

E is for Emotion:
Teaching Affective Skills to Young Children
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Sharing A Vision 2015

Some general issues...

1. Affective (emotional) skills should be taught when children are calm and ready to learn.
2. Whole class, small group, pair and individual instruction are all appropriate models.
3. Instruction should be both direct and indirect; it may utilize literature, discussion, role play, puppets, posters, games, etc. (acquisition of knowledge)
4. Practice of the newly learned skills should be done within a natural social context. For example, while children are in centers or free play time or while a conflict or stressor is occurring. (application of new skills)
5. Many children will initially need support from an adult (re-teaching, modeling, Q & A, shadowing) during peer interactions or while responding to a stressor until they become able to easily use their new skill with a variety of people across a variety of settings. (fluidity)

Instructional Process for Affective Education

The same as followed for pre-academic and other skills:

LEARNING STAGE	CHILD IS...	CHILD'S EXPERIENCE:	TEACHING STRATEGIES
1. Acquisition	Learning new information	"Now I know it."	Direct instruction: stories, role play, games
2. Application	Using new information, but sometimes needs support from adult	"I can do it sometimes, but I still might need some help."	Guided practice during free play, shadowing, peer model
3. Maintenance	Able to use new skill in specific situations	"I can do it by myself now when it is just like I learned it."	Behavior-based positive feedback, modeling in new situations
4. Fluidity	Able to use skill across situations	"I can do this all the time and by myself now."	Behavior-based positive feedback, allow child to become a peer model

Resources:

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL):
www.csefel.vanderbilt.edu

Smith, Charles A.:

The Peaceful Classroom: 162 Easy Activities to Teach Preschoolers Compassion and Cooperation

Promoting the Social Development of Young Children

Key Affective (Emotional) Skills to Teach

Teaching these skills throughout the early childhood years results in stronger resiliency, better academic performance, healthier relationships, better mental health and adult life success.

1. Labeling 4 main feelings:

Angry Sad Scared Happy

2. Identifying situations triggering these feelings

3. Identifying emotional state in self (a higher- order skill; often emerging during 3-5)

4. Identifying emotional state in others

5. Relaxation skills (management of frustration or fear & calming self)

- Progressive muscle relaxation (Ragdoll)
- Focused Breathing
(Flower/Candle, Balloon, Hopping Frog, Dragon Breathing, Bunny Breathing)

6. Appropriate expression of strong feelings (anger, stress, frustration)

Be sure to teach a replacement means of expression that fits the child's preferred anger release point!

RELEASE POINT	ASSOCIATED INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS	APPROPRIATE RELEASE BEHAVIORS
Mouth	spitting, biting, sticking out tongue, cursing, verbal threat making	using words singing angry song blowing bubbles
Hands	hitting, pinching, throwing, shoving, tearing, punching, finger gestures	shake out fist angry scribbling/writing fidgets
Feet	kicking, running or walking away, tripping, stomping	go for a walk angry dance stomping square

To contact the presenter for staff professional development training, classroom consultation, behavioral analysis & positive behavioral support plans, reflective supervision of parent educators, program design or workshops for families:

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