**Post one**

Classroom Management

After reading Chapter 9, read the article [Developmentally Appropriate Child Guidance: Helping Children Gain Self-Control](http://www.childcarequarterly.com/pdf/spring09_selfcontrol.pdf).  Then, identify two to three classroom management situations (e.g. raising hand to speak) that you would be likely to encounter in an early childhood classroom.  Describe how you would address these situations in ways that are developmentally appropriate to young children.  Your initial discussion post should be at least 200 words in length.

Post two

Start Planning!

Find the Kindergarten learning standards online at the State Department of Education for the state of **Alabama**. Begin with the U.S. Department of Education State Contacts to find **Alabama**. Choose a particular content standard (e.g. “Read emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding”) and describe two to three curriculum planning ideas or teaching strategies that would support the learning of this standard. Your initial discussion post should be at least 200 words in length.

**Chapter Nine to go with post one**

**Early Learning Standards for Social and Emotional Development**

As described in Chapter 4, the social and emotional needs of young children vary by age, personality, and circumstances. Social psychologists, led by Erik Erikson (1950), consider it critically important that young children develop secure attachments and trusting relationships, a positive self-image and confidence, independence regulated by awareness of and sensitivity to others' feelings and expectations, and the ability to make and keep friends and function as a member of a community. These ideas provide the framework for early learning standards that focus on social and emotional development and are consistent with the 1997 National Education Goals Panel recommendations. Social and emotional development is an important element of early childhood curriculum for a number of reasons related to the development of resilience, self-regulation, and early childhood as a window of opportunity.

**Resilience**

Children who acquire the skills emphasized in the early learning standards for social-emotional development are far more likely to be resilient, able to cope with stress and overcome adversity. (McClelland, Cameron, Wanless, & Murray, 2007; Pawlina & Stanford, 2011; Pizzolongo & Hunter, 2011). The kinds of significant challenges children face today include violence, abuse or neglect, natural disasters, economic distress within their families, and separation from loved ones. They also experience the typical developmental dilemmas that emerge as they begin to form friendships, experience rejection, and bond with unfamiliar adults.

Resilient children display a sense of agency, a feeling of control over their own decisions, and confidence in their ability to solve problems. They also do better in school over the long term. Their mindset tends towards optimism in face of a dilemma or challenge (Pawlina & Stanford, 2011, p. 31). People without resilience, in contrast, feel powerless to improve their circumstances or solve problems (Pizzolongo & Hunter, 2011).

Consider the family caring for a disabled grandparent and the range of reactions the child might display—the resilient child might see his grandpa's illness as an opportunity to spend more time with him, reading books, sitting with him in the room and helping his parents with care needs; the child with a lack of resilience might instead pick up on a sense of parental distress, feel anxious, and act out for attention as he observes his parents spending time caring for grandpa when he feels he needs their attention himself. Children with special needs face additional challenges and may particularly need to develop skills associated with resiliency (McClelland, Cameron, Wanless, & Murray, 2007).

**Self-Regulation**

Self-regulation is the ability to make decisions to control impulses in varying situations. An increasing body of research confirms strong links between early and long-term academic success and a child's ability to regulate her own behavior, work independently, control impulses, and follow directions (McClelland, Cameron, Wanless, & Murray, 2007; Papalia & Feldman, 2011). These are learning skills that emerge with the development of executive functioning, as stressed in the Approaches to Learning standards (Chapter 7). While multiple factors including temperament, brain development, and home environment contribute to shaping these abilities, teachers certainly play an important role in helping children learn how to thrive in educational environments (Jewkes & Morrison, 2007).

Social and academic competence is linked to classrooms with warm and responsive teachers and positive teacher-child interactions. Self-regulation that is internally motivated, rather than a response to expected rewards, also seems to develop best in classrooms where children have many opportunities to make and be accountable for their own decisions (Pianta, LaParo, Payne, Cox, & Bradley, 2002).

**The Early Childhood Window**

Brain research points to the importance of acquiring these learning-related skills during the early childhood period (Masten & Gewirtz, 2006). The field of early childhood education has long emphasized the need for social and emotional competence and teachers who understand how children construct their social selves in a similar hands-on fashion as in other areas of development; studies today confirm more than ever that this continues to be the case (Saracho & Spodek, 2007).

In the next two sections, we explore a social environment that promotes healthy development of these qualities and how teachers facilitate development of self-concept, social competence, and self-regulation.

**The Social-Emotional Learning Environment**

Providing an environment that promotes healthy social and emotional development requires considering the social ecology of the classroom (van Hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011), or how interaction patterns vary according to setting and type of activity. Think of social ecology from the perspective of Bronfenbrenner, as a network of individual personalities as well as overlapping peer groups, characterized by different ways children join, create, or are assigned by others—by popularity, interest, friendship, ability, and so on. Understanding group identification as a natural human activity is important, since groups can have an impact on the social development of individuals (Kindermann & Gest, 2009).

For instance, a teacher creates an artificial social ecology by assigning children to permanent or fixed reading groups using a single characteristic such as ability (homogeneous grouping). Subsequently, the children may recognize these distinctions and label their peers in these groups as "smart" or "dumb" and behave toward one another with this label in mind. Classroom ecology evolves more naturally when teachers vary the assignment of children to working groups (heterogeneous grouping) and monitor how children create and self-select their own membership in groups. Teachers learn a great deal about individual strengths and needs from observing the ways children form groups and interact with one another.

In the class discussed above, those same children whom the teacher labeled by ability might categorize themselves by interest, such as "artists," or "block builders." Or they might develop perceptions about ability but express them differently, such as "fast runners" or "good storytellers." Of course it is also possible that some group assignments would not be positive, such as "troublemakers" or "mean kids." Teachers use this information to help individual children with social skills and to guide groups toward inclusive and positive interactions.

Social acceptance, rejection, confidence levels, and self-image are all affected by social ecology and can also be very distinctive, fluid, or idiosyncratic from one class to the next. Teachers are most likely to establish a positive social atmosphere when they:

* Help children separate from parents and integrate quickly into the flow of classroom activity (Hendrick & Weissman, 2007; van Hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2007), so that they don't remain isolated or begin the day as bystanders.
* Build an inclusive, responsive, and diverse community (van Hoorn, Nourot, Scales & Alward, 2007) that values similarities and differences.
* Establish a positive verbal environment (Meese & Soderman, 2010) that sets the stage for friendly social interactions.
* Create opportunities for developmental levels and types of play that promote face-to-face contact and socialization (Fox & Lentini, 2006; Howes & Lee, 2007; van Hoorn, Nourot, Scales & Alward, 2007).
* Intentionally teach and model appropriate social skills (Fox & Lentini, 2006; Howes & Lee, 2007).

Helping each child feel comfortable and safe at school or care is best achieved with a gradual approach. Preenrollment visits and individual interactions with the teacher build trust. Small-group play before whole-group activities helps children get to know each other. Acknowledging, modeling, and helping children express their feelings from the start allows them to feel emotionally safe and secure (Hendrick & Weissman, 2007).

Building community is an ongoing process that also starts before children enter the program, with home visits as well as written and verbal communications. It continues every day as teachers welcome children, establish routines that involve them in caring for the classroom and each other, and plan and conduct activities that help them learn about the concept of community and investigate the community in which they live and go to school or care.

Teachers establish a positive verbal environment when they use language to demonstrate respect for children and their abilities by showing genuine interest in their activities and asking a variety of questions. Perhaps a teacher might say, "Wow, I see that you have brought in some very interesting rocks to share with us—can you tell us about where you found them and what you know about them?" Teachers model courtesy and help children understand expectations with language such as, "It would be so helpful if you could . . . " Or "Thank you so much for putting your trucks away—you knew right where they belong."

Teachers should also encourage children to use their words to describe the choices they make, with opportunities to make decisions that are meaningful and important (Meese & Soderman, 2010). For example, a teacher might say, "I see you have put the 'work in progress' sign on your block structure—you must have some big ideas about what you are building—can you tell me about what you want to do next?" These kinds of verbal interactions help children feel valued and special and create conditions that affirm positive perceptions of themselves and others.

The positive verbal environment can be used as a context for facilitating play interactions as teachers establish defined activity areas and pathways to allow for different types of social exchange. For example, by choosing and arranging furniture and equipment that encourage face-to-face encounters, teachers increase the chance that children will engage with one another (van Hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2007). A comfortable area with pillows or soft furniture and homelike lighting for reading and looking at books encourages conversation and personal interactions. A playhouse in the outdoor space invites children to congregate and play in small groups.

Direct teaching and modeling takes many forms, from having a conversation with an individual child about how to communicate anger with words to guiding three children through settling a dispute or constructing a set of "friendship guidelines" with an entire group or class.

**Teacher Practices and Interaction Patterns**

In many ways, a teacher or caregiver's behavior and interaction patterns are as important to children's social and emotional development as any materials or activities in the classroom (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Gallagher & Mayer, 2006; Willis & Schiller, 2011). In general, regardless of the age of children, teachers support social and emotional or affective development by building high-quality relationships with them. The specific characteristics of teacher-child interactions will vary over time and by age as teachers get to know their children, become familiar with them as individuals, establish mutual trust and respect, and commit to a long-term relationship with each child and family (Gallagher & Mayer, 2006).

**Teacher behaviors that promote high-quality relationships include:**

Using words and body language that show affection and interest for individual children

Responding promptly to children in distress

Engaging in personal interaction or conversation with each child daily

Recognizing and acknowledging individual and group accomplishments

Respecting children's need or desire for privacy

Respecting children's need or desire to finish an activity

Providing children with a number of choices or directions that are manageable for their age

Waiting to see if children can solve a problem independently before intervening

Using positive language (I need you to . . . can you please . . . ) to convey expectations (rather than 'no, don't', etc.) (Gestwicki, 2011)

**Self-Concept and Socialization**

Self-concept begins to develop very early, as babies first realize that their limbs are part of their bodies; it grows as toddlers, for example, beginto recognize their images in a mirror (Papalia & Feldman, 2011). This is a multidimensional concept that also affects how a child developsrelationships with others.

Children acquire **personal identity** as they learn to recognize and feel comfortable with their self-images and bodies. They begin to understandtheir **social identity** as comprising the kinds of things that characterize them as individuals within larger groups, such as ethnicity, culture,gender, and social standing (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010; Kowalski, 2007). They develop an attitude of confidence and an internalized senseof self-worth as they experience repeated success at completing tasks and solving problems. Young children also begin to develop **empathy**—theability to imagine or understand how another person might feel in different situations. All these things are needed for a child to build healthysocial relationships with peers and others.

**Personal Identity**

Young children tend to describe themselves in concrete terms, according to what they look like, what they can do, or what they like or don'tlike. They can't typically provide a description with multiple, integrated or qualitative characteristics until middle childhood (Hendrick &Weissman, 2007). Therefore it makes sense to do activities with them that focus on these concrete attributes so they can begin to develop avocabulary for describing themselves in terms of things that are real to them, such as, "I have brown eyes" or "I like to dance." Table 9.1 offerssuggestions for steps teachers can take to foster a sense of self.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Table 9.1: Strategies for Promoting the Development of Personal Identity** | |
| **Activity Focus** | **Sample Activities** |
| Mirrors | * Place mirrors strategically around the classroom—vertically, horizontally, or diagonally—perhaps even on theceiling. * Provide hand mirrors and/or a magnifying mirror in the dramatic play area. * Consider making or purchasing a pyramid-shaped structure that children can crawl inside with mirrors on theinside surface. * Use small reflective materials like foil and mirror tiles for collages. |
| Photographs | * Give each child a small photo album and periodically insert pictures taken at school. * Frame family photos and display them in the room. * Print out a sheet of adhesive labels with each child's photo and use them in ways that allow the children tofind their pictures unexpectedly; for example, tape some pictures on small plastic cubes and hide them in thesand table, in a basket of cars, or freeze them inside ice cubes to put in the water table. * Print out a 4- by 6-inch image, laminate it to poster board, and cut it up into a puzzle. * Print out 8- by 10-inch photos, put each one on a cutout paper birthday cake, and make a birthday wall. * Project a child's picture on a piece of poster paper and let him or her trace the image. * Photograph the front and back images of each child and make a guessing game chart. |
| Names | * As with photos, print out sheets of labels with each child's name on them and use them whenever andwherever possible. * Play name games at circle/group time or while waiting for transitions; for example, "I'm thinking of a childwhose name starts with S. . ." or " I am . . . and I like to . . . ," and so on. * Incorporate finger plays or songs that include the opportunity to insert a child's name. * Print names on sentence strips, laminate them, and use them for tracing. * Write names in glue on cardboard and sprinkle with glitter or colored sand. |
| Accomplishments | * Start an "underwear club" for toddlers with a pocket folder holding each child's picture, with a Velcro tab onthe back and a matching tab for each child at the top. When a child is toilet trained, he or she posts his orher picture to the club. * Create a display board with the words, "\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ can . . . ," and fill in the blanks with the child's nameand what he says he can do. * Make a class book, "I (or we) can. . . ." For each page, use a photo and sentence dictation from a child or thegroup about things they can do. * When children learn their home addresses, mail a note addressed to the child at home; make a special callwhen they know their phone numbers. |
| Preferences | * "I like/I don't like . . ." class book. * Make a chart that graphs foods children like and don't like, with each child's name or picture and smiley orfrowny face stickers. |

**Social Identity**

Acquiring social identity includes learning about gender, ethnicity, and ability issues. Experts on multicultural and antibias education adviseteachers to focus on values, interaction patterns, and equitable teaching practices, rather than curriculum activities that highlight superficialfeatures like flags or potentially stereotypical images of different cultures, such as a sombrero or feathered headdress (Derman-Sparks &Edwards, 2010; Hendrick & Weissman, 2007). In other words, children are taught to respond to each other courteously as individuals. This helpsto create a classroom culture that values respect, caring, and the matter-of-fact recognition of similarities and differences. It also provides thegrounding children need as concrete learners to understand their places in the context of others.

Strategies that promote an accurate and unbiased environment include the following:

* Using pictures of actual children and families rather than drawings.
* Making sure that photographs, displays, and materials depict at a minimum the ethnic groups represented in your class; also be sure thatpeople of all ages are represented.
* Examining and removing any literature that includes stereotyping of any kind.
* Using only materials that are culturally inclusive and gender-neutral (e.g., showing both men and women in different occupations).
* Encouraging children to bring materials from home for the dramatic play area.
* Making sure that dolls in the dramatic play area accurately reflect ethnic features rather than dolls that are identical except for skin pigment.
* If you notice "gendrification" in play areas, where, for example, only girls are playing in the kitchen area, designate "girl only" or "boy only" daysin those centers to encourage cross-gender participation.
* Making sure classroom job assignments are gender-neutral.

Activities that can be used in the classroom to contribute to development of social identity include the following:

* Cut out and paint a life-size tracing of each child's body and display these in small groupings, or asa "class portrait."
* Mix paint to match the skin color of each child when making portraits, or to do handprints orfootprints.
* Have children cut out pictures from magazines to make a book or collage of boys and girls doingsimilar things.
* Make personal time lines with photographs children bring from home that depict important eventsin their lives.
* Make class books of things children like or don't like to eat or do, or things they fear or that makethem happy or angry.
* Pair or group children to ensure cross-cultural and balanced gender interactions.

**Confidence and Self-Esteem**

As children's cognitive awareness and ability to use words to describe "who I am" develops, theyalso begin to make comparative judgments about themselves in relation to others. Children tend tohave perceptions about their self-worth long before they begin to talk about it, which typicallyoccurs toward the end of the early childhood period (around age 7 or 8) (Papalia & Feldman, 2011).Younger children also seldom make subtle distinctions, usually categorizing themselves at one or theother end of a spectrum, such as good/bad. Further, their ability to be realistic about strengths andweaknesses can be affected by adults who lavish unwarranted praise or who are continually critical.

Essential to healthy self-esteem and confidence that motivates children to persist through difficultiesis "unconditionality" (Papalia & Feldman, 2011). In other words, if a child's self-esteem is solelycontingent on success, she can develop a sense of helplessness if she is not successful on the first try. Conversely, if a child's self-esteem andconfidence are unconditional attributes, a failed attempt will only lead him to try repeatedly until he succeeds. Over time, children who lackconfidence expect to fail and become more reluctant to take risks, while an overconfident child may not learn how to react to failure (Willis &Schiller, 2011).

The goal for teachers of young children is to help them develop realistic confidence in several ways, as Table 9.2 illustrates.

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| **Table 9.2: Strategies and Examples for Developing Confidence and Self-Esteem** | |
| **Strategy** | **Example** |
| Encourage trial and error, so children learn thatmistakes are a normal part of progress and the waywe learn what does work. | Trying several different combinations of paint to make green. |
| Share your own experiences with success, failure,and problem solving. | "Last weekend I was making cookies and I burned them all in the oven; I had tostart over, but the second time, I set a timer, and that batch turned out great!" |
| Identify challenges. | "Wow, our plan for the garden is going to include a lot of digging and hardwork, but I know if we take our time and work together, we can do it!" |
| Model talking through options or pros and cons forsolving a problem so that children see that decisionmaking is a process. | "Well, if you want to put a tower on top of this airport, there are a coupleplaces it could go. Let's think about what might happen if we put it here orthere before we move the blocks." |
| Read stories to children that provide goodexamples of how one finds success and deals withfailures. | See the [appendix](https://content.ashford.edu/books/AUECE311.13.1/sections/table_appendix#social) for a list of children's books geared to social-emotionaldevelopment. |
| Emphasize the value of trying something new as animportant part of learning. | "This puzzle doesn't have the little knobs you are used to, but look at the greatdinosaur picture on the cover of the box—it shows what it will look like whenthe puzzle has been put together." |
| Acknowledge accomplishments. | Documenting with photos, displaying work, sharing a construction or artproduct during group time with other children, etc. |
| Praise effort over ability. | "I know you tried three times to cut that paper circle to get it just right." |
| Sources: Gartrell, 2012; Pawlina & Stanford, 2011; Willis & Schiller, 2011. | |

**Empathy**

As defined earlier, empathy is an abstract concept that develops over a long time. Very young children generally do not experience or expressempathy. Infants, toddlers, and young preschoolers tend to be highly egocentric, acknowledging only their own needs and assuming thateveryone experiences the world from a single perspective—theirs (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969)! It would not be effective, for example, to addressan 18-month-old child who bit another child with, "That was mean! How do you think you made him feel?"

The teacher or caregiver could, however use such an episode as an opportunity to begin building empathy. The teacher might say, "Oh, you hurtyour friend," and ask the biter to help comfort the other child, perhaps by holding his hand or helping to hold ice on the bite. Parents, teachers,and caregivers can encourage children—beginning around age 3—to consider how others are feeling, keeping in mind that it takes many suchexperiences for empathy and compassion to grow.

As with many other dimensions of social learning, it is essential to use language to help children recognize what others are feeling or thinking.You might, for example, say "Remember this morning when you couldn't find the block you were looking for and you got upset? I see that Mollyis getting frustrated because she can't find what she is looking for—can you help her?" Here you are letting both children know that emotionsand feelings are universal and that one can demonstrate sympathy and concern.

Caregivers can support the development of empathy by providing children with opportunities to care for and recognize emotional signals andbody language in others. Children should also be encouraged to consider the fact that different people have different perspectives about thesame situation. Simple activities such as looking at, describing, or drawing an interesting seashell from multiple angles, or asking children whatthey see when they lie on their backs and look up at the sky, provide concrete reference points for discussing point of view.

Additional caretaking activities that help children to develop empathy include:

* Encouraging children to wash, dress, feed, change, and speak to baby dolls in the dramatic playarea.
* Caring for classroom pets—even a fish needs daily care; provide a feeding schedule and recordchildren's daily observations about what the fish is doing or how it is behaving. If your state allowsother kinds of pets, consider inviting children to take a pet home over a weekend.
* Noting when a child is out sick and making cards or sending a note/email message to a child athome.
* Using sticky notes to jot down brief anecdotes when you observe a child doing somethingthoughtful or particularly sensitive to another child's feelings; put the sticky note in the child'stake-home materials or make a wall chart.

To help children learn to recognize and acknowledge others' feelings, try activities such as:

* Making "persona dolls" (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010)—simple rag dolls that children nameand for which you make up a back story relevant to the circumstances of children in your group.Use them to role play empathetic interactions.
* Making stick puppets, each with a photo/face of a child in the classroom. Use them to reenactcaring or hurtful interactions that you observe.
* Giving plush animal puppets names like Fearful Frog, Sickly Snake, Angry Alligator—thusencouraging children to use them for role playing.
* Making or buying a matching lotto-type game that incorporates facial expressions indicatingfeelings—delight, anger, frustration, boredom.
* Making a book with pages that start with, "I feel sad when. . . . I feel happy when . . . ." Recordchildren's responses and keep your record handy to read frequently.
* Singing songs like "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands . . . if you're angry and youknow it, stomp your feet. . . ."

**Healthy Social Relationships**

With young children, developing healthy social relationships depends a great deal ona general feeling of safety and confidence (Willis & Schiller, 2011) as well as onestablished interactions with family members and caretakers, andmaking/maintaining friendships in the neighborhood and at school or child care(Howes & Lee, 2007). One of the most heartbreaking things a teacher can witness isa child who is a social outcast, unable or unwilling to make friends, clearly miserableand unhappy most of the time. Infants as young as 2 months begin to distinguishpeers from others and by 2 years of age have begun to display preferences in playpartners (Kowalski, 2007; Ladd, Herald, & Andrews, 2006).

Play-based group settings that provide children with adequate space, time to play,open-ended and creative activities support positive and complex interactionsbetween and among children more than those with highly directed programs andlimited access to materials (Howes & Lee, 2007; Ladd, Herald, & Andrews, 2006).Important as well is evidence that close and trusting relationships between childrenand their teachers provide children with emotional resources that help them managestress and aggressive tendencies (Gallagher & Mayer, 2006; Gallagher, Dadisman,Farmer, Huss, & Hutchins, 2007; Howes & Lee, 2007; Ladd & Burgess, 2001). Twochallenges for teachers to help children develop healthy social relationships arepromoting peer-group acceptance and facilitating and creating the conditions forchildren to form friendships with other individuals.

**Peer Acceptance**

Through observation and interactions with children, early educators learn todistinguish between general acceptance of a child by his peers and truefriendships between individual children characterized by mutual affection,companionship, and longevity (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2007). Thefactors that attract children to their peers are very similar to those that attractadults—shared interests, personality, appearance, and behavior (Howes & Lee,2007; Kowalski, 2007).

General peer acceptance is important, since much of a child's day at school orcare involves interactions with others in play, small- or large-group activitieswith adults, snacks and mealtimes, story time, or rest. Some of these activitiesare more "high profile" than others; for example, if a child states loudly,"Ewww, I don't want Timmy to sit with me at lunch," it is likely other childrenwill hear and the probability of Timmy being rejected by others increases(Ladd, Herald, & Andrews, 2006). Further, once a child has established anegative reputation, that reputation becomes more and more difficult toovercome, and it becomes harder for the child to form individual friendshipsas well (Buhs & Ladd, 2001; Gallagher et al., 2007; Persson, 2005).

Because play is typically a fluid activity, with children moving about and highly engaged in what they are doing, a child can "practice"negotiating relationships with peers by inviting others to play or asking them to join a play in progress. Studies have shown that children aremost successful in their attempts to join group play when teachers encourage them to:

* Approach a group of four or more children, as the personal dynamics of pairs and triads are characteristically more exclusive and likely to resultin a rejected offer or request.
* Observe for a few minutes so the child can gain a sense of what is going on, and then make an effort to join the play by imitating what otherchildren are doing and using language that focuses on the group, rather than on themselves. For example, instead of saying, "I want to play," achild will be more successful by asking, "Can I help you build the bridge?" (Ladd, Herald, & Andrews, 2006.)

***Teaching Friendship Skills***

Young children communicate and cooperate more with their friends than with other children (Howes & Lee, 2007; Kowalski, 2007). They alsohave more conflicts but usually find ways to resolve them (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2007). Over time, from spending a lot of timetogether and sharing experiences (mutual socialization), they may even take on similar characteristics or preferences, such as hairstyles, clothing, or musical tastes (Howes & Lee, 2007; Kids Matter, 2009).

Young children are more likely to make friends when they are able to use their words effectively to initiate conversations, express feelings,provide ideas for play, and compliment other children. They are also more successful when their behavior is generally helpful and cooperative,demonstrating the ability to share and take turns, refusing to join in others' negative behavior, playing fair, following rules, and being goodlosers (Bovey & Strain, 2012; Kids Matter, 2009).

Engaging young children with activities that model and teach friendship integrates all the elements of self-concept.

**Promoting Self-Regulation**

Self-regulation links all the domains of development and is considered one of the most reliable predictors of academic and social success in laterlife (McClelland, Cameron, Wanless, & Murray, 2007; Papalia & Feldman, 2011). It is important during early childhood because children need tolearn how to delay gratification; respond and adapt to rules; and handle frustration, challenges, and disappointments in socially acceptableways. We want them to do so not only because of the sense of satisfaction they feel when they know they are making good decisions but alsobecause being able to control themselves sets them up as more likely to achieve success as adults.

Adults promote self-regulation when, before stepping in to help, they wait to see if the child can solve a dilemma alone. That is, they wait notso long that the child becomes frustrated and angry or at risk for getting hurt but to communicate confidence that at some point they expectthat the child will be able to solve problems independently.

**Behavior Management**

The primary goal of classroom or group-care **behavior management** is not for the teacher or adult to manage the children but for the childrento learn how to regulate themselves. Behavior is the visible representation of the child's effort at any given moment to integrate what he or shewants or feels with what he or she chooses to do.

Many factors motivate children's behavior and the decisions they make, and a "one size fits all" approach to classroom management is neitheruniversally effective nor considered developmentally appropriate (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Kohn, 1999). A sound approach to guidanceincludes the following:

* Building a trusting relationship with each child
* Accepting feelings children express without judgment
* Determining the precipitants or causes of behaviors
* Establishing guidelines that allow for a range of consequences rather than a fixed or predetermined punishment
* Intentionally teaching and modeling decision making
* Regarding children as problem solvers and expecting them to participate in finding acceptable solutions for conflicts
* Communicating expectations clearly and praising children's efforts to meet them
* Pointing out good decisions

When you see a child "fly off the handle," know that the child decided to do so because it seemed the only option, whether or not the child isaware of having come to that conclusion after weighing alternatives. Brain research has revealed that when children experience prolonged orsignificant stress, a chemical reaction interferes with the "fight or flight" response, resulting in **reactive aggression** as a protective measureagainst a perceived threat (Bruno, 2011; Gartrell, 2011). Therefore children experiencing high levels of stress at home or in school may act outfor reasons much more complex than a simple mischievous desire to break a rule or get something they want.

Automatically punishing reactive aggression only serves to make the situation worse, as punishment compounds the stress that caused thebehavior in the first place. Sometimes it can be difficult to figure out what is going on when a situation erupts or a child consistentlymisbehaves, but it is important to do so in order to help the child make connections between feelings and actions so that he or she can beginto make better decisions.

**The Development of Self-Regulation**

Self-regulation begins in infancy, as babies gradually learn that their needs willbe met by responsive adults (Papalia & Feldman, 2011). For example, thenewborn cries in response to all stressors (being wet or soiled, hungry, thirsty,and so on). Over time, baby learns to wait before crying as he begins to trustthat when hungry, he will soon be fed, when wet, he will be changed, and soforth. Caregivers help infants and toddlers with self-regulation by providing acontext and routines that are predictable and anticipating their needs whenpossible so they don't have to handle too many challenges at once. When anadult remains calm while the child is angry or crying and uses words todescribe what the child might be feeling, the child learns that his feelings areacceptable.

By interacting with babies and toddlers in routines—such as diapering,bathing, and feeding—and communicating what they can do to participate,adults help them to establish self-efficacy. For instance, while changing a 6-month old, the caregiver may say, "Can you lift up your bottom to help me get the dirty diaper out so we can put the new one on?"

Some infant toddler curricula include the use of signing with preverbal infants andtoddlers to begin giving them tools with which to communicate what they need orwant as well as "announcing" what they might choose to do (Vallotton, 2008). Forexample, a 12-month-old might learn to shake his head, signifying "no," as heapproaches a hot stove, to indicate that he has learned not to touch it. Similarly, hemight learn to stroke his forearm to indicate that he knows he needs to use a gentletouch.

As children acquire language and become increasingly able to control theirmovements, early educators help preschool and primary children develop self-controlby emphasizing that how they feel or what they think is not the same thing as whatthey choose to do. Thus adults need to first help them acknowledge or identifyemotions and, second, learn how to express themselves and solve problems withwords or other appropriate actions.

**Acknowledging and Expressing Feelings**

Suppressing or denying emotions teaches children that certain feelings are notpermitted, or bad, and damages the self-esteem a child needs to make difficultdecisions with confidence. Children are also sometimes frightened by the intensity oftheir feelings. Therefore three of the most helpful skills you can develop as a teacherare close observation, active listening, and modeling how to express feelings withwords.

***Close Observation***

**Close observation**, or monitoring how children seem to be feeling and looking for signs of distress, gives you the opportunity to invite a child toopen up and talk before losing control. Especially with infants and toddlers but also with older children, you focus on interpreting their bodylanguage, as sometimes children don't know an appropriate word or the ones they do know seem inadequate to convey their feelings. As youget to know the children, you begin to recognize signals and can guess at describing how they are feeling.

Particular emotions have recognizable features, such as a red face or clenched fists (anger), diverted eyes or a crumpled body (guilt), or tears(sadness) (Bruno, 2011). Picking up on these cues, you might say to a child, "Your body seems all stiff and tight; I'm wondering if you are feelingmad about something."

***Active Listening***

**Active listening** means giving a child your undivided attention and accepting what is said withoutjudgment. You reserve your approval or disapproval and focus on how the child chooses to act onhis or her feelings. Active listening conveys and models empathy—that you care about how childrenfeel and acknowledge that their problems are real and important (Hendrick & Weissman, 2007).Further, if you *paraphrase*, or repeat back in your own words what you heard a child say, you helpteach the subtle difference between lashing out with words (to hurt another in an attempt to makeoneself feel better) and the more constructive process of reporting to another person how you feelas the first step in solving a problem.

For example, LaToya, a 4-year-old playing in the housekeeping center, is pretending to makepancakes and goes to the refrigerator where play food is stored to get some milk. Mario is alreadythere and takes out the very item LaToya wants. She turns to Mario, stomps her foot, and says, "No,no, stupid, that's mine!" and then proceeds to try to take the milk away from him. The teacher stepsin, saying, "LaToya, your words tell me that *you are upset because Mario has something you wantedto use*" (paraphrasing). The teacher might follow with, "but you hurt his feelings with the words youused; can you try again to tell him what you need and see if he can help you with that?"

***Modeling Talking about Feelings***

Teachers can model how to talk about feelings as a natural part of conversation and to let childrenknow that experiencing a range of feelings is normal. For instance, you might describe how pleasedyou are that you will be going out to dinner with friends for your birthday, that you are sad athaving to say goodbye to your son going off to college, or that you felt frustrated because you werein a hurry but had to wait in a long line at the grocery store.

Finally, you can provide children with alternatives for expressing their feelings with words or actions that are harmless, such as:

* Using expressive materials like easel or fingerpaint, modeling dough, or clay
* Physical activities that release tension, like jumping up and down, throwing a ball at a target, or hammering pegs into a block of clay or apounding board
* Redirecting to a soothing activity like swinging, rocking, or putting on a set of headphones and listening to music
* Using the "silent scream"—mimicking screaming as loud as possible without letting any noise come out!

**Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution**

As children begin to identify, acknowledge, and express their feelings, they also need practice tolearn how to solve problems and resolve conflicts. Key to this process is not only actively facilitatingproblem resolution when conflicts are happening but also having intentional conversations withchildren about decision making when they are not.

First, discussion provides an opportunity to think objectively and dispassionately about the kinds ofproblems children have or might experience. Second, children develop a shared sense ofresponsibility and ownership over the process. Third, identifying typical problems and brainstormingsolutions provide them with resources—a "toolbox" of strategies they can draw from to try to solveproblems themselves. Teachers need to keep in mind that there can be more than one appropriateresponse for a given situation and that children sometimes generate potential solutions that theteacher might not think of.

A teacher might encourage children to generate a list of scenarios and possibly useful strategies orsolutions, writing them down on a chart posted in the classroom for future reference. For instance,to resolve conflicts over toys or other objects, the list of alternatives might include trading oneobject for another, asking to use the item when the child is finished, or asking to join the play andshare. Later, when children are faced with a dilemma or conflict, those ideas can provide a place tostart in solving the problem.

As with expressing feelings, adults can also help children learn to recognize good decisions by usinginstructive language that describes the choices they make; for example, saying, "I know you wantedthe green marker very badly, but you made a good choice to ask your friend if you could use itwhen she was finished instead of taking it away from her." Descriptive language helps childrenseparate feelings from actions and understand that decisions have natural consequences that can be either positive or negative: "When youtook the ball away from your friend, you made a bad choice because now your friend is upset and doesn't want to play with you anymore; wasthere a better decision you could have made?"

In general, classrooms or care settings with a positive social/emotional climate have fewer confrontations, but young children do often haveconflicts (Singer & DeHaan, 2007). Such conflicts typically focus on arguments about objects, physical encounters, entry to play, and ideas. Thereis wide consensus among constructivist theorists that conflict is a normal part of life which helps children learn about social and moral rules(Singer & DeHaan, 2007; Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998). Teaching them to resolve conflict peacefully requires all of the above approaches—modeling, coaching, and direct teaching.

Some teachers use a process modeled after the Peace Table, a strategy first proposed by three-time Nobel Peace Prize winner [Thomas Gordon](http://www.gordontraining.com/)(Teaching Tolerance Project, 2008). This process can be effectively used with young children because it gives them a concrete means forresolving conflicts. The principle behind the Peace Table is scaffolding—intentional assistance and modeling of a series of steps that the childrengradually take over for themselves until they are able to solve a conflict unassisted and without prompting from an adult.

A place in the classroom is designated specifically for problem solving, with a place for two or more children to sit and a tool they canmanipulate, such as a clock-face type of circle with movable hands to mark their progress through the series of steps listed below.

* Identify the problem.
* Teacher or child initiates mediation by inviting children to the Peace Table.
* Each child describes the problem.
* Teacher summarizes each child's perspective using simple, clear language.
* As a group, children generate possible solutions. Teacher may offer prompts, but children's ideas should be the focus of this step.
* Group agrees on a solution.
* Children offer one another a sign of friendship, such as a hug, to close the process.
* Teacher follows through by checking in with children to verify that the problem has been solved.

**Rules vs. Guidelines**

As early educators work to help children develop self-regulation, they need to identify socially acceptable behaviors as goals for them toachieve. Traditionally this has meant establishing a set of classroom rules for children to follow. However, research has shown that rules foryoung children tend not to be helpful because they:

* Are usually stated as negatives (e.g., don't hit, no running, etc.), which can suggest to children that such behaviors are expected to occur (Wien,2004)
* Tend to define the teacher's role as one of technician/enforcer (Gartrell, 2012)
* Don't provide information about what children should do (Gartrell, 2012; Readick & Chapman, 2000)
* Can result in labeling (e.g., good/bad children) and uneven application (i.e., being lenient with "good" children, stricter with "bad") (Gartrell,2012)
* Can lead to long-term problems with aggression (Gartrell, 2012)

While teachers need to set expectations for individual and group behavior, many experts recommend using a few broad guidelines—rather thanmany specific rules and punishments—so as to construct a positive classroom dynamic and climate (Gartrell, 2012). Guidelines for preschoolersand children in the primary grades should frame expectations in positive terms, such as, "We are careful with our bodies," or "We use words tosolve problems." Guidelines should also be framed as open-ended statements to allow children to infer more specific friendly behaviors (likesharing a toy) from the general statement, "We are friendly with others." They should be displayed or posted in the classroom or care settingwith pictures and words as visible reminders of desired behavior. Caregivers who work with infants and toddlers (who are too young to verbalizeguidelines) should use gentle prompts and modeling to help children meet expectations.

Positively worded guidelines function as standards—defining common goals that the community as well as individuals work together to achieve(Gartrell, 2012, p. 57). Finally, guidelines provide teachers and caregivers with opportunities to involve children in setting goals for behavior andproblem solving. Preschoolers are generally able to participate in talking about and creating guidelines, and many teachers use the framework ofa class meeting to do so.

**The Class Meeting**

An extension of the time-honored custom of "circle time" (which traditionally includes group activities or routines planned by the teacher) is the**class meeting**, a forum for informal and intentional discussions including those that help foster self-regulation (Gartrell, 2012; Pawlina &Stanford, 2011; Vance & Weaver, 2002) Like its adult counterpart, a classroom meeting can be a regular part of the daily or weekly schedule orcalled as needed (by either a teacher or child) when situations arise that require consideration by the group as a whole. Examples of functionsthat might be carried out in a group setting include:

* Problem solving—addressing issues that affect the group or helping individuals brainstorm solutions for a problem with which they arestruggling
* Creating, discussing, or revising guidelines—including children in this process enhances their sense of community involvement and investmentin the welfare of the group
* Role playing/demonstrating appropriate actions or behavior
* Affirmations/acknowledging efforts and accomplishments
* Making joint decisions about curriculum that can involve children, such as choosing a field trip destination, determining what direction aproject should take, or making a plan for how the garden will be planted

Class meetings teach children about the purpose of shared goals and foster a sense of partnership in a **learning community** (Galinsky, 2012),where all members learn from each other and actively engage in meaningful and relevant decision making.

**Time Out**

Many teachers (and parents) believe that designating a chair or spot where a child can be sent for**time out** supports the development of self-regulation and fulfills a commitment to peaceful discipline, giving children a chance to calm down, think about what they did wrong and what to donext, and be ready to return to group play when released. Rules of thumb such as one minute intime out per year of age are commonplace.

However, an increasing number of early childhood researchers observing children placed in time outfind fault with this traditional format and believe that it should be discouraged if not discontinued(Hendrick & Weissman, 2007; Readick & Chapman, 2000). Among their findings are that time outcan result in feelings of isolation, sadness, and not being liked by the teacher; confusion about whythey were there; and uncertainty about what to do when released. Moreover, when time out is usedroutinely for noncompliance rather than reserved for the most serious problem behavior, itseffectiveness dramatically decreases (Readick & Chapman, 2000).

To avoid these negative outcomes, teachers who use time out should modify the practice to providethe child with a more active and meaningful role in self-regulation, by:

* Reserving time out for only the most serious negative behaviors (i.e., hurting someone else ordamaging property) when other strategies such as redirection have failed.
* Keeping the child with an adult rather than sending him or her to a corner or isolated location.(This maintains the teacher-child connection and also reduces the possibility that the adult mightforget about the child!)
* Helping the child use words to discuss what happened and how to make a better decision.
* Rather than imposing a specified time, let the child indicate when he or she is ready to return (modified from recommendations from Hendrick & Weissman, 2007).

**Social Studies**

A large piece of the development of the whole child involves helping each child acquire a sense of self in the world. The content area of social studies focuses on how children learn about themselves and groups of people in relation to others (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2010). The integrated study of the social sciences draws from several disciplines—history, geography, political science, economics, anthropology, archaeology, psychology, religion, philosophy, and sociology (Seefeldt, 2001).

The concept of social studies in the early twentieth century was primarily focused on promoting citizenship education, especially in public schools with high populations of immigrant children. This class with Asian American children is learning to recite The Pledge of Allegiance.

Social studies today evolved from an early-twentieth-century focus on citizenship education, influenced by John Dewey and others, which was intended to provide children (especially immigrant children) with direct experiences using a project-based curriculum orientation (Mindes, 2005). A 1988 position paper by the NCSS Task Force on Early Childhood/Elementary Social Studies spoke to the importance of the social studies for young children:

The social studies in the early childhood/ elementary years are crucial if we expect the young people of this nation to become active, responsible citizens for maintaining the democratic values upon which this nation was established. Unless children acquire the foundations of knowledge, attitudes, and skills in social studies in the important elementary years, it is unlikely that teachers in the junior and senior high schools will be successful in preparing effective citizens for the 21st century.

**Social Studies Standards**

Today, a high-quality and developmentally appropriate approach to social studies in early childhood is one that is integrated with other areas of the curriculum and includes experiences that are meaningful to children's lives and understanding and are highly engaging (Seefeldt, 2001). The national standards focus not just on content knowledge but also on the skills and methods of social scientists, attitudes, and values. The preschool/primary classroom or group-care setting provides a natural environment from which to learn about democracy and practice citizenship. The Bank Street School, discussed in Chapter 2, has demonstrated this idea and social studies as the heart of the curriculum for nearly one hundred years.

The revised national standards released by NCSS in March 2010 continue to organize content around ten themes that reflect the variety of disciplines within the social studies:

Culture

Time, continuity, and change

People, places, and environments

Individual development and identity

Individuals, groups, and institutions

Power, authority, and governance

Production, distribution, and consumption

Science, technology, and society

Global connections

Civic ideals and practices

Early childhood educators and researchers have reservations about the developmental advisability of some standards and performance indicators that address abstract concepts such as time (history) and spatial relationships (geography) (Jantz & Seefeldt, 1999). But the NCSS explanations of each theme suggest "big ideas," or avenues of inquiry teachers can explore with young children, that are developmentally appropriate, especially in curricular activities that focus on:

The self in social settings

Individuals in school and family life

The neighborhood

Sharing the planet with others (Jantz & Seefeldt, 1999; Mindes, 2005)

The remainder of this chapter will focus on inquiry themes and strategies early childhood educators can use to develop key concepts, skills, and values embedded in the NCSS standards.

**Identifying and Organizing "Big Ideas"**

In choosing ideas for social studies themes, teachers should guide children toward questions that promote sustained investigation, with many opportunities to integrate other areas of the curriculum. Remember from Chapter 6 (Planning) that activities can be preplanned and also emerge as work progresses to change the direction of an original idea.

Emergent Themes

Recall that big ideas can also emerge from the interests or questions of a particular group of children, either to initiate a study or change the path of work under way. Published accounts of project work from Reggio Emilia schools often describe topics deeply embedded in the social studies. For example, a project described in the first edition of The 100 Languages of Children, "The City in the Rain," emerged after children took a walk following a thunderstorm and wondered where the rain went after it fell, leading to a long-term study of the public water and storm drainage systems in their city (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998).