

Inventory of Practices for Promoting Infant and Toddlers' Social Emotional Competence

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Purpose of the Inventory: *The Inventory of Practices for Promoting Infants' and Toddlers' Social Emotional Competence* is designed as a reflective series of tools for use by individuals and/or teams to recognize effective practices, identify ongoing professional development needs, and plan a course of action to address those needs related to five target areas:

Foundational Assessment: Program Design and Management

The program design and management section may be most helpful as a reflection tool for administrators and supervisors. It is aligned to the *Effective Workforce* portion of the pyramid and can be helpful in reflecting on policies and program design elements that support infants and toddlers social emotional development. This tool describes critical practices and policies that should be in place in a high-quality program that supports infants, toddlers, and their families. Many of these policies and practices pave the way for providers to be successful in implementing the practices detailed in Tools I-III.

Tool I: Nurturing and Responsive Relationships

The *Nurturing and Responsive Relationships* section is aligned to the base of the pyramid, which indicates where a program should begin in addressing infants' and toddlers' social and emotional development through the important aspects of building relationships with infants and toddlers and their families.

Tool II: Creating High-Quality Supportive Environments

The *Creating High-Quality Supportive Environments* section is also aligned to the base of the pyramid, which indicates where a program would begin addressing infants' and toddlers' social and emotional development through the important aspects of creating environments that support social emotional development.

Tool III: Targeted Social Emotional Supports

The *Targeted Social Emotional Supports* section relates to systematic approaches to promoting, facilitating and teaching social and emotional skills to infants and toddlers. This section is a focus for programs and classrooms that already have the base of the pyramid in place.

Tool IV: Individualized Intensive Interventions

The Intensive Interventions section describes indicators for implementing a program process to effectively implement individualized intensive interventions. This section can be used to stimulate reflection among program administrators, teams, caregivers, and families.

The target areas are aligned with the CSEFEL Pyramid Model. Some of the items, specifically in the sections at the base of the pyramid, address issues that are well-established indicators of high quality programs. Some of these indicators may be addressed in other tools or measures already used within a program (such as the Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale). The purpose of this tool is to provide a specific lens to look at social emotional development in infants and toddlers. It can be used strategically in conjunction with other tools within a program. While it is not likely feasible to use the entire set of tools at one time, the set of tools is designed to be used as an ongoing planning and discussion tool by programs. For example, if the program plans to focus on creating supportive environments to support infants' and toddlers' social emotional development, the Creating Supportive Environments section may be used with teachers as a pre and post reflective opportunity to gauge practices and develop plans for key areas for growth. The tools within the inventory encourage individual self-reflection, opportunities for teaming between caregivers, mentor coaches, supervisors, consultants, site directors, and other administrators, and promote effective practices for direct service staff. For each of the tools in the inventory, there is an action plan that can guide reflection, feedback and next steps. While each tool focuses on a different level of the pyramid, it is important to note that some of the ideas and themes are consistent and overlapping throughout several tools.

Use of the Inventory: This tool is best utilized in a manner that encourages reflection and discussion. Each of the five target areas includes *Topics, Practices and Indicators* that promote social emotional competence in infants and toddlers. The Indicators are detailed phrases that enable the user to “dig a little deeper” in identifying practices and observable behaviors that may or may not be present in the caregiving environment. A column entitled *Observations/Evidence* allows the user to write thoughts, suggestions, strengths, and needs concerning the specific *Topics, Practices or Indicators*.

Three following three levels of skill permit users to record their perceived practice level for each Indicator by checking the appropriate box:

Consistently: The caregivers understand this practice and believe they perform the practice frequently, regularly, and consistently throughout the day. *If self-administered:* Caregivers can recall few or no important, naturally occurring opportunities when they failed to demonstrate the practice. *If administered by a colleague:* Caregivers do not appear to miss important, naturally occurring opportunities to demonstrate the practice.

Occasionally: The caregivers understand this practice and believe they perform the practice sometimes but not frequently or consistently throughout the day. *If self-administered:* Caregivers may recall several important, naturally occurring opportunities when they failed to demonstrate the practice. *If administered by a colleague:* Caregivers may miss important, naturally occurring opportunities to demonstrate the practice.

Seldom: The caregivers may not understand the concept or practice and the practice is not performed very often if at all. *If self-administered:* Caregivers may recall many important, naturally occurring opportunities when they failed to demonstrate the practice. *If administered by a colleague:* The caregivers often miss important, naturally occurring opportunities to demonstrate the practice.

Indicators that have an asterisk are those that may best be answered through interview, discussion or document review. When possible, users should plan a time with the caregiver or team to ask questions or look at examples of various tools or policies designed to support infants’ and toddlers’ social emotional development. Users should meet with caregivers in a quiet area, during a time when the caregiver is not responsible for caring for infants and toddlers. The final column allows the team to decide whether an indicator should be a *Target for Training*. Following each section is a space for writing additional comments. The team or individual may wish to acknowledge particular strengths or delineate specific training requests, professional development opportunities, strengths, or feedback regarding practice in the *Comments* box. A team or individual may choose to assess their perceived skill in one of the five target areas, or select a few indicators within each topic of the five target areas.

Use of the Action Plan: Once users have determined the specific *Practices and Indicators* from the Inventory they want to target for development, a plan for next steps can be developed using the *Action Plan*. In the first column of the *Action Plan*, users should outline priority indicators as targets for development. In the second column, caregivers and support personnel (e.g., trainers, supervisors, consultants, mentor coaches, administrators) should work together to identify the strategies they will each use to help the caregiving team implement the new practices. The third column allows users to identify *Resources and Supports* that will be necessary to successfully complete the activities or strategies listed in the second column. Once the caregiving team has completed their action plan on the selected indicator(s), the team can select other priorities to work on, creating an ongoing process of quality improvement.

Completion Dates: Users may complete the *Inventory and Action Plan* on an ongoing basis as a way of determining their progress toward addressing specific Practices targeted for training and to track changes over time. Portions of the Inventory may be completed repeatedly, as needed, during a program year, or as time and resources permit.

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Tool II: Creating Supportive Environments and Routines

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11. Designs responsive routines and schedules that promote social emotional competence
12. Ensures smooth transitions
13. Individualizes plans and curriculum to promote social emotional competence
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Tool III: Targeted Social Emotional Supports

16. Uses prompting and reinforcement of positive interactions effectively
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19. Explores the nature of feelings and the appropriate ways they can be expressed
20. Develops individualized approaches to support children in distress

Tool IV: Individualized Intensive Interventions and Program Design and Management

21. Team uses information and careful observation to determine the meaning of behavior
22. When necessary, uses a program process to develop individualized support plans
23. Uses program process to reflect on children's progress within support plan

Practices and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for Training?		Observations/Evidence
				YES	NO	
4. Provides physical and emotional security for each child	3	2	1	YES	NO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates responsive caregiving. Acknowledges and responds to infants' and toddlers' needs promptly when the need is expressed * (i.e. verbally acknowledges verbal and non-verbal forms of expression when unable to physically because they are caring for another child and provides appropriate response to meet need as soon as possible) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides physical forms of comfort and support, such as, holding infants close, holding toddlers hands while walking around with them, sitting close while reading, talking, singing or interacting and playing with infants and toddlers. 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares and informs children about transitions (i.e. lets infants and toddlers know when the primary caregiver or parent will be leaving the room/program) and facilitates rituals for routines (eating, sleeping, arrival, departing, diapering/toileting); helps parents understand the importance of these rituals (saying goodbye, waving at parent from the window) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses photos, songs, stories and objects that reflect the child's family and culture 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides easy access to and allows children to keep important objects or comfort items with them throughout the day (e.g. blankets, stuffed animals, pacifiers) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassures children who venture off to explore that caregivers are still close by if needed 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconnects with a child through a smile, hug, or kind words after having a challenging interaction 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages children to explore and try new experiences (e.g. encourage crawling by practicing tummy time and placing a favorite toy a bit out of reach; encourage child to try new foods; encourage child to play near or with other children and notice what they are doing) 						
Comments:						
5. Develops meaningful relationships	3	2	1	YES	NO	
Develops Meaningful Relationships with Infants and Toddlers						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spends time on the floor, communicates with children at eye level, face to face, using smiles and positive responsive verbal and non-verbal interactions 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks calmly and warmly to infants and toddlers 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses words, writing, music, and songs whenever possible in the child's home language 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses one-on-one times, such as diapering and feeding to interact with infants and toddlers individually 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is "in tune" with each child in her or his care; reads infants and toddlers individual cues (understands when a young infant is ready to play and responds by placing her on her tummy for a few minutes; responds to infants sleep cues) 						

Practices and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for Training?	Observations/Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows children’s lead in play 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses books, stories and conversations to help make meaningful connections to children’s experiences children’s experiences and the important events in their lives (<i>reads a book about different kinds of families, a story about a new baby in the family</i>) 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plays responsive social games with children (e.g. peek-a-boo) 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates joining infant and toddlers emotions 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulates pace of interaction in response to child’s state or emotional expression 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates reciprocity in interactions 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages in joint attention with infants and toddlers 					
<p>Develops Meaningful Relationships with Families</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listens to and incorporates parents’ beliefs, as appropriate, into practices around social emotional issues, such ways to hold a baby, ways to calm and soothe children, ways to encourage and guide children 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a system to communicate with families in a meaningful way on a daily basis and ongoing, using a variety of communication methods (<i>notes, touch base during drop off and pick-up, daily reports, home visits , parent-child meetings</i>) 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks to children and families by name 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greets children and adults individually on arrival and says goodbye at departure 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses arrival and departure times to connect with the family and gather valuable information about the child since last seen. Caregiver asks what has happened since last seeing the child 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows a consistent plan to transition child from parent to caregiver upon arrival 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages parent’s sense of competence by commenting and acknowledging positive parent child interactions 					
<p>Promotes the Parent-Child Relationship</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates comfortable spaces for adults (<i>adult furniture in care space</i>) and spaces that welcome family members (<i>e.g. spaces for breastfeeding, to receive and provide information, facilitate meaningful transitions during drop-off and pick-up, or playing with their children</i>) 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks all parents about their feelings (<i>including asking about depression related symptoms and feelings</i>) 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides information to parents about ways to support their child’s social emotional development (<i>e.g. including information on practices in this inventory</i>) 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides resources and support for parents unique needs and interest. 					

Practices and Indicators				Target for Training?		Observations/Evidence
	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	YES	NO	
Encourages and Models Positive Relationships with Other Adults in the Environment						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates opportunities for family members of children in the group setting to interact with and get to know one another (<i>family meetings, outings and group activities</i>)* 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates positive relationship with colleagues including co-workers and administration 						
Comments:						
6. Assists infants and toddlers in regulating emotions	3	2	1	YES	NO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists children in regulating their emotions and reactions to outside stimuli (mirrors baby's emotions/face, takes a sweater off when a baby seems warm, explains what is happening in a calm voice, labels what the child is doing, talks for the child) 						
Comments:						
7. Applies knowledge of children's individual temperaments to interactions and practice	3	2	1	YES	NO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledges children's temperamental traits (<i>"I know you like to watch for a while when we try new things. Don't worry we will take our time."</i>) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapts schedule, behavior, and energy level to meet the temperamental characteristics of different children in care (<i>follows children's toileting and eating patterns, holds a child who is fearful when a new adult enters the room, stays calm and quiet if needed; provides increased activity and stimulation if needed</i>) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses positive or neutral descriptors (<i>dramatic, assertive, persistent, watchful, observing, takes her time with new people, excited, energetic</i>) and avoids the use of negative labels for children's temperament (<i>loud, aggressive, stubborn, scared, shy, fearful</i>) 						
Comments:						
8. Engages in ongoing observation and reflection about infants' and toddlers' social emotional development to facilitate relationship building	3	2	1	YES	NO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observes throughout the day and objectively and routinely records the behavior, interactions and activities * 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitively shares observations regularly with colleagues and child's family to learn if everyone is observing similar things and to discuss how the child is progressing * 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses observations to inform next steps for continuing to build the relationships with the child (<i>noticing that rocking calms and soothes when she is overwhelmed and upset</i>) 						

Practices and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for Training?		Observations/Evidence
				YES	NO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses observations to make a best guess about the meaning of behavior and uses this information to inform interactions/planning * 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses formal and informal assessments to measure toddlers’ social emotional development over time * (<i>structured and spontaneous observations</i>) 						
Comments:						
9. Examines personal, family, and cultural values, beliefs, and assumptions	3	2	1	YES	NO	
Examines own attitudes toward challenging behavior						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the relationship between infants’ and toddlers’ social emotional development and challenging behaviors 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands that infants’ and toddlers’ challenging behaviors are conveying some type of message 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands there are many things that can be done to prevent challenging behaviors 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies what behaviors “push my buttons” 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops strategies for dealing with situations when children’s behavior “push my buttons” 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works together with a team to problem solve around issues related to challenging behaviors 						
Examines personal, family, and cultural views of child’s challenging behavior						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers personal beliefs regarding the acceptability and unacceptability of specific types of child behavior 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers personal beliefs regarding the causes of specific types of unacceptable child behavior 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges contrasting or conflicting beliefs held by others regarding acceptable and unacceptable types of child behavior 						
Comments:						

Action Plan

Priority Skills and Indicators	Strategies I will use to implement new practices or support others in implementing new practices	Supports and resources needed to accomplish these activities	CSEFEL Resources
			<p>Where to find helpful training information...</p> <p>Tool I: Nurturing and Responsive Relationships</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Provides physical and emotional security for each child – Module 1 & 2 5. Develops meaningful relationship with children and families – Module 1 6. Assists infants and toddlers in regulating emotions – Module 2 7. Applies knowledge of children’s individual temperaments to interactions and practice – Module 1