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The Importance of Teaching Social-Emotional Skills to Young Children

Stephanie M. Valdez

A Capstone Project for the Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Science

Introduction

My capstone project enhances the social-emotional skills of preschool children, which are fundamental for relationships, emotional management, and empathy. Children lacking these skills may struggle in learning, behavior, and socializing when they progress to elementary school. Studies have shown that social-emotional competence and cognitive competence are critical predictors of academic accomplishment (Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Student Benefits: Implications for the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Core Elements, n.d.). Children in preschool who lack these skills may experience difficulties in learning, behavior, and socializing as they progress to elementary school (Amy Morin, 2019). A significant issue arises when children encounter obstacles in the development of their social and emotional skills. This can manifest in behaviors including aggression, crying, misunderstandings, and difficulty regulating emotions.

The repercussions of such struggles extend beyond the child and can affect their peers and teachers in the classroom. Therefore, I designed a specialized curriculum for 3-5-year-olds that I implemented at Ocean Rock's Preschool Ministry in Marina. Using Tucker the Turtle's story to teach them to identify emotions, resolve conflicts, and regulate emotions. Additionally, we created a conflict resolution kit and conducted an activity on regulating emotions. By developing these skills, young learners will be better equipped to succeed academically and socially as they grow and learn.

Needs Statement

In the early stages of education, a child's social-emotional abilities can play a significant role in their overall growth. These abilities encompass problem-solving, collaboration, attentive listening, and emotional recognition. Developing these skills is essential to ensure children can interact positively with others and convey their thoughts, needs, and emotions effectively. Mastering social skills can lead to a range of benefits, including better academic performance and stronger peer connections Amy Morin (2019). It is particularly important to introduce social-emotional learning to children at a young age to prevent any hindrance to their educational development. In fact, it can begin as early as three years old or even sooner.

My project sought to accomplish just that by creating a specialized curriculum emphasizing identifying emotions, self-calming techniques, and emotional awareness. Social-emotional development is a critical aspect of a child's growth, as it significantly affects their overall well-being and success in life Bursa and Dinc (2020). Emotional competence is a vital component of social-emotional development, as it enables children to understand and regulate their emotions effectively, which, in turn, helps them develop healthy relationships with others. It is important to note that the lack of social-emotional skills in children can lead to developmental delays, including difficulty establishing healthy relationships, academic struggles, and behavioral problems. Therefore, early childhood educators must recognize the significance of social-emotional learning and development in children and incorporate it into their teaching curriculum. To develop social-emotional skills, children must learn a range of vital skills, including coping mechanisms, conflict resolution, interpersonal skills, diverse perspectives,

emotional regulation, empathy, and identifying emotions. These skills are essential for children to become responsible and well-functioning members of society.

Coping mechanisms enable children to manage stress and anxiety, while conflict resolution skills help them handle conflicts effectively. Interpersonal skills enable children to communicate and interact with others in a positive and constructive manner. Diverse perspectives help children understand and appreciate different cultures and backgrounds, which is essential in today's diverse world. Emotional regulation skills enable children to identify and express their emotions in a healthy and appropriate manner, while empathy helps them understand and respond to the feelings of others Nabors et al. (2022). It is important to note that social-emotional learning is not an inherent trait but can be acquired through experience and guidance. By promoting social-emotional learning in children, early childhood educators can create a safe and supportive classroom environment that is conducive to learning, where children feel valued and respected. Ultimately, developing social-emotional skills in children benefits not only the individual but also the community as a whole.

In my capstone project, I am focusing on the social-emotional development of children who are transitioning to kindergarten. The first subtopic of my research is about helping these children to identify at least two emotions that they may experience when they encounter peer-related situations. Emotional awareness is a crucial aspect of social-emotional development, and it involves a range of skills, including understanding, recognizing, labeling, and making sense of one's own feelings and those of others. According to Denham et al. (2013), young children often struggle to comprehend these concepts when dealing with problems that arise in the classroom with their peers. This can be particularly challenging for children in transitional kindergarten, who are still adapting to the social dynamics of school. As a result, it is important

to provide them with opportunities to develop their emotional awareness and to support them in learning how to navigate social situations.

In my project, I have identified the second social-emotional subtopic as young children's conflict resolution skills. Children are usually empathetic and can understand others' emotions but often find it difficult to manage conflicts in the classroom. These conflicts include sharing, taking turns, and expressing their emotions in a healthy way. The reason for this is that conflict resolution is not an innate skill but something that needs to be taught and modeled. Recent research by Pieng and Okamoto (2020) emphasizes the importance of teaching young children conflict resolution skills. They have found that young children frequently encounter social conflict when interacting with their peers. The way these children handle these situations has significant implications for their personal and interpersonal growth. Teaching children to acknowledge different perspectives, defend their own views while considering others, and find fair solutions through compromise can help them gain important skills that will benefit them throughout their lives. Educators have a critical role in teaching conflict resolution strategies to young children. By providing them with skills and tools such as active listening, problem-solving, and negotiation, educators can help children confidently and resiliently face conflicts. These skills can also be transferable to other areas of their lives, such as family, social interactions, and future careers. Therefore, it is crucial that educators teach conflict resolution strategies early on to help children develop these skills. By doing so, children can learn to manage conflicts in a healthy way, which can have a positive impact on their personal and social development.

Lastly, my project focuses on young children with the development of Emotional regulation, which refers to the ability to manage and control one's emotions effectively. It

involves recognizing and understanding one's feelings, as well as being able to respond to them in a healthy and adaptive way. Emotion regulation is an essential psychological skill that can impact all aspects of life, Nook et al. (2019), including mental health, relationships, and overall quality of life. By learning to regulate their emotions, individuals can reduce stress and anxiety, improve decision-making and problem-solving skills, and cultivate a greater sense of self-awareness and emotional intelligence. The research conducted by Nabors et al. (2022) has shown that emotional regulation has a close connection with social functioning. Effective regulation can lead to positive engagement and behaviors during interactions, while dysregulated behaviors like uncontrolled expressions of anger may hinder a child's engagement with others in a school setting.

Preschoolers who have behavioral problems may struggle to understand emotions and lack executive control over their own emotions and behaviors, which can lead to disruptive behaviors. This can have a negative impact on social development and put children at risk for behavioral disorders. Therefore, it is crucial to increase engagement in young children during the early years, as engagement has a positive relationship with enhanced social and cognitive development. During the preschool years, children experience a wide range of emotions, but they may not yet have the language or tools to express and manage them effectively. As a result, they may feel overwhelmed and struggle to control their behavior. To help young children navigate this emotional landscape, it is essential to understand that they experience their emotions before they can fully comprehend them. To react appropriately to a child in preschool, it is crucial to identify their emotional state. This involves paying close attention to their behavior, body language, and facial expressions. Once we have identified their emotional state, we can help them regulate and understand their emotions by modeling skills such as identifying and

recognizing emotions. We can also provide them with the tools they need to navigate their emotions, such as breathing exercises, mindfulness activities, and self-soothing techniques. It is important to note that young children may require assistance from adults to regulate their emotions, especially when they are feeling overwhelmed. In these situations, it is helpful to provide them with comfort and support and to help them identify and label their emotions. However, there are also times when children need to be given the space and time to regulate their emotions independently. By providing children with the tools and skills they need to navigate their emotions, we can help them develop emotional resilience and learn to regulate their emotions effectively.

In the past few years, preschool programs in the United States have incorporated conflict management skills into their social-emotional learning curriculum. These programs include Head Start, Prevention, Social Emotional Learning, and Peaceful Kids Conflict Resolution programs. According to Humphries and Keenan (2006), targeting preschool-aged children is particularly effective as this is a crucial period for social-emotional development. By emphasizing these skills early on, preventive programs can reinforce positive behaviors during this optimal developmental period. Providing preventive programs during preschool is more effective as problematic behaviors or cognitive deficits are less likely to accumulate due to maturation. Practical classroom strategies typically focus on teaching children about emotions, such as recognizing facial cues, identifying the root causes of their emotions, and developing conflict resolution and social skills. Teachers and educators use age-appropriate language and activities to help children better understand their emotions, which can reduce problematic behaviors and increase their social and emotional competence. These programs aim to reduce aggressive behavior among children by modeling and providing them with the appropriate words to devise

conflict resolution methods. They help children develop the skills they need to handle challenging situations and conflicts positively and productively. By creating nurturing environments at home and in school, children can develop these abilities and continue to refine them throughout their lives.

Extensive research has confirmed that Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is vital in fostering students' sound progress and academic success. Moreover, SEL has proven to mitigate problematic conduct and emotional turmoil that may impede the growth and learning of specific students. The incorporation of SEL into the educational curriculum elevates academic performance and lowers instances of disruptive behavior, substance abuse, and emotional distress. By providing children with the tools they need to navigate conflicts and emotions in a healthy way, we are setting them up for success in the future.

In conclusion, I facilitated the development of social-emotional skills among transitional kindergarten students by guiding them in understanding and identifying their emotions through the use of emotion cards. In addition, I instructed them on the Tucker the Turtle self-calming technique, which involved stopping, taking three deep breaths, and finding a place to "tuck and think" of a solution when a problem arose. As a class, they constructed a conflict resolution kit, which they utilized to select the most effective solution for each conflict.

Theory

My capstone project is based on Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which suggests that people learn by observing and imitating the actions of those around them. This theoretical framework is rooted in the behaviorist learning theories of classical and operant conditioning, as explained by (McLeod,2023). Bandura introduces two crucial concepts:

mediating processes between stimuli and responses and observational learning from the environment. Mediating processes refer to the internal mental processes that occur between a stimulus and a response. The process of learning a new behavior involves four main steps: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Attention is the ability to focus on the behavior being observed, while retention is the ability to remember the behavior that was observed. Reproduction is the ability to replicate the observed behavior, and motivation refers to the drive or incentive to perform the behavior. Observational learning can occur through direct observation or through media, such as television, movies, or the Internet. Overall, the Social Learning Theory is a comprehensive theoretical framework that explains how individuals learn through observing and imitating the behavior of others in their environment. In my opinion, the Bandura Theory is highly relevant to my project, which involves implementing a behavior management program in the classroom. The program aims to encourage children to observe, learn, and imitate positive behaviors, such as sharing, taking turns, and following rules. By using the principles of observational learning, children can develop new skills and behaviors that will benefit them in their social and academic lives.

Consideration of Diversity

I conducted my project at Ocean Rocks Church, located in Marina, CA. According to the U.S. Census, Marina has a population of 22,503 people. The Ocean Rocks Children's Ministry is responsible for serving 40 students from infancy to school age and is committed to serving the diverse community of Marina. The preschool group, consisting of ten children aged between three and five, has a 70% Latino/a, 20% Asian, and 10% white composition. The preschool group has 70% female and 20% male children. My project was designed in a comprehensive and all-inclusive manner, catering to individuals of all ages and cultural backgrounds. I made sure to

create a learning experience that was engaging and inclusive, without any hindrances or obstacles. I accomplished this by developing a structure that was easy to understand and engage with, ensuring that my project was accessible to all participants, regardless of potential barriers. The Ocean Rocks Children's Ministry is passionate about providing excellent service to the community, and through my project, I aimed to contribute to their mission by providing a valuable educational experience that is accessible to all participants.

Learning Outcomes

I have created a 3-day lesson plan featuring Tucker the Turtle, aimed at helping children learn about the importance of social-emotional skills. The lessons have these three learning outcomes.

1. Children will be able to identify at least four emotions, including anger, sadness, happiness, and calmness when shown emotion cards featuring facial expressions.
2. Children will learn to identify at least two tools they can use to resolve conflicts with their peers in the classroom.
3. Children will demonstrate two self-calming techniques when experiencing negative emotions

Method

Location and Participants

I presented the project on social-emotional skills at the Ocean Rocks Church Preschool classroom in Marina, CA. As the teacher and program director, I delivered 30-minute lessons over three days, using Tucker the Turtle as a teaching aid. The target audience was children between the ages of 3-5 years old. The classroom consisted of the same ten children each day, all of whom were proficient in speaking and understanding English as their primary language. Among the children, 70% were Latino/a, 20% were Asian, and 10% were white. Moreover, 70% of the children were female, and 20% were male.

Procedures and Materials

On the first day of my lessons, I focused on Learning Outcome 1 Children will be able to identify at least four emotions. I began with a circle time activity involving stretches and wiggles. It was an effective way to get any of their unwanted energy out to focus better during circle time. Next, I introduced the children to Tucker the Turtle, our classroom puppet (See Appendix 1.), who would help us learn about our emotions and how they are connected to our feelings. We started reading the book "Tucker the Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think." (See Appendix 2.) It was an engaging story about Tucker, the turtle, who struggled to control his emotions. We discussed the feelings that were evident in the story, such as anger, sadness, and happiness. The children shared their thoughts and opinions about how Tucker's friends felt when he hurt them. After finishing the book, we moved on to the next activity, where I showed the

children a set of emotional facial cards. (See Appendix 3.) The cards focused on four primary emotions: anger, sadness, happiness, and calmness. My primary focus was to teach them how each emotion had specific facial expressions. We played a guessing game where the kids had to name the emotion by turning the cards upside down and flipping them over to see the facial expressions. This game helped them understand how facial expressions can help us identify emotions. We repeated this game a few times, and I encouraged the kids to use these expressions in their daily communication. After the game, I assessed each child by showing them the four emotion cards and checking if they remembered the name of the emotion when they saw the facial expression on the cards.

On the second day of our lessons, we focused on Learning Outcome 2, which was to teach the children how to manage their emotions and resolve conflicts in a peaceful and respectful way. We started our day with circle time and a dance session to energize the children and get them ready for the day's activities. After the dance session, we had the children sit down and reread the book "Tucker the Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think." We also reviewed the four emotions we had learned about previously, which were happy, sad, angry, and calm. The children shared their personal experiences of how they felt when they experienced each of these emotions. During the session, Tucker the Turtle made a special appearance to reinforce the importance of managing emotions and resolving conflicts peacefully. During circle time, he came up with a great idea to support us in dealing with our emotions. He shared a set of solution cards that could help us find solutions to problems with our friends or express our emotions in a healthy way. This tool proved to be very helpful, and the solutions that we discussed were: 1. Getting a teacher's help, 2. Asking nicely, 3. Ignoring, 4. Playing together, 5. Saying "please

stop", 6. Saying "please" (See Appendix 4). These cards were designed to help children identify and express their emotions while finding peaceful solutions to conflicts.

In addition together, we created a solution box in the classroom, which included the solution cards, Tucker the Turtle puppet, calm-down fidgets, our feelings/emotions card, and a timer. We discussed the importance of using the solution box whenever we felt overwhelmed by emotions or faced conflicts with our friends (See Appendix 5). We also practiced using the solution cards and the Tucker the Turtle puppet to express our emotions and find peaceful solutions to conflicts. During the assessment, I interacted with each child individually and presented them with a set of solution cards. I asked them to recall which solution they remembered from the cards. This method allowed me to evaluate the level of retention and understanding of the material by each child.

On the third day of our lesson, we focused on the third learning outcome, which was to help the children learn to use two self-calming techniques when experiencing negative emotions. We gathered at circle time, did some yoga moves, sat down to review the first two lessons, and re-read Tucker the Turtle Story. To introduce the lesson, I brought out our classroom, Tucker the Turtle, who presented us with a poster that showed the turtle technique (See Appendix 6). During a recent session, I introduced a new technique to the children aimed at helping them manage their emotions. The technique has four simple steps: 1. Recognize the emotion you are feeling 2. Stop and think 3. Tuck in your shell, take three deep breaths, and think calming and coping thoughts 4. Come out of your shell when calm and think of a solution. The children were very excited to learn about this technique and listened eagerly as I explained each step.

We practiced together, taking our time to ensure that everyone understood how to control their feelings and calm down by "thinking like a turtle." After practicing the technique, we discussed how it could help us in our daily lives. We talked about how it can be challenging to control our emotions when we feel upset and how the turtle technique can help us stay calm and focused. The children shared their own experiences and how they would use the technique when they felt overwhelmed.

Tucker, our instructor, then introduced us to a new song called "Think like Tucker the Turtle Song," (See Appendix 7). The song is a fun interactive method to teach children the necessary steps while keeping it enjoyable and engaging. Through the song's lyrics, the children can easily grasp the concepts and remember them for future use. Overall, it was a great addition to our learning experience. After the lesson was done, I gathered a couple of children at a time to assess whether they remembered at least two of the self-calming techniques that Tucker the Turtle had taught us today.

Results

Throughout the first lesson, the main objective was to help the children understand and learn about different emotions. Specifically, the aim was for them to recognize at least four emotions: anger, sadness, happiness, and calmness. To achieve this, emotion cards displaying facial expressions were used, and each child was assessed individually by showing them the cards and asking them to name the emotion. All ten children successfully identified all four emotions, meeting the learning outcome 1. This indicates that the children had a good understanding of different emotions and were able to recognize them based on facial expressions.

Throughout the second lesson, my goal was to teach children how to identify and utilize appropriate tools and strategies to resolve conflicts with their peers in the classroom. Specifically, the goal was for them to identify at least two solutions that they could use to resolve disputes with their classmates. I am pleased to say that this learning outcome was fully met. I interacted with each child individually during the assessment and presented them with the solution cards. I was happy to find out that nine of the ten children successfully identified the solution box and at least one solution from the solution cards.

In my third teaching session, my primary objective was to help the children learn and demonstrate two self-calming techniques to cope with negative emotions. After teaching the techniques, I gathered a few children at a time to assess whether they had retained the knowledge. During the assessment, I asked them to recall at least two of the self-calming techniques that Tucker had taught us. The goal was for them to demonstrate at least two self-calming techniques. I am happy to report that this learning outcome was fully met, and all ten children were able to achieve this goal.

Discussion

Upon the completion of my capstone project regarding the importance of teaching social and emotional skills to young children, I am pleased to report that it was a resounding success. The first learning outcome was that children could identify at least four emotions, including anger, sadness, happiness, and calmness, when shown emotion cards featuring facial expressions. All ten children were able to identify these emotions when shown the cards. The game I played with them was interactive and fun, which helped them memorize the facial expressions and what each one meant. The second learning outcome was that all ten children were able to identify at

least two solutions they could use to resolve conflicts with their peers in the classroom. The puppet Tucker the Turtle led the class in this project, which kept their attention, and the children were involved in creating the solution kit. The third learning outcome was that nine out of ten children were able to demonstrate at least two self-calming techniques when experiencing negative emotions. The child who did not participate in the assessment wanted to play with Legos instead, so I did not force them to participate. This activity was successful because it was made personable to help children remember and fun and interactive with a song to help them grasp the self-calming techniques.

Overall, I attribute the success of my project to the carefully planned and engaging activities that I conducted throughout the project. The use of Tucker the turtle puppet was particularly effective in capturing the children's attention and making the learning experience enjoyable. I designed my projects and activities in a way that was hands-on, interactive, and fun while not compromising the importance of teaching social-emotional skills. Overall, I am proud to say that the children thoroughly enjoyed their time in the program while also learning valuable life skills they can apply.

Upon reflection, I've come to realize that the success of my previous projects was hindered by the constraints of time. In order to make a significant impact on children, initiatives must be repetitive and extend beyond the confines of the classroom. To achieve this, we must design our projects in a way that allows them to be sustained throughout the year and in various settings. Only then will we be able to achieve the desired outcomes and witness the true impact of our efforts on students and their learning experiences. By integrating such initiatives as a regular part of the curriculum, we can create a more comprehensive and effective approach to education. Although my previous projects were limited by time constraints, I am confident that

by expanding this approach throughout the year, we will achieve better results and see a positive impact on students and the classroom as a whole.

In terms of the future direction of this project, my plan is to continue utilizing Tucker the Turtle as a teacher's aid for the purpose of teaching and expanding our students' social-emotional skills throughout the academic year. I believe that Tucker the Turtle's character serves as a relatable and engaging tool for children to learn about emotions, empathy, and communication in a fun and interactive way. Furthermore, I would like to create a "Tucker the Turtle quiet thinking corner" in the classroom or a designated area where children can go to reflect, calm down, or take a break whenever they need it. I think this space will be especially helpful for students who may feel overwhelmed or overstimulated during the school day. In addition to using Tucker the Turtle in the classroom, I also want to expand its use to children at home. Research has shown that repetition and consistency are key for children's learning and development, and Tucker the Turtle and social-emotional learning can play a valuable role in reinforcing social-emotional skills beyond the classroom setting. Lastly, I would like to organize parent workshops to educate parents on the importance of social-emotional skills and how they can support their children's emotional well-being at home. These workshops will provide parents with practical tools and strategies to help their children navigate their emotions and build healthy relationships, not only in school but also throughout their lives.

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Appendix 1



Appendix 2

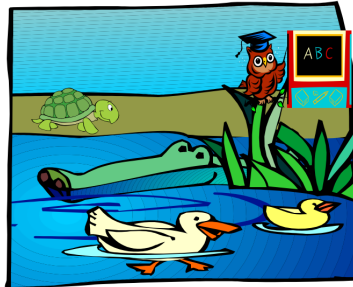


Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think

A scripted story to assist with teaching the "Turtle Technique"
By Rochelle Lentini
March 2005

© 2005 by The National Center for Learning Disabilities. Tucker Turtle is a trademark of the National Center for Learning Disabilities. All rights reserved. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. The authors and children's development series: One Above School, Seattle, WA. The Incredible Years.

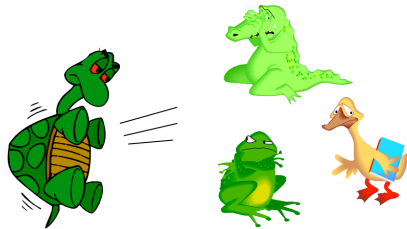
Tucker Turtle is a terrific turtle. He likes to play with his friends at Wet Lake School.



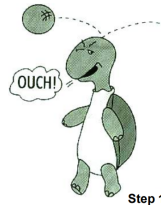
But sometimes things happen that can make Tucker really mad.



When Tucker got mad, he used to hit, kick, or yell at his friends. His friends would get mad or upset when he hit, kicked, or yelled at them.



Tucker now knows a new way to "think like a turtle" when he gets mad.



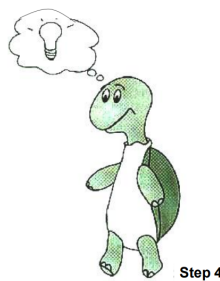
He can **stop** and keep his hands, body, and yelling to himself!



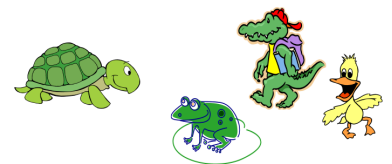
He can **tuck** inside his shell and take **3 deep breaths to calm down**.



Tucker can then **think of a solution** or a way to make it better.



Tucker's friends are happy when he plays nicely and keeps his body to himself. Friends also like it when Tucker uses nice words or has a teacher help him when he is upset.





The End!



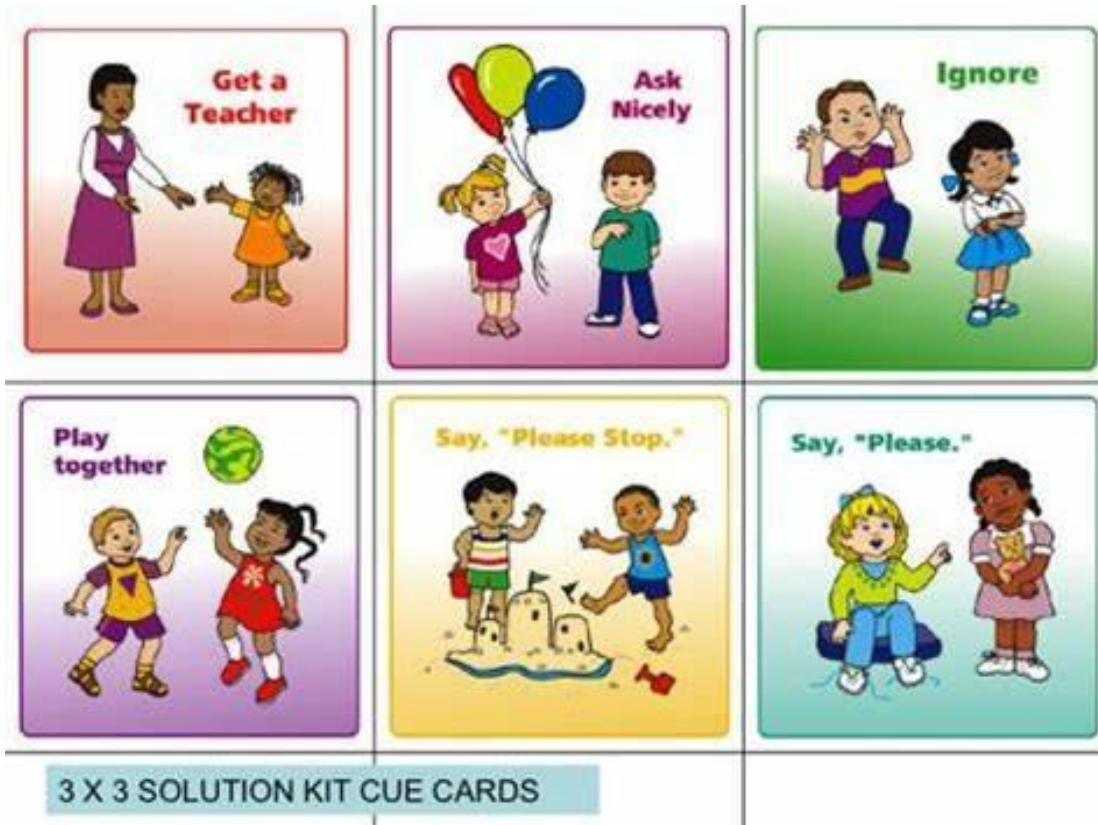
Appendix 3

Learn about emotions with Tea Time Monkeys!

 <p>happy</p> <p><small>www.teatimemonkeys.com</small></p>	 <p>sad</p> <p><small>www.teatimemonkeys.com</small></p>
 <p>angry</p> <p><small>www.teatimemonkeys.com</small></p>	 <p>calm</p> <p><small>www.teatimemonkeys.com</small></p>

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Appendix 4



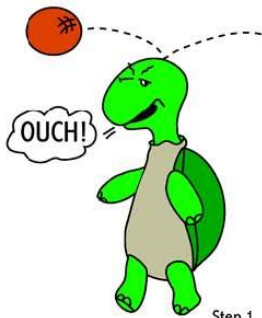
Appendix 5



Appendix 6

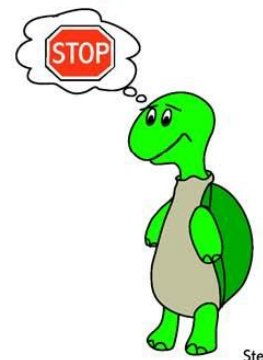
Turtle Technique

Recognize that you feel angry.




Step 1

“Think” Stop.



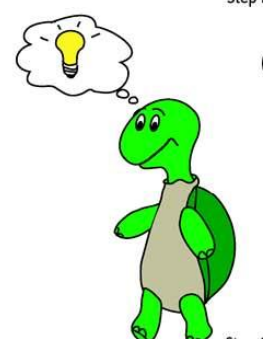
Step 2

Go into shell. Take 3 deep breathes. And think calm, coping thoughts.



Step 3

Come out of shell when calm and thinking of a solution.



Step 4

Appendix 7

Think like Tucker the Turtle Song:

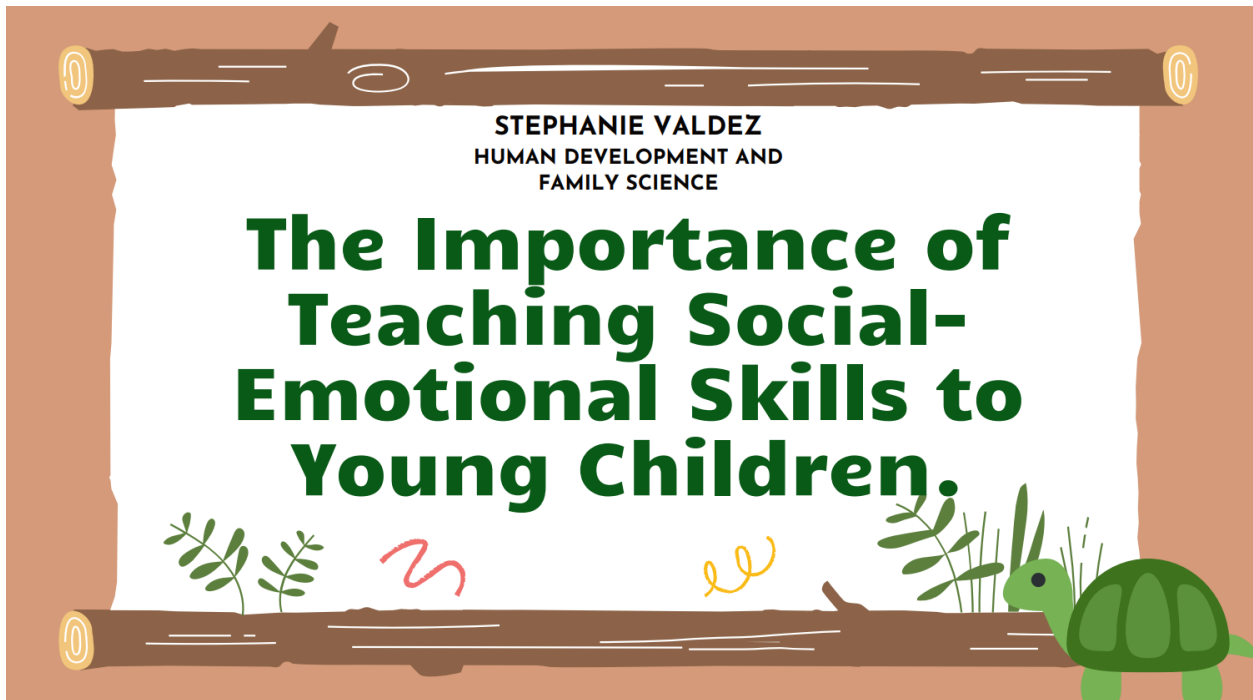
Think like Tucker, the turtle; think like Tucker, the turtle.

STOP. Keep your hands to yourself

No yelling at your friends

Take three deep breaths 1....2....3.....

Repeat

Appendix 8

Introduction

- Social-emotional skills are a set of abilities that help individuals manage their emotions, such as:
 - communicate effectively & develop positive relationships with others.
- These skills are essential to ensure children can interact positively with others and convey their thoughts, needs, and emotions effectively.

My why:

- Throughout my 17-year career working with children, I have held various positions and have gained important insights. One observation I have made is that children who lack fundamental social-emotional skills tend to face more difficulties when it comes to learning and are more likely to exhibit behavioral problems in the classroom.



Needs Statement



The Problem

- The lack of social-emotional skills in children can lead to developmental delays, including difficulty establishing healthy relationships, academic struggles, and behavioral problems.

The Research

- Children in preschool who lack these skills may experience difficulties in learning, behavior, and socializing as they progress to elementary school (Amy Morin, 2019).

Needs Statement

The Solution:

- I designed a specialized curriculum for 3-5-year-olds that I implemented at Ocean Rock's Preschool Ministry in Marina. Using a puppet named Tucker the Turtle and his story to teach them to identify emotions, resolve conflicts, and regulate emotions.



Theory

- My capstone project is influenced by Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which suggests that people learn by observing and imitating the actions of those around them. This theoretical framework is rooted in the behaviorist learning theories of classical and operant conditioning, as explained by McLeod (2023).



- This theory pertains to my project, as my lessons are designed to facilitate children's learning through observation and imitation.

Learning Outcomes

01

- Children will be able to identify at least four emotions, including anger, sadness, happiness, and calmness when shown emotion cards featuring facial expressions.

02

- Children will learn to identify at least two solutions they can use to resolve conflicts with their peers in the classroom.

03

- Children will demonstrate two self-calming techniques when experiencing negative emotions.



Location, Participations, & Method

Where

- Ocean Rocks Church Preschool classroom in Marina, CA.

Participations

- The targeted audience was 10 children between the ages of 3-5 years old.
- The classroom consisted of the same ten children each day, all of whom were proficient in speaking and understanding English as their primary language.
- Among the children, 70% were Latino/a, 20% were Asian, and 10% were white. Moreover, 70% of the children were female, and 20% were male.

Method

- 30-minute lessons over three days



Lesson:

01

- Circle Time- Morning Stretches
- Tucker the Turtle Introduction
- Read Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think.
- We discussed the emotions in the story.

Method

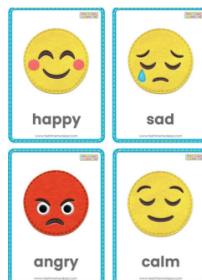
- Activity set of emotional facial cards. The cards focused on four primary emotions: anger, sadness, happiness, and calmness. My primary focus was to teach them how each emotion had specific facial expressions.
- played a guessing game where the kids had to name the emotion by turning the cards upside down and flipping them over to see the facial expressions.



Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think

A scripted story to assist with teaching the "Turtle Technique"
By Rochelle Lentini
March 2005

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Lesson:

02

Method

- Circle time and a dance Session
- Tucker the Turtle shared with us a great idea that could help our class if we ever had big feelings and needed help finding solutions to problems we may have with our friends or expressing our emotions. He showed us the solution cards

- We created a solution box in the classroom, which included the solution cards, Tucker the Turtle puppet, calm-down fidgets, our feelings/emotions card, and a timer.
- We discussed the importance of using the solution box whenever we felt overwhelmed by emotions or faced conflicts with our friends

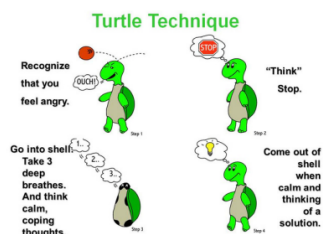


Lesson:

03

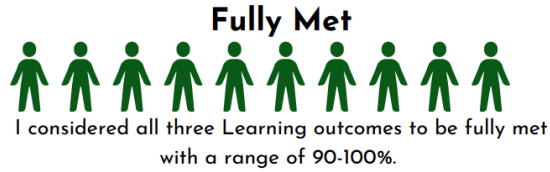
Method

- Circle Time- Morning Yoga
- Recap of the first two lessons
- Re-read Tucker the Turtle Story.
- Tucker the turtle introduced us to the think-like-a-turtle method.
- Learning to think like a turtle song
- The children shared their own experiences and how they would use the technique when they felt overwhelmed.



Think like Tucker the Turtle Song:
 Think like Tucker, the turtle; think like Tucker, the turtle.
 STOP. Keep your hands to yourself
 No yelling at your friends
 Take three deep breaths 1....2....3.....
 Repeat

Assessment Results



Learning Outcome 1



- I assessed each child by showing them the four emotion cards and checking if they remembered the name of the emotion when they saw the facial expression on the cards.

Learning Outcome 2



- I assessed each child individually and presented them with a set of solution cards. I asked them to recall which solution they remembered from the cards. This method allowed me to evaluate the level of retention and understanding of the material by each child

Learning Outcome 3



- I gathered a couple of children at a time to assess whether they remembered at least two of the self-calming techniques that Tucker the Turtle had taught us.

Successes and Limitations

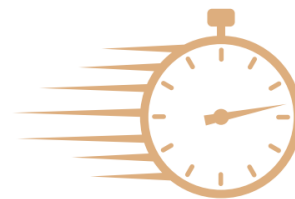
Successes:

- All ten children in the range of 90-100% met all three learning outcomes.
- Planned, engaging, and fun activities
- Confident that the children who participated have gained valuable life skills they can apply in the future.

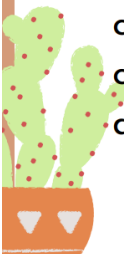


Limitations:

- Time Constraints
- Needs to be part of the regular curriculum. (repetitiveness and consistency are key)



Future Plans




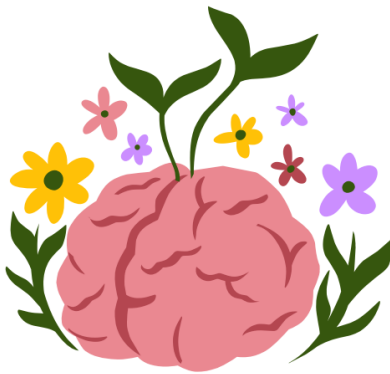
Expanding Tucker the Turtle within the classroom by creating a calm down corner..



Expand social-emotional learning among children by introducing Tucker the Turtle in their homes.



Conducting parent workshops.



Every conflict presents you with a choice. You can choose to view conflict as an opportunity to teach or as an opportunity to blame & punish.



Thank
you!

Questions, Comments or
Ideas?

