together is going to be a great one, and we're going to be talking about a lot of variety of different things. Sit back, get a drink, relax, take self-care, nourish yourself, because at the top of the things that we're going to be talking about is teaching practices that supports positive behavior, obviously because that's the time, that's the name of our theme today.

We're going to take some time to promote your wellness. Spiritually, mentally, and emotionally, however that shows up for you. We're going to connect effective practices to brain development and our new segment – Oh, I can't wait for that one – Neuroscience nook. We're going to discuss small changes that you can make to the environment, to your practice, to your strategies, to your orientation, your paradigm shift, we all know it's going to have big and impactful and long-lasting change in your practice. We're going to focus in on that in our equity segment. That's going to be targeting strategies that builds that sense of belonging, that promotes relationships, reciprocal relationships, between yourself, between other adults, between children, and between children and children.

We'll wrap up our time together as we always do with our bookcase, where we connect our topics to books that you can share with families and children. Like I said, we're going to get all up in our feelings. Let's begin by checking in. And you can use that purple widget once again. I think it was a purple, right?

Becky: Yeah. Yeah, purple Q&A.

Mike: The purple Q&A, and tell us what number, the picture that you're really relating to right now in this moment and why? Once again, it's the purple widget. As I'm looking at the tree, I'm feeling like 19. I'm just climbing up there. It's Thursday. I'm near the top. The weekend's the top. The sun is shining. As well as just feeling grounded because, I have this – an indigenous elder gave me this medicine bag. Inside it has sage and tobacco and rose and all these other different things, which I open it up and I sniff, and it helps me feel grounded. I'm like on 19, but I'm also grounded as well. What about you?

Becky: Yeah. That's so great. Such a great self-regulation strategy, Mike. I'm feeling like 18. Like I've got friends here. I'm here with you, Mike. We've got so many people helping us in the Q&A. We've got our multimedia teams. I'm feeling supported and hopefully, feeling like I'm supporting others as well.

Mike: Absolutely. Let's see what's happening in the chat. We've got 15. That big grin and smile. I love that. I'm glad that you're here with us. We've got one. And that's OK. That's good that you're hanging on. You didn't fall. You didn't fall. You're hanging on. Sometimes we need to recognize that, be OK with that. I know that's a weird feeling to be in. I'm glad that you're here. Know that you're not alone. You got all your other friends, 1 through 20, as well as us here with you.

Becky: Mm-hmm. We have a 13, sort of just like what you were saying. Like all feelings are welcome here. This is a safe space, and we're here with you. And we've got 15. Up there waving hi. We're waving back. Thanks for being here. And let's see what else we have, a number 17.

Where is 17? Oh on top of someone's shoulders. I love that feeling, that excitement, that adrenaline hopefully.

Mike: Perfect.

Becky: Let's see. Today, we're so excited to be focusing this season of Teacher Time on positive behavior support and also on social emotional development. And you probably already know that social emotional development is one of the early learning outcomes framework domains.

And we're going to be talking about practical strategies today that are going to focus on social emotional development. As you can see that's highlighted here. And within social emotional developmental domain, there are four different subdomains, which are relationships with adults, relationships with other children, emotional functioning, a sense of identity and belonging. And each one of these subdomains is important, and we will connect the practical teaching strategies we talk about today to all of these subdomains. Let's do some Q&A, Mike.

Mike: Love it. I love talking but I love hearing from you all is well. To start us off, we'd love to just hear what strategies are coming up for you around this question. What's one way to support building relationships? Once again, reciprocal relationships, not transactional ones, but reciprocal relationships with the youngest children in our care, the infants, toddlers. I love this age group. It's so much fun. And please share once again in that Q&A, the purple widget, what's one way that you're supporting that relationship? I know that you have Jeremiah. Who is how old?

Becky: He's 2 1/2.

Mike: 2 1/2, and he loves climbing up on things. What's one way in which you support that?

Becky: Yeah. Thanks, Mike. Thanks for thinking about him. One of the things that I've been practicing is holding back my nervous feelings about him climbing so that I can be respectful of his interests, and we can build or repair our relationship wherever we're at as I'm like invested in what he's interested in. Yeah.

Mike: Exactly. I love it. When I'm in the classroom, in the learning environment, I love going up to each individual child and really making that personal and warm greeting. Not just one time, but throughout the day, each and every single time, whenever we do the transition.

And one thing that I just love to do is especially on a Monday, oh man I tell you after a weekend we all know that groggy feeling that we have, but I love going up to the children and going, "Oh my God, I missed you. It's been 48 hours. That was two nights of sleep that I didn't get a chance to see you and be in community with you. Oh, but I know you had a wonderful time at the pumpkin patch. Can you tell me why? What was it about it? How big was the pumpkin? Was it bigger than my head?" Because I've got a big head. And we're able to use math skills and science and technology, and things like that in order to make them feel welcome into the environment. I see there's a lot of chatter happening in the chat. Let's check that out.

Becky: Yeah. Let's see. Using a child's name consistently. Paying attention to what they like to do in the classroom and playing with them in that area, having those nice one-on-one or as much as you can in the classroom.

Mike: Greeting them warmly. We pay attention to what they like, like you were saying. Trying to make sure the child is excited and asking open-ended questions. Trust me, ask open-ended questions is less work that you've got to do.

Becky: Yeah, yeah, yeah. There's so many things, so many benefits to open-ended questions. Building the relationship. Like we said, this season of Teacher Time, we're going to be working our way through the pyramid model. And if you're familiar with the pyramid model, you are probably thinking, "This pyramid looks different than the pyramid that I see on the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovation or NCPMI," and you're correct. That's because the bottom level of the pyramid that says effective workforce is missing. And it's a very important foundation, and we recognize this. And we're going to be focusing on these top three tiers of the pyramid during the season.

The pyramid model is a positive behavior or PVS framework, so many acronyms already this morning or this afternoon, for addressing social emotional development and challenging behaviors of young children. And this framework offers a continuum of evidence-based teaching practices that are organized into four levels of support that we see here.

First, nurturing and responsive relationships, then high-quality supportive environments, and social emotional teaching strategies, and at the very top, intensive intervention. And today we're really going to be focusing on the first level located at the base of the pyramid, that nurturing responsive relationships with all children. And just so you know, if you want to learn more about the pyramid model, we highly encourage you to check out the resources from NCPMI in your viewer's guide in the resource list at the very end.

Positive behavior supports is a positive and proactive approach to challenging behaviors that focus on supportive adult interactions and building social emotional skills, specifically those executive functioning skills that help to regulate our behavior. And PBS recognizes that all behavior communicates a message or need. And once the educator can understand the meaning of a child's behavior, they can, together in partnership with the family, teach the child a more effective way to communicate their wants or needs.

Mike: Let's turn the attention back to you. As promised, I have more things to say rather than just go, "Hey, back to you," but we do our best caregiving and teaching and educating and being in relationship and community when we feel well ourselves. When we're feeling good. Engaging in self-care practices, however that looks like for you, can really help us as educators build a greater social, greater emotional capacity, physical capacity to deal with those challenging times.

We know there's a lot of challenging times. Before we can support children's behaviors positively, it's really important that we turn it back to ourselves and find ways to regulate our

feelings throughout the day. Self-regulation – just to make sure we get a grounding in a definition – self-regulation is really the ability to manage our feelings, our actions, and our behaviors. And our ability to self-regulate is foundational to literally everything we do, but essentially building strong and positive relationships with the children in our care as well as with ourselves.

It's important to note there are many different things that can affect our ability to self-regulate. For example, our perceptions is one, our biology, our personal histories, our cultures. It's important to take all of that into context. And these experiences can influence how we engage with others, including the children, even how we feel in our own bodies.

We may have a physical response to our need to self-regulate. That can be fatigue, headaches, feeling of being distracted, etc. We're all coming to our work and to our environments with our own unique stories and challenges. So much can really affect our ability to self-regulate. Make sure that we acknowledge what's happening to us. It's OK if you need to step away. It's OK if you need to step away to self-regulate. And it's important to note that a lot of you are doing that right now. You're stepping away from the classroom to be with us today and that could be part of your self-regulation technique.

With this in mind, let's take a moment to get out of our busy days of caring for ourselves through breathing. We do it all the time, but let's do it more intentionally. Pausing throughout the day to self-regulate, release any tension that we're holding. I know I've got a lot in my shoulders right now. And resets ourselves, supports our ability to respond mindfully as we nurture healthy relationships within our learning environment.

This quick breathing regulation exercise is one exercise. Takes about 16 seconds. Stay with me for 16 seconds. If you feel comfortable, let's try it out together. This breathing technique is called 4-4-8 breathing. We're going to breathe in slowly for four, we're going to hold it for four, and then we're going to breathe out slowly for it. Don't quote me, but maybe Michael Phelps does this. Maybe we can be a swimmer one of these days. Find a comfortable position that you're in, and let's start together.

Breathe in through your nose on a count of four. Take the breath slowly and deeply into your belly. Ready? Let's do this. One, two, three, four. Maybe I need to count a little faster. Now hold it. Four, three, two, one. And then slowly release it on a count of eight. Eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one. Great. Y'all know how to count. Notice how the body feels after these mindful breaths.

We really do encourage to explore other self-regulation techniques that works best for you. And there are always additional resources on ECLKC, it's a mouthful. Sorry y'all. From our partners at the National Center of Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety. They offer a variety of different mindfulness and wellness resources. You just search that wellness to find wellness posters, tip sheets, and more. It's all there.

Becky: That's great. Thank you, Mike. Thank you so much. OK. Now that we've regulated ourselves or we've tried to regulate ourselves, when we take moments to stop and pause and breathe, this helps us to slow down enough so that we can support the child to slow down and regulate too or co-regulate.

And I'm sure many of you are familiar with this practice of smelling the flower and blowing out the candle. And this is one mindful breathing activity you could do with older infants and toddlers. You support the child in taking a deep breath in like they're smelling a flower and then you help them breathe out like they're blowing out the candle. And maybe you help the children practice the skill by having a fake or real flower to smell or maybe it's a picture of a flower that you've laminated, and then you have a large unlit candle they can practice blowing out. Or again, you have a laminated picture of a candle so they can have something to hold as they're practicing.

And if you are interested in having these visual cues, check out your viewer's guide to find them and the link to get them too. And maybe for younger infants and toddlers who very much regulate through support from their caring adults, I would encourage you to try modeling this practice and talking through this exercise. Maybe you're talking through this specific one of smelling the flower, blowing out the candle, or you're modeling the 4-4-8 breathing. It's really helpful for children to see and hear you self-regulate. And we would also love to hear how you self-regulate. Any other breathing or mindfulness techniques that you use in the learning environment, please share them in the Q&A. We really want to hear those techniques.

Mike: Nurturing, like we've been saying all day, nurturing responsive relationships are key to really supporting children's health and social and emotional development. And children who know they can depend on trusted and caring adults are better able to manage their thoughts, their feelings, their actions, and explore and learn with confidence.

I invite you to really think about what makes a caring and trusted adult? Pause and think about that. What makes a trusted and caring adult for each child as each child is unique and special and wonderful, for each child in your care? Does a specific instance of a child come to mind? Thinking about this can really support the developing of a more joyful. Because we want a joyful and responsive relationship within the learning environment. And responsive relationships are how children really build strong social skills, the self-confidence, and really they're more likely to engage in positive social behaviors with their peers as well as with adults.

We'd love to hear how you've seen responsive relationships positively impact the work that you're doing, the care that you're giving. Once again, the purple widget, the Q&A. The purple Q&A. That's where you're going to type in your comments. And I already see people starting to type it in there.

I think back personally to my mom who ran an in-home child care center, which was really the catalyst for me wanting to be an educator, wanting to be with young children, caring for them. And in her in-home child care she spent a lot of time working specifically with children that were dealing with a lot of trauma, whether that was from neglect or was from a loss of a

caregiver. Her just being able to hold them throughout the night because she also did overnight care and seeing her stay up and having small and intimate conversations with them and reassuring them was something that really has stuck with me in my practice.

When I'm at nap time, there's always that one child who doesn't want to sleep, really having them, and holding them, and having that intimate conversation. Because sometimes you don't really get a chance to do during the day because you have 16, 20 different children running around. That one-on-one interaction is something I hold dear. Thanks, Mom.

Becky: Yeah. That was so powerful, and I thank you for sharing that. Your mom sounds like an amazing child care provider. Let's see. What we have from the chat. We've got oh lots of suggestions for the mindful breathing. Thank you so much. And building a trusting relationship by showing the children you care for that they are genuine and you're genuine. That you're true to your word. I mean what I say, which has so many impacts with trust and safety and all of those really important things for relationships.

Mike: I see use a fake flower and pinwheel too, that the toddlers love. I like to tell them to blow into my finger and then I'm like "Aah, I got one up." And it's very nasty afterwards. But it's to have that relationship as well as consent and things like that that we really do get a chance to talk about.

Becky: That's great. Such a nice way for the toddlers to see an effect from the breathing out so they can get that mindful breathing technique into their mind and start to feel it. I'm so excited about this new segment, this Teacher Time season called Neuroscience Nook. Research tells us that the early years are foundational for brain development and adults play an important role in supporting healthy brain development, connection, and architecture. And this segment, Neuroscience Nook, is where we connect the research to everyday practices. We are going to start by looking at a video on how serve and return interaction shape brain circuitry from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University.

Mike: You should hopefully – crossing fingers – see this slide up, it's serve and return in a circular motion. And as you saw, they're not seeing the video. Maybe you heard it, or you will see it later, so you can always go back and listen to this again. One way to develop healthy relationships with a child is through culturally, developmentally, and emotionally responsive interactions. It's important to have all three.

To recap, the serve and return that you might have heard in the video, it's a special type of relationship. Responsive interaction, that is foundational to that healthy development of a child's brain and the relationship. For example, I think about how a child serves by saying something or they're doing something or they're looking at something.

Becky: And then the adult responds in a meaningful direct developmentally appropriate way that matches the child's serve.

Mike: Hopefully, this works. This next one, let's see what a potential serve and return could look like in action.

Becky: While we're going to watch this short video clip from an Early Head Start classroom, we want you to think about where do you see the serve and return between the teacher and the child. And it is a super quick clip, so get ready. OK.

[Video begins]

Teacher: [Indistinct noise]

Baby: [Baby blabber]

[Video ends]

Let's take just a reflective moment to think about the serve and return interaction that you saw in the video. Here I'll pause for a second, because I know I get very excited about relationships so I'm talking a lot. And just think about what kind of serve and return you saw. Now we're going to watch this video again with narration. And the narrator is going to highlight the steps of serve and return within this brief eight second interaction. This is the time where you can see it slowed down and see if your predictions about the serve and return interactions match with the narrator highlights.

[Video begins]

Narrator: In this clip, the caregiver is helping the infant stand up. The infant serves by making a noise. The caregiver encourages the infant by making a noise too. Then they go back and forth. The infant makes another noise, and the caregiver encourages her by imitating the noise and smiling. They go back and forth again. The infant makes another noise, and the caregiver encourages her.

[Video ends]

Becky: OK. I have a time to check your predictions. Did your serve and return predictions matchup with what the narrator highlighted? And some of the things that we have learned is that serve and return interactions are truly everyday interactions that take seconds to engage in, this eight second interaction. And what we noticed was that the educator started fostering a relationship through responsiveness, warm tone of voice, and attentiveness to the infant. And the interaction also allowed the infant to experience what this give-and-take and back-and-forth of conversation might sound and feel like. And it also supports brain development.

We know that infants and toddler educators have such an important role in helping to build children's brain. And a big way you do this is through serve and return interaction.

Mike: That being said, we really discussed the importance of relationships and how toddlers and infant educators play such a vital role. We are important. Remember, you say those

affirmations every single day. We are important in playing such a vital role in supporting brains development.

Let's take a short shift in looking at practical strategies now for how to build that relationship. The way that we do that, we get back to the basics y'all. The basics are a collection of strategies that we can use in any setting, no matter where you are with infants and toddlers. The Teacher Time basics are behavioral expectations in advance, attend to and encourage positive behavior, scaffold with cues and prompts, increase engagement, create or add challenges, and specific feedback. The basics can be used and adapted with all children birth to 5. And it's important to be intentionally and properly using these strategies with infants and toddlers.

In this season of Teacher Time, we will be focusing on the first two letters, that is B and A for each episode. I know y'all can spell. We hope that you will join us for all of the different webinars of the season and access them through PushPlay so that you can get all the basics. They're full of positive behavior supports.

Like I said, we're going to be focusing on B, behavioral expectations in advance, and A, attend to and encourage positive behaviors to really support emotional development and build relationships. One way that we can do this, we can share behavior expectations in advance with infants and toddlers is to let them know ahead of time what's going to be happening next. This shows respect to and for the child and really does communicate bodily consent as you can see in the first example there. "Alejandro, I'm going to pick you up and give you a fresh diaper." Because who doesn't love a fresh diaper? And it really helps infants and toddlers develop a trusting relationship with the educator.

Once again, for example, "Alejandro, I'm going to pick you up to give you a fresh diaper." And then take a moment so that person can confirm, the child can confirm, and then now that you have that consent you can pick him or them up. And really over time, a child will then learn the educator means what they say, especially if they say something ahead of time like, "Hey, in a few minutes or in five minutes, I'm going to sit down and read a book. Which book should we read?" And then follow through and actually sit down with the children to have that conversation, have that interaction.

For infants and toddlers, much of their experiences – we have to remember this because they've only been walking around, crawling around, loving life for 2,000 days. Maybe less? – these are often first-time moments that they're experiencing. Remember that, and remember that we're engaging with children whose time on this planet is literally marked in terms of months versus years. Allow them time to be a toddler and be an infant. Allow them time to learn and to grow into these new understandings, new skills, and these new behaviors.

Becky: Yeah. Totally. Thank you so much, Mike. Those are such helpful tips and helpful sentences to use in the learning environment. Let's watch what behavioral expectations in advance look like with infants and toddlers. And as we're watching this video, we would love to hear from you in the Q&A again, what you notice in the video and how do you see this educator engage in this practice. How is the educator supporting behavioral expectations in advance?

Mike: And Becky, as I was thinking, as we're thinking about someone who might not be able to see the video, I'm thinking maybe there's pop-up blockers on your browser. I'm no expert, but that was the first thing that came to mind. If you have any pop-up blockers, maybe it's time to turn that off just for this little bit because we don't all love pop-ups. But that might be preventing you from seeing the video.

Becky: Thank you. Thanks, Mike, for that tip.

Mike: Don't forget the mute button on the bottom left.

[Video begins]

[Child crying]

Teacher: OK. We'll put the puzzle up here. And after we have snacks, we'll bring it back out. OK? Because Josiah is ready for a snack. Can I do that? Can we go line up at the door to go wash our hands? I'm going to put this and the fishing pole, and we're going to put it right up here. And then after snacks, we'll bring it back. OK?

[Video ends]

Becky: OK. Let's see what did you notice, Mike? What did you notice about that video?

Mike: Once again, I really loved the warm engagement, the warm tone. And it really felt like wow, this educator sees, this educator values me. I was blown away, and I'm like smiling right now because that's what I felt when we do this video that I've seen a million times. What about you?

Becky: I really appreciated how the educator said exactly what they were going to do. "We're going to put the puzzle up here. And then after we have snack, we're going to bring it back out." I'm seeing some things in the chat saying the teacher immediately responded to the child, and I could totally feel that warmth too and that relationship and her body language, the educator's body language with the child. Oh we've got more things coming in. Using the "first, then" sentence stem, where first we put the puzzle away, then we have snack. Or the teacher let the child know what they were going to be doing.

Another comment says, I also thought it was great the teacher explained to the child what they are going to do and what is going to happen next, and then she explained again as she was putting the puzzle away, giving that reassurance. This is what we're doing. This is what's happening.

Mike: Exactly. Now let's think about the letter A in our basics and how we can attend to and encourage positive behavior. One way that we can really do this is by letting the child know you see them. Like I said earlier, when they are engaging in positive behavior.

An example of attending to and encouraging positive behavior is narrating what the child is doing or really recapping what they saw. This connects the child's behaviors to their words and to their actions that describes this behavior as positive. They go, "Oh I like that. I'm going to keep doing that." This positive serve and return interaction like we talked about earlier are just a couple things that we want to keep you in mind.

And other things that we do want to keep in mind when we're naming positive behavior and building relationship is really we want to show interest in children's experiences and their ideas. Validate them, communicate with your body language, oh my goodness like with your tone because it hits differently when you're like, "Well that was great" or "Oh that was fantastic." Play around with that and play around with words and tell them that you're interested in what the child is doing, what they're thinking, what they're saying.

It might sound like you're narrating what the child did. "Oh my goodness, you went up the climber and down the slide," with warmth and excitement, maybe a little bit more than I did, but with that tone of voice. It might also sound like, "Dylan, are you showing me more with sign language? Are you showing me more? Oh do you want more pasta? Thank you for telling me that." That's the only sign language that I know. I'm no expert.

But another thing that you might say is like, "Whoa, you seem so excited. You're jumping, jumping, jumping." And encouraging that large gross motor and now relating that jumping is an appropriate way to feel, to feel your feels, express your feelings. You can always once again on the last bullet point on this slide you can share affection and use words that communicate respect. This is the foundation of all relationships. You might say, "Thank you so much for sharing a huge hug with me. That was so gentle."

In the learning environment, teaching and talking about sharing and gentle touches happens often. And this is one way in which we can support child and infant learning about what sharing and gentle touches look like. We want to promote that, and we want to feel all our feels like we keep saying. Let's see and attend to and encourage positive behavior. What does that look like in action?

Please once again in the chat purple widget button, y'all are pros at this. You don't need me to keep saying that. What does the adult engaging in this practice actually look like? We are going to click on the video. See if I can do this correctly.

[Video begins]

Teacher: Are you going to watch? I like how you are waiting your turn. I like how you are doing this. I like how you're waiting, waiting your turn.

[Video ends]

A lot of different things that you might have seen, you heard. Can't smell, but use your senses in order to really pay attention. And the first thing that's really coming up for me – once again

type into the chat in the purple widget, what you saw, what did you feel? – but really the first thing that came up to me that I heard was the educator saying warmly once again, really warmly, "I like how you're waiting your turn." That positive behavior. What about you? Did anything come up for you?

Becky: Yeah. I appreciated that the educator also had a visual of waiting right there. She was able to say thank you so much for waiting and here's another way of saying like thank you so much for waiting. You're showing the child that this is what waiting looks like. This is acknowledging like this is what waiting feels like. That was really neat.

Mike: And trust me, waiting is hard. I was waiting for today's presentation I was like, "ugh." What's coming up for y'all in the chat? Let's take a look.

Becky: Staying close to the child while they are waiting. There was so much communication within the educator's body language too. And I noticed that the child seemed very relaxed. Their shoulders weren't shrugged. Like they didn't look tense, so that was like, "oh this feels comfortable for you."

Mike: And that goes back to what we were talking about, what does a trusting and caring adult look for. Sometimes we like to say, "Oh well. This is a responsive classroom," or "They trust me," but that child is actually showing that they trust them by being relaxed, by chilling, feet up, hands out, things like that. Melinda also said in the chat I liked and then completed the sentence.

Another thing that I saw that we can always say over again is just acknowledging that hey, waiting is hard. It is a hard thing to do, especially for toddlers, especially for infants. Encouraging this behavior can really support toddlers in growing an ability to wait, to just wait a little bit longer. That instant gratification that we do in society. Just wait a little bit longer.

And I think also the educator is also sending a very warm message through their own body language. Where we've got to think about power dynamics. The educator's actually on the child's level. The arms are around the child. And the child just looks comfortable and relaxed, as you mentioned earlier. Let's see. There's one other thing I can highlight in the chat. The praise the teacher, the educator gave the child. Absolutely. You can never give enough positive reinforcements for children.

Becky: Small change, big impact is our next segment. And this is where we share how to make these small adjustments to the way we set up her learning environment, to modify our curriculum, or engage with children and how it can make a big difference. And we know that no two children are the same, and when we make these small changes, it can have a big impact for all children.

It's also important to note that children sometimes will need more support with additional individualized curriculum modifications, imbedded instruction, or intensive individualized

teaching. And in today's webinar, we are going to offer two strategies. The relationship piggy bank and the greetings choice board.

Mike: Focusing on positive behavior, the first thing we really want to do is focus once again on that warm greeting. An example of this is showing excitement that the family and the child are there. It's not just I know we like to focus on the child, but remember this is family engagement, family partnerships that we want to promote as well.

And really just having a quick check in if the family has time and supporting both the child and the family member by saying, "Hey it's good that you're here. I'm glad that you're here. Welcome in. We're going to see you a little bit later, and we can't wait to see you back at pickup time." In a way that really feels good to everyone.

Another thing that we think about is playing together. An example of this might look like modeling that child's lead. They might be cooing; they might be playing peek-a-boo. That's simple. That's easy. We all do that. Or rolling a ball back and forth.

Another thing that we can do is that positive check in. Once again, throughout the day, not just at the beginning, not just at lunch, but constantly throughout the day being really intentional of that. An example of this could be on a daily sheet if you might have that or a positive phone call to the family. It's OK. You can pick up the phone. I know we're a texting society, but it's great to just pick up the phone and not always have negative news or bad news. Just be like, "Your child is a blessing, wonderful to have in our environment today, and I just wanted to share that with you."

Or once again, sharing a story at pickup or at drop-off about something special that happened today. You know the families that you partner with and which methods of communication works best for them, so make sure it's responsive to them.

And last but not least, we are going to talk about providing empathy. An example of this is acknowledging and just validating the child's feelings, the toddlers' feelings when the tower falls over or offering hugs. And I don't know any child or any toddler that doesn't like hugs. Once again asking like, "Would you like a hug? Would that make you feel better?" And then if not, say, "All right. Let's find a different way in order for you to feel better." But really acknowledging that and validating that child's feelings.

Becky: Yes. Thank you so much, Mike. And when we think about this relationship piggy bank, it's helpful to keep in mind that some children arrive to the learning environment and they're in need of extra deposits. If we think about our relationships are built on these positive interactions that are put into the piggy bank, the ones that you described, and sometimes adults and children enter the learning environment needing more. And while it's important to think about the strategy for all children, including children with disabilities or suspected delays, the piggy bank deposits for every child should be individualized.

Mike: Absolutely.

Becky: For example, you might provide a deposit through descriptive feedback by saying to a child, "Oh thank you so much for helping me stack the blocks. We cleaned up that area so quickly with your help. Nice teamwork." And you give a high five.

You might individualize the same type of feedback for a different child by like a quick smile and thumbs up across the room and that child will understand and feel like, "Whew, that was a deposit in my piggy bank." You could also individualize deposits for a child, thinking about the youngest children in our care. An infant, they just wake up from nap and this particular infant has a really hard time waking up. It's just hard to get out of the sleepies and be awake. You might sit and hold that infant and acknowledge like, "Oh, it can be hard to wake up, and we can sit here together and snuggle while you wake up and your eyes adjust to the light." And there are many reasons why a child might not receive as much positive attention or interaction in their learning environment or at home. And the piggy bank strategy ensures that all children are receiving positive attention.

Just really quickly, we want to highlight that another way we can make deposits into our piggy bank is through greetings. And here is a visual choice board for how to greet a child. And if you want this greeting choice board or if you want to know more about it, we encourage you to check out your viewer's guide to find the link for the template so you can make your own with pictures of kids and toddlers.

Mike: Throughout this webinar, we have been discussing a variety of different ways to foster that social emotional skills for all children. Today in our focus on equity segment, we really want to use our equity lens to take a closer look at implicit bias and how it impacts on our different relationship with young children. Relationships are complex. News flash. And many of the ways we relate to others are rooted in our cultural background as well as our past experiences. Sometimes even subtle little biases that we might not even be aware of can really interfere with our ability to relate with an adult, with another infant, with another child. The process of uncovering these implicit bias takes time and reflection, but it's so worth it.

Becky: Thanks Mike. And we will make sure to share some more thoughts on our focus on equity segment on MyPeers. We've got another video we want to share there. Please, if you're not already in the MyPeers community, we invite you to join. And we are so excited this Teacher Time season because we have a Teacher Time librarian. Let's get ready to see what's in our bookcase today.

[Video begins]

[Music]

Becky: Welcome to the bookcase. And we're here today with our Teacher Time librarian.

Emily: Hi, everyone. I'm Emily. I'm excited to be here as your Teacher Time librarian.

Becky: And Emily has a few books for us today about building relationships.

Emily: Yes. We've got four books today. The first one is "Girl of Mine." It features a child and their adult as part of the bedtime routine. It has these great colorful illustrations. They're quite joyous I feel like, and the book also has really nice simple rhymes, which is important in children learning to speak.

Becky: Yeah. I love that. And I love that this author has also written a "Boy of Mine" as well.

Emily: For our second one, we have "Count to Love." This is part of the "Bright Brown Baby" series. And I just love the close – you can see a positive relationship on the page between the child and the adult. I also love that it purposely calls out counting things – one, two, three, four. This is a great one.

Becky: I love that book. And I love like you said counting and so you can build a relationship with the child you're reading with as you count their little toes or their arms and their legs.

Emily: Yes. Yeah, this one does a great job of calling out body parts and introducing those words to babies. And then we have "In My Anaana's Amautik." This one I love how big this one is because it's great for like sharing in more of a group setting than the one on one. It also has beautiful illustrations that are all based in nature. I find they're quite whimsical. The whole book is telling about how cozy and safe the child feels in their Anaana's Amautik.

Becky: I love that so much, those special feelings you have with a trusted adult and the relationship that you have.

Emily: Yeah. This is a great one.

Becky: Emily is going to help us make the case today. And when we make the case, we're thinking about four letters: C stands for connecting to the ELOF, A stands for advanced vocabulary. And books are a great way to introduce new vocabulary, novel words in a child friendly way. And then we have S which stands for supporting engagement. And we really want children to be active participants while we're reading. And E stands for extending the learning where we can plan activities that help children connect to the content in the book. And this is a great time to reintroduce that advanced vocabulary and support concept development.

Emily: Yes. Today, we're going to make the case for Together. This is a small wordbook, but it has a lot in it. It shows what humans, animals, and concepts when they come together and what they're like individually. We see this right from the very first page where it starts with "one star shines as a distant light." And then we go into "and when stars shine together they make our galaxy." Amazing, advanced vocabulary on the second page. And we see that throughout the entire book.

We get words like cacophony and symphony, just to name a few. Great advanced vocabulary in this one. And then supporting engagement, this is a great one for with how saturated the illustrations are in this. It's beautiful, beautiful illustrations. And then one of the things I noticed while reading this, which could be great if you're having kids that maybe aren't interested in

reading. We want reading to be a positive experience with children. It's to make it into a bit of a game. There is a frog, or a picture of a frog hidden on every single page. That can be a way to encourage children to sit and read with you is to make it into a bit of a game.

Becky: I love that idea.

Emily: Yeah. And then for our final one of extending the learning, this is illustrations that are related directly to real life. We see bees. You could bring in a photograph of a bee. We see what I assume is Mount Everest. You could bring in a picture of Mount Everest. As well as just simple things as like maybe changing the instruments up in the classroom, bringing in different music to listen to as well.

Becky: Wonderful. They can practice making that symphony together.

Emily: Yes. Exactly.

Becky: Well, thank you so much, Emily, for sharing these wonderful books with us, and we can't wait to see you next time.

Emily: Thanks for having me.

[Video ends]

Mike: We're pushing time, we might have time for one or two questions, type into that purple widget Q&A once again. We'll try to get to them really quickly.

Becky: Yes. Yes. Hopefully we can get to one. And if you want to incorporate any of those books into your learning environment from the bookcase, all of that information is in your viewer's guide, please check it out. And we also want to say that have you heard about Parallel Play? Parallel Play is a podcast for you, for educators who love toddlers. And Mike and I host the podcast, so you can take us on the go and continue your education and reflecting on how best to support the youngest learners in our environment.

And both of our episodes are up on ECLKC or in the Head Start Talks app. And our first episode is about self-regulation and reframing the terrible twos, and it focuses on how talented, tenacious, and terrifically thoughtful toddlers are. And we hope that you'll check it out to extend some of our talk today about self-regulation and co-regulation. Let's see. Let's see if we have any questions in the chat. Are there any coming up that we can answer?

Mike: I will stall for a little bit because I can talk about PushPlay. Now before we hopefully grab a question or two, you can always, well we want to make sure that you know about PushPlay first of all. If you missed a webinar, we've got you covered. Don't even worry about it. Go to PushPlay DTL on demand, where you can view recently aired webinars. It's the end of this, clearly I'm stumbling over my words, great timing. Where you can watch any of the recently aired webinars at your convenience.

I'm going to stumble over that word again. We made it easy for you to find exactly what you need, exactly what you're looking for. The more views you have, the more customized experience. It's responsive to you. Please be sure to bookmark the site, save it, write it on a post-it note, however you learn best, and you can always find it on MyPeers. One more thing before we look at the questions. If you're watching the webinar live, we're including certificates of completion. Just click on the link after the webinar and check it out, and you also have the link in your evaluation.

Becky: Yeah. Thank you so much, Mike. And again we invite you to join us on MyPeers. And if you have questions that you're like, "I need time to process this webinar so I can think about my questions," please go ahead and put those questions in the Teacher Time community on My Peers. We are there. We will do our best to answer those in a timely manner. And we will share a few things from the relationship piggy bank from this webinar and the focus on equity. And again please utilize the viewer's guide. All of the information is in there as well.

Mike: Just looking at the Q&A, we have a lot of affirmations. Thank you all. It takes so much to put this on. You just get to see our floating heads, but there are about a million people in the background and so we want to shout out everyone who helps and support us to put this on. And at the end of the day we want to celebrate you. Give yourself a pat on the back because you're doing amazing and awesome work. It's hard work, but it's the most rewarding work, and I wouldn't be anywhere else in the world than right here. Thank you all. Do you want to end this or should I?

Becky: Yes. Let's do it together.

Mike: All right. Same time. Thank you.

Becky: Thank you. Thank you so much for joining us today, and we can't wait to see you next month for building relationships with preschool children, and then in December for emotional literacy with infants and toddlers.

Mike: Cannot wait. Take care of yourselves. Thank you so much, and we'll see each other soon.