

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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Foundational Assessment: Program Design and Management

1. Program Design
2. Program Management
3. Teams with families to develop individualized curriculum plans for all children

Tool I: Nurturing and Responsive Relationships

4. Provides physical and emotional security for each child
5. Develops meaningful relationships
6. Assists infants and toddlers in regulating emotions
7. Applies knowledge of children's individual temperaments to interactions and practice
8. Engages in ongoing observation and reflection about children's social emotional learning
9. Examines personal, family, and cultural values, beliefs, and assumptions

Tool II: Creating Supportive Environments and Routines

10. Designs responsive environments that promote social emotional competence
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
14. Uses age appropriate expectations to guide children's behavior
15. Supports families to develop home environments and routines that promote social emotional competence

Tool III: Targeted Social Emotional Supports

16. Uses prompting and reinforcement of positive interactions effectively
17. Provides guidance to aid children in their development of social practices
18. Promotes identification and labeling of emotions in self and others
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	
16. Uses prompting and reinforcement of positive interactions effectively	3	2	1	YES	NO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages peer interaction (positions infants near each other, organizes activities that encourage toddlers to work together, acknowledges and comments on children’s interest in other children; encourages their attempts to join play) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows an understanding of developmental levels of interactions, play practices, and individual children (e.g. does not expect that toddlers will share toys) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remains nearby during social interactions to provide security, comfort, encouragement, guidance or facilitation if needed 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows children an opportunity to work out conflicts before offering guidance and assistance 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates behavioral expectations by letting children know what they should do (not what they should not do). For example, says “hands on your lap instead of your neighbor” instead of “don’t hit.” 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talks about “friends” and “playing with friends” 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates interactions by supporting and suggesting play ideas where more than one child can play (“Can you two move that heavy box over here?”) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that interactions are mostly child-directed throughout the day 						
Comments:						
17. Provides guidance to aid children in their development of social practices	3	2	1	YES	NO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes social interaction goals on all individualized plans or curricula * (Integrates children’s social and emotional development in the planning of activities and experiences. Does not plan activities that have isolated development goals. For example, if planning a gross motor experience, considers and plans for how infants and toddlers might interact with one another and adults) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses naturally occurring opportunities to promote empathy and awareness of others (e.g. when a child is sad, caregiver models empathetic response and encourages children to notice how child is feeling and talks about helping to make them feel better; e.g. saying to other toddler peers “Josh is frowning. I wonder if he is upset. What do you think you can say to him that might make him feel better?” “Let’s ask him if he is ok”) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses naturally occurring opportunities to begin to talk about turn taking and sharing 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregiver plays games and interacts using give and take or turn taking (i.e. “I’ll roll the ball to you and you roll it back” or “I put a block in and you put a block in”) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Models playing alongside children and recognizes children’s efforts to play with one another (e.g. when a child is rolling ball, gives a second ball to another child near child, and suggests rolling balls to one another) 						

Practices and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for Training?		Observations/Evidence
				YES	NO	
17. Provides guidance to aid children in their development of social practices (continued)	3	2	1	YES	NO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Firmly shares concerns about hurting but does not ridicule or use punishment (e.g. says, “I see that it really hurts Jaylen when you pull his hair, look at his face.”) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a combination of natural and logical consequences and encourages children to be responsible for their own behavior (“Kayla, instead of throwing the doll at Jordan, why don’t you hand it to him? If you throw the doll again, you could hurt Jordan and we will have to put the doll away and find something else that you can throw”) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shares program strategies for prompting and reinforcing positive behaviors and social practices with parents 						
Comments:						
18. Promotes identification and labeling of emotions in self and others	3	2	1	YES	NO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses photographs, pictures, and posters that portray people in various emotional states 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduces children to more complicated and varied feelings words (e.g. terms such as: calm, interested, curious, quiet, bubbly, frustrated, uncertain, worried, anxious, enthusiastic etc.) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask children questions about their feelings and talks about the fact that feelings can change (e.g. “Are you upset right now? I know he doesn’t want to let you use the truck right now but when he is finished you can have a turn and I think you will be happier then!”) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses real-life situations to practice problem-solving, beginning with defining the problem and emotions involved as appropriate for each age (e.g. “I can see that you are upset because it is time to go inside. It is sometimes hard and upsetting to go inside when you don’t feel ready. Let’s think about how to make it better...maybe we can come outside again later?”) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists children in recognizing and understanding how another child might be feeling by pointing out facial expressions, voice tone, body language or words 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observes aloud how children’s actions influence others in the room (e.g. “It looks like Margaret feels happy when you give her the doll!”) 						
Comments:						

Practices and Indicators	Consistently	Occasionally	Seldom	Target for Training?		Observations/Evidence
				YES	NO	
19. Explores the nature of feelings and the appropriate ways they can be expressed	3	2	1	YES	NO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labels cues of emotional escalation for children (“<i>You look like you are getting frustrated when Jennifer takes the blocks from you</i>”) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses opportunities to comment on occasions when children state they are feeling upset or angry but are remaining calm (24 months & older) and comments on positive emotions (“<i>You are so calm and relaxed right now</i>”) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is present and offers calm words of support during a toddler “tantrum” if the child is in danger of hurting self or others, gently holds child and provides explanation 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chooses books, music and finger plays with a rich vocabulary of feeling words 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labels own emotional states and provides an action statement (“<i>I am feeling frustrated so I better take some deep breaths to calm down</i>”) 						
Comments:						
20. Develops individualized approaches to support children in distress	3	2	1	YES	NO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops individualized approaches for children who have difficulty with routines and transitions (i.e. helps parent develop a ritual for drop off; engages in a specific routine to soothe a child who has difficulty falling asleep; provides an individual child more frequent warnings in preparation for transitions) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works with families to share and explore techniques to try both at home and in the program 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages in reflection with peers, supervisor, consultants and/or coach for a child exhibiting difficulty with certain routines or transitions 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjusts responses to child’s behavior based on effectiveness* 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response to behavior is matched to the cause, purpose, or meaning of the behavior rather than a one –size-fits all approach* 						
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
			Where to find helpful training information... Tool IV: Individualized Intensive Interventions
			21. Team uses information and careful observation to determine the meaning of behavior – Module 3 22. With team, develops initial responses to concerns – Module 3 23. When necessary, uses a program process to develop individualized support plans – Module 3
			24. Uses program process to reflect on children’s progress within support plan – Module 3