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Helping Kindergarteners Understand their Emotions and their Peers

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Introduction

My focus is on kindergarteners aged 5 to 6 years old, wanting to help children build meaningful relationships with their classmates and understand their emotions. The problem I will be stating is how children find it difficult to form good relationships with their peers or others in their environment because they do not understand others emotions. This is a problem because of children's inability to respect their peers' emotions. Given the issue of children not understanding their peers' emotions, there is a need to communicate or show to the children the many types of emotions and how they can help their friends when they are unhappy. In response to this need, I created a workshop with three lessons. First lesson is demonstrating what good physical boundaries are and how to respect them with their friends. The second lesson teaches children the necessity of distinguishing between good and poor words. The third lesson will teach children several strategies to aid their friends who are feeling worried. I will be providing these three lessons at an after school program at YMCA located in San Jose. I will be presenting the lessons to 6 kindergarten children, the workshop will be done in two days.

Need Statement

Kindergarten children often struggle to form strong peer connections. These children frequently struggle with understanding peers' emotions and forming meaningful relationships. Forming meaningful relationships is important because you are able to have someone who stands with you in difficult situations. It is critical that these children have healthy peer relationships because peer relationships can help you develop better skills, which is an essential component of child development. The first lesson focused on personal boundaries. physical boundaries. The second lesson taught the children how to be kind to peers and teachers. The third lesson taught the

children how to assist their peers when they are experiencing distress. The main objective is to help children form positive relationships with their classmates.

Background on Prosocial Development

My main focus is on the prosocial development of kindergarteners. Mareš (2017) notes that prosocial development involves voluntary activities aimed at benefiting others. Includes developing positive interaction skills in children and having a better understanding of emotions when children start to have a better understanding of different emotions we expereince and start to see things from others point of view. Domain area that will be focused on is social emotional development. According to Denham et al., (2012) social and academic success depends on young children's emotional competence, which includes knowing how to control their own feelings and those of others as well as how to express and experience emotions when needed. The importance of children understanding kindness is very important because being considerate, amiable, and giving while simultaneously being understanding, compassionate, and humane is an important way of having positive peer relationships.

Importance of developing prosocial skills

According to Denham et al., (2012) the reason that it is important for children to develop prosocial skills is because it helps them develop positive relationships and also a sense of belonging in their community or environment. The way this benefits children in school according to Denham et al., (2012) it gives them successful educational experiences that are made possible by the ability to express and control healthy emotions as well as the comprehension of one's own and other people's feelings. It is important for children to be able to express themselves in order to create healthy friendships. According to Denham et al., (2012) it is believed that parents and teachers play a significant role in socializing emotions in children by giving them experiences

that either encourage or inhibit the development of emotional intelligence. Stated by Denham et al., (2012) it is evident that emotional competence is crucial for preschoolers' early school performance in both the social and intellectual domains. Parenting research has shown compelling evidence that socialization practices of adults can either support or undermine this competency. The people mostly around children need to support them with their prosocial skills in order to learn how to create positive relationships.

Low social emotional skills

Some negative outcomes of having children having low social emotional skills according to Darling-Churchill & Lippman (2016) children will struggle to have good peer/friend relationships because they do not take into consideration their friend's feelings/emotions they will struggle to maintain relationships. According to Darling-Churchill & Lippman (2016) failure to form safe attachments with caregivers may subsequently cause problems with emotion regulation, communication, and building strong relationships with peers. Due to children having low social emotional skills, these children when they go into their adolescence age tend to dropout, juvenile delinquency, or do bad in school according to Brauner & Stephens, (2006), it could lead to anxiety and depression leading to poor academic achievement. Children having low social emotional skills can lead them to have poor success due to not knowing how to manage their emotions.

Physical Boundaries-LO 1

My project's first main focus is what physical boundaries are defined as not letting anyone touch or contact them without their consent. According to (Jacobson 2024), learning to be more understanding can assist children with social relationships, but it's also important to teach your child to speak for themselves and their limits when other children are being

overbearing, aggressive, or just plain careless. According to Jacobson (2024) boundaries are primarily about acknowledging and respecting our own needs, while also being courteous and mindful of the needs of others. Making a strategy for what to do when someone doesn't respect your child's feelings or limits allows your child to experience sticking up for themselves.

Teaching physical limits to children can make them feel safe and comfortable while also teaching them to respect others. This issue pertains to my topics since we are focused on teaching these children the value of having healthy relationships with their classmates. It is critical for children to maintain positive friendships by respecting their peers' physical limits and feelings. This connects to my service experience since the children at the site have a difficult time keeping their hands to themselves, so clarifying what physical boundaries are and why they are necessary would help them comprehend why we should keep our hands to ourselves. According to Eijgenraam (2020) boundaries help us become fully-rounded human beings, teaching us how to interact with others and to adapt to society.

Kindness-LO 2

My project's second main focus is that children will be able to distinguish kind from unkind behaviors. According to Chadwick, Smith, & Perkins (2022) kind means someone being nice to you, sharing things, or saying kind things to you. In the experiment that they did, they asked children from age 5 to 6 years old to distinguish kind from unkind. These children provided many different kinds of ideas of how you may help someone in physical or mental need. These included soothing and caring for them, involving them in a game, protecting them, helping them up, analyzing the harm done, helping the injury, notifying a teacher, and taking the wounded person to seek adult assistance. All of these reactions included doing something to help someone or being kind to someone. If children know what is the difference between those two

things they can help others distinguish kind from unkind. I want to clarify the importance of kindness by making lessons about interacting with their classmates.

Helping others-LO 3

My third main focus is how can children assist their classmates or friends when they are feeling any kind of emotion, for example feeling sad, angry, happy or upset in any other way.

According to Salisch (2010) parents play a significant role in their children's emotional development not just because they are attachment figures, but also because they have cognitive and emotional competence and teach their children how to utilize emotion labels, evaluations, expressions, and control mechanisms. In addition, parents teach their children cultural and subcultural rules about emotions. Weir (2023) states that you need to start from early infant years teaching them about their emotions first and then going from there to teach them about others. According to Weir (2023), it involves discussing and teaching your kid to understand and label their emotions, model appropriate conduct, and keep calm while modeling those positive actions. It is easier said than done; create strategies for dealing with circumstances like these, and play it out by imagining your child is having an emotional conversation with a classmate about how they are feeling or how they are making them feel.

Conclusion

My project was based on three lessons taught at an elementary after school program where children tend to have an understanding of the different types of emotion we experience and the importance of physical boundaries. This lesson took a span of two days. I decided to do these lessons in two days hoping the children would have a better understanding of what I was trying to teach them. My capstone project is focused on children aged 5 to 6 years old, who I attempt to assist them to comprehend their emotions and those around them. I am focused on

helping children manage their actions and emotions, as well as understanding others' feelings. My need statement explained why children should be able to differentiate between good and bad language, why boundaries are essential and should be respected and obeyed, and when to aid their peers when they are experiencing an emotion. I also covered the difficulties and what caused them, such as what inspires children to breach boundaries amongst their peers, children not understanding their peers' feelings, and why it is difficult for them to discriminate between good and bad language. Overall, my study focuses on the social-emotional development of children aged 5 to 6 in afterschool programs.

Theory

The theory that is associated with my capstone project is Bandura's Social Learning
Theory. According to Nabavi & Bijandi (2011) Social learning theory is widely recognized to be
essential to promoting positive behavioral change. This theory proposes that children learn
through social interactions. The focus of the theory is that individuals learn from one another.

Noted in Nabavi & Bijandi (2011) the way children learn how to social interact with others is
observing, initiating and modeling these behaviors to others like children. Stated by (Nabavi &
Bijandi 2011) Bandura's theory suggests that observing positive outcomes in the first stage leads
to the second and third phases of social learning, which include imitation and behavior modeling.

According to Bandura's children, they should be able to understand and learn from others at the
age 5 to 6 years old. According to Nabavi & Bijandi (2011) children imitate each other by
observing and imitating the activities of others. This method is termed observational learning.

According to Bandura children must develop social skills in order to be successful in life, as they
cannot learn everything on their own. According to (Nabavi & Bijandi 2011) the role of parents is
to demonstrate these behaviors to their children and to show the importance of having self

regulation. Noted by the authors is that adults are models to these children, they need to model these behaviors in order for them to intimate them while interacting with others. In order to successfully apply Bandura's Theory these steps need to be followed.

The way this theory will help me when creating these lessons for the children is teaching them self regulation. I have to demonstrate these emotions to the children in order for them to be able to have good interaction with their peers. One teaching approach is modeling the behaviors of being able to distinguish their emotions and their peers emotions. Another approach is praising the child for doing a good job or being able to understand other emotions. For example, in one of my lessons we will be demonstrating what physical boundaries are and why they should be respected. By demonstrating these behaviors the child will be able to understand what good physical boundaries are. By role modeling what good and bad behaviors are, what good and bad words are these children will be able to use these interactions and behaviors with their peers.

Consideration of Diversity

There is a great ethnic diversity in San Jose, California residents. According to the U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts for San Jose City, California (2023), 38.1% are Asian 32%, are white, 30.8% are Hispanic, 12.4% identify as mixed race, 2.9% black, 0.8% are American Indian, and 0.5% are Native Hawaiian and/or Pacific Islanders. My capstone project is focused on children attending the YMCA after school program at Northwood Elementary in San Jose California. The participants I worked with were of Asian background and the different ethnicities were Vietnamese and Indian. Since the children came from different Asian backgrounds they all spoked a second language. Some characteristics of the children are that they were both male and female students, ages 5 to 6 years old, and all of the participants come from middle class homes.

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My project was not focused in ethnicity backgrounds, it was more focused on the age and grade level I was working with. But I felt it is important to discuss the children's ethnicities because all different ethnicities come from different backgrounds and beliefs and it is important to respect their beliefs. They way that this influenced my project because I was able to establish a greater connection with the children and get more feedback from them. To help the kids relate my project to their everyday lives, I made sure to let them talk freely about their norms. Like I stated it was important to have understanding what they believed and what they were taught because I do not want to incorporate my beliefs into a lesson.

The way I made my lessons and materials to be culturally relevant and sensitive is by allowing the children to tell me about the rules and culture they follow at home. I let them discuss stories about their culture with me. I allow the children to share random stories about them and their families, even if it did not relate to the topic. During the lesson most of the students spoke English there was no need of translating, most of these children attend more outside activities that help them expand their vocabulary. During the process of creating my lessons I tried to come up with materials that both boys and girls would enjoy, during the time I was doing my service learning I took into knowledge the children enjoyed too color or do outdoor activities. So I decided to do an outdoor activity which was the hula hoop activity and then coloring the different types of emotions we experienced in the worksheets I found online, to put my lessons together. I also created my lesson around the ages 5 to 6 years old because I realized throughout my whole Service Learning hours that the children still tend to struggle how to read and write so I created lessons that related more of talking to them, coloring, listening which led to them listening to the storytelling of the books that I was using throughout my my third lesson. I didn't want to provide lessons that were difficult for them to understand so I made

it easier by providing worksheets that show the different types of emotions we experienced and activity that also was easy for them to understand what physical boundaries are and when they were being broken. I took into consideration that my participants were just 5 to 6 years old so I had to put myself in their position to see what were they were capable of doing since I was able to experience a certain amount of hours with them in my service learning I got a better understanding of what they like to do and how to make it fun but still learn and taking knowledge from my lessons.

Learning Outcomes

I designed a workshop on understanding Social Emotional Development for a group of kindergarten children ages 5 to 6 years old attending Northwood Elementary. It is focused on the following learning outcomes:

LOs1: Children will be able to demonstrate good physical boundaries

LOs 2: Children will be able to distinguish kind words from unkind words

LOs 3: Children will be able to say two ways to help their friends when feeling emotional.

Method

Location and Participants

The project was conducted at YMCA Afterschool Program at Northwood in San Jose, CA. During this project I had a total of 5 participants, a total of 3 girls and 2 boys who are children in kindergarten age 5 years old. Their ethnicities are Asian and South Asian. The main languages spoken by the children is English, but 2 speaked Vietnamese, and 3 Hindi. These children come from middle class backgrounds.

Procedures and Materials subsection

I had three lessons over two days, my first lesson focused on physical boundaries. First I started this lesson by asking the children if they knew what physical boundaries are and if they can define it. The children did not know what physical boundaries are instead, they knew it as personal space or snowball hands. Which is the way they define keeping your hands to yourself and respecting your friends' space. Second I started to explain what physical boundaries were, after explaining I asked the children if they could define boundaries. Two students stated do not put your hands on your friend and give them space when they need it. Third I played a video named The Boundaries Song- "That's a Boundary" which explained that some people do like to be touched like hugs, hand shakes, and tickling each other while others do not like to be touched, want their boundaries respected, and the importance of boundaries. Finally we went outside where we grabbed 6 hula hoops and demonstrated boundaries and when boundaries are being broken. I ended the lesson by asking the children if they understood what physical boundaries were, if they understood to put their thumbs up and if they did not to put their thumbs down. The assessment was assisted by the hula hoop activity where the children demonstrated boundaries between their peers with the hula hoops, we all stood in a circle giving each other enough space between each hula hoop.

My second lesson was on children being about to distinguish kind and unkind words. First I started the lesson by asking the children to name kind words that can be told to their friends. Second, I asked them if they knew why we should not be saying unkind words to our friends. Most of the children gave an explanation because we do not want to hurt our friends feelings or because it is not nice to say those things. Third, I then asked them if they could say something kind to the person next to them. Most of the students started to think some did say something kind to the person next to them and some could not. Lastly, I ended the lesson on why

it is important to be kind to others and how unkind words can hurt their friends feelings. The way I had to assess these lessons to see if my participants had understood what was being taught to them is by providing a worksheet that distinguishes kind and unkind words.

My third lesson was children being able to help their friends when they are feeling emotional. I first started this lesson by asking the children if they have ever helped their friend when they are feeling emotional. Most children answered by telling a story on how they helped. Second, I then asked the children what emotion their friend felt when they were helping them. Third I stated another question that was what do you do when your friend is feeling sad or upset. Most students raised their hands and said to make them laugh or ask a teacher for help. Fourth, after discussing with them I brought a box set of the books A Little Spot of Emotions, I read them the books A Little Spot of Anger, A Little Spot of Happiness, and A Little Spot of Sadness (e.g., Appendix E). Finally I end the lesson asking the children to distinguish these different emotions between their friends and most put their thumbs up and know ways to help their friends when they are feeling these emotions. The children demonstrated understanding by completing the worksheets on understanding others emotions, talking about the books of emotions, and being able to distinguish the different emotions and list ways they can support a friend.

Results

LOs1: Children will be able to demonstrate good physical boundaries

My first lesson was on children being able to demonstrate good physical boundaries.. The possible points of passing this assignment is 5. There were five students that participated.

During this activity over 80% of the students passed the learning outcome. Meaning 4 out 5 children were able to demonstrate what good physical boundaries are. I think my learning

outcome was fully met because only one child was not able to demonstrate the activity because they were distracted. The assessment for this learning outcome was the hula hoop activity where the children were able to demonstrate good physical boundaries and when boundaries were being broken. During this assessment activity was done in a group with all the children where we did the activity that demonstrated them having an understanding of what good physical boundaries are. The passing score for this assessment is if all 5 children were able to demonstrate the activity, meaning passing scores would be 4 out of 5, or 5 out of 5, a total of 4 students receiving passing scores due to being able to demonstrate good physical boundaries.

LOs 2: Children will be able to distinguish kind words from unkind words

My second lesson was on children being able to distinguish kind words from unkind. The assessment method and materials used during this lesson is I just asked the participants questions, some questions are if they knew why we should not say unkind words to our friends. They all gave me reasons that saying unkind words hurts their friends feelings. I gave them a worksheet that labeled kind words and unkind words. I would then read the phrases and let them pick a side if the words were kind or unkind. After reviewing the children's worksheets 3 out of 5 (60%) of children were able to distinguish between kind and unkind words on the worksheet. Based on the phrase "You can't play with us" 3 students answered it with unkind words and two students as kind because they have done it before in real life where they tell another student they cannot play with them and they just walk away. The worksheet of the Sort it Out (e.g., Appendix C) demonstrates that the kind words had six boxes to fill out with good words, and the unkind words had six boxes as well to fill out with unkind words. My participants were able to distinguish which and once were kind and unkind from words the part they struggled and was the challenge area where they had to say how are you kind to a friend most of them struggle to

fill out that part or say how it would be kind to a friend that's why I stated my outcome was partially met. The highest score to get was 10 correct answers and most of my participants had 9 out 10 or 8 out 10. Children who received a passing score of 3 out of 5 were able to get a passing score. What I was considering passing to me is 8 out of 10. Most of my participants received passing scores because they participated in the activity and had understanding.

LOs 3: Children will be able to say two ways to help their friends when feeling emotional.

My third lesson was on children being able to help their friends when they are feeling emotions. The assessment method and materials used during this lesson is: I asked the children to tell me a time they helped a friend when they were feeling upset. Three of the participants told me stories of the time their friend had got injured during break time, the way they assisted them was by trying to make them laugh, being funny was a way to help their friend.. I introduced three books to the children from A Little Spot of Emotions, the three books were A Little Spot of Anger, A Little Spot of Happiness, and A Little Spot Sadness (e.g., Appendix R,S,T). These books teach the children about how to handle their emotions, teaching children to learn about their emotions can help them understand their peers emotions as well. I then asked the children ways they are able to support their friends and most of them gave an answer. I also gave them a worksheet on Understanding others (e.g., Appendix B), which has different types of emotions. After reviewing the worksheet and asking the children questions on how they would help their friends when they are feeling emotional 3 out 5 (60%) children were able to give me good ways to support their friend and answer the emotions correctly on the worksheet. After reviewing I think the participants partially met the learning outcome because not all children were able to give me ways to support a friend.

Discussion

The focus of my project is children being able to understand their emotions and their friends. I think my project was successful because more of my learning outcomes were fully met or partially met. The assessment results were consistent with Bandura's Social Learning theory . children learned by observing me teaching them physical boundaries, through the videos, and through the books that were read to them. It did work well with the participants' development because the children are learning to interact with others and learning to understand peers' emotions, not just their own. Most students found the lessons engaging and interesting. They really enjoyed the video of physical boundaries, hula hoop activity and the worksheets.

Some limitations I had on my capstone project was time because I felt I needed more time with the participants in order for them to fully understand what I am trying to teach them. Some difficulties I had was always having the children's attention because I had five students with me while sharing a classroom where the other students were working on activities they had been wanting to work on. The children wanted to do another activity but doing mine, at the end they did enjoy my activities because we ended up going outside and working on worksheets. All my learning outcomes were met, but I would improve things on my activity.

In the future I hope to involve parents in these lessons and activities because parents are the biggest role model for children to learn because they are the ones they spend most of their time with. I would also like to involve the teacher into the lessons to keep the children interacting with the activities being done. In the future, I hope that children can learn from these lessons being taught to them that they will use these strategies to be able to support their peers, not just their peers but friends and family when they are feeling down. Even though my project was

successful there are still things to work on to improve these lessons and for the children to take in all this information.

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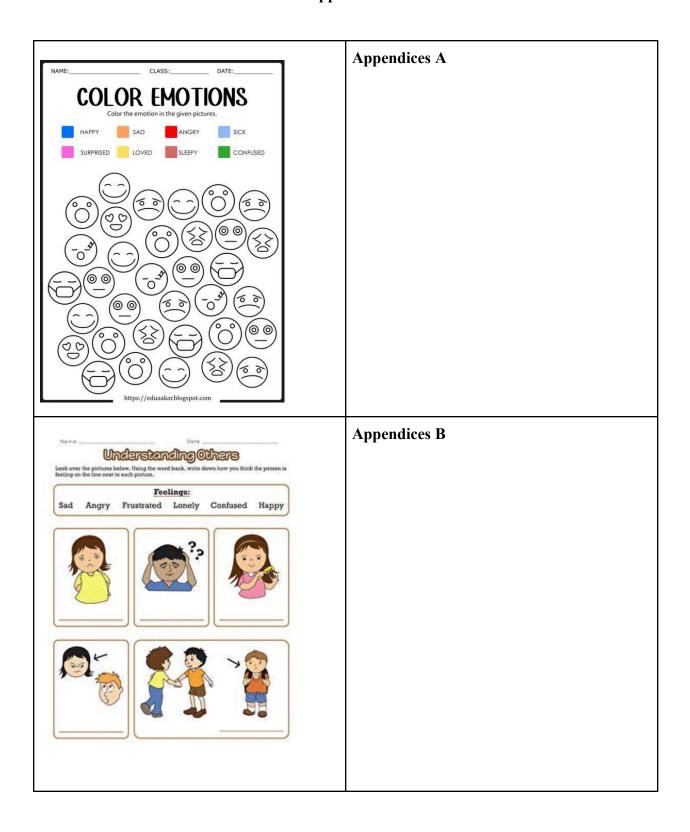
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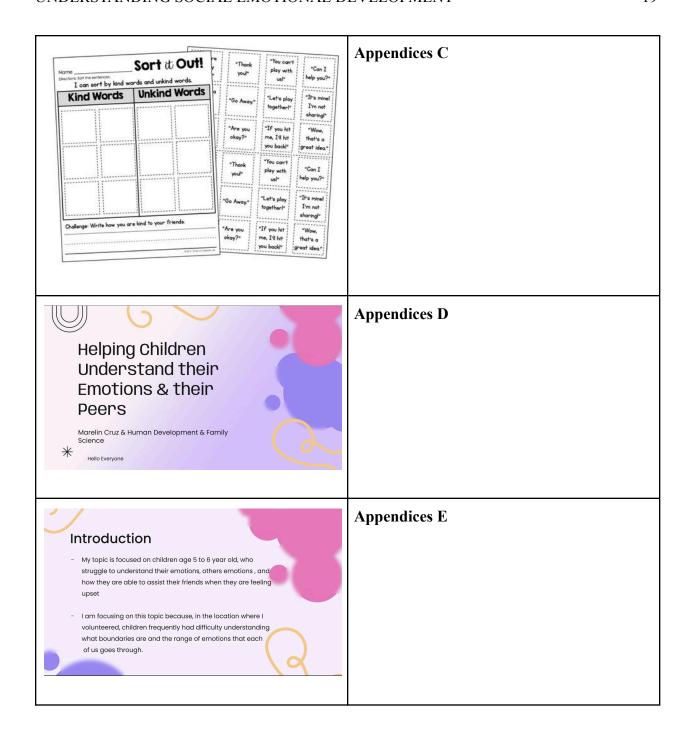
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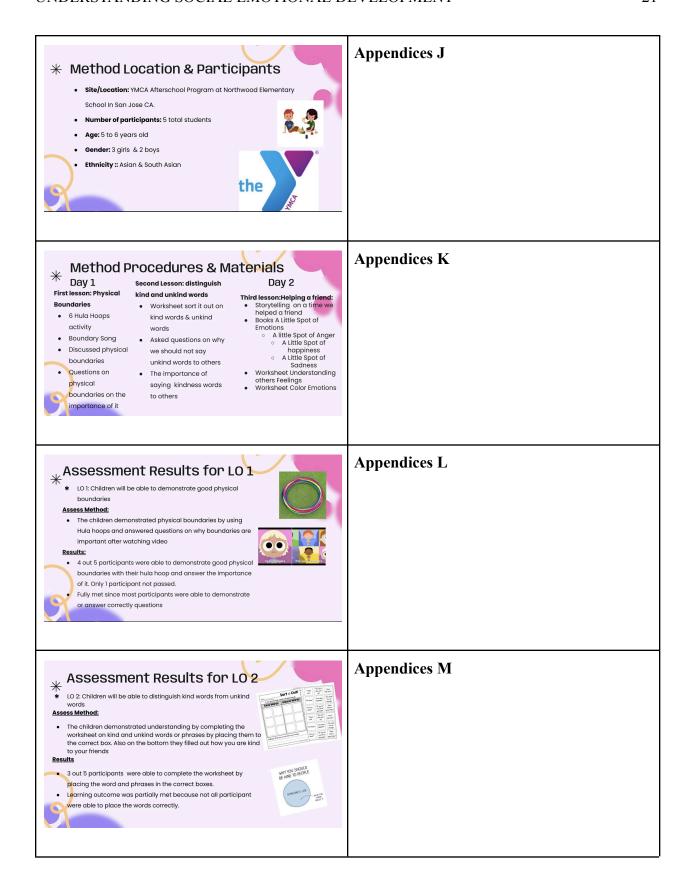
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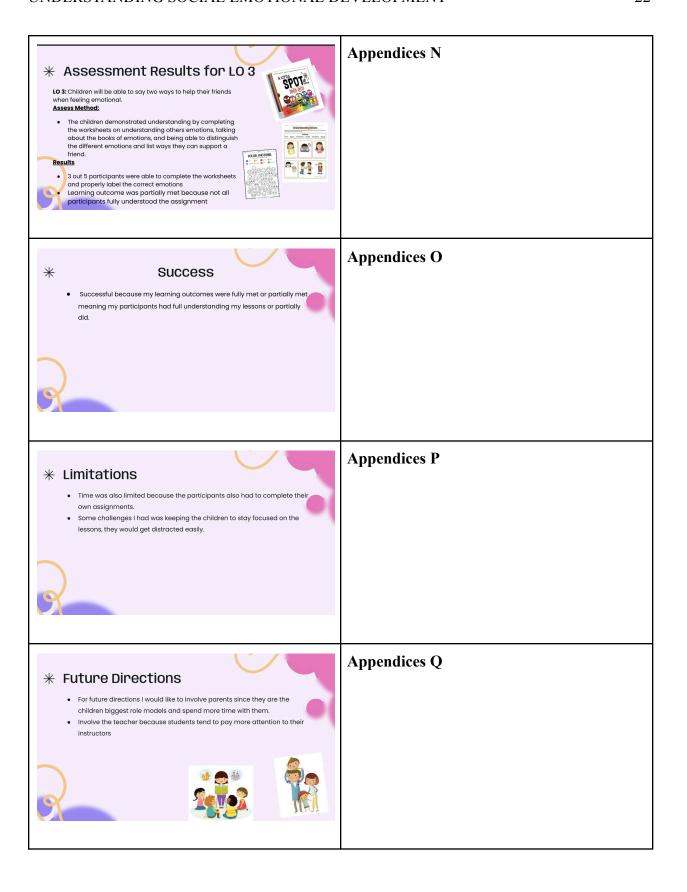
Appendices

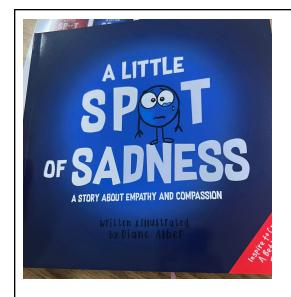




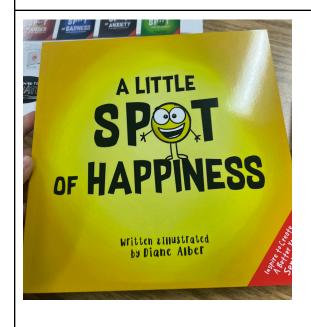




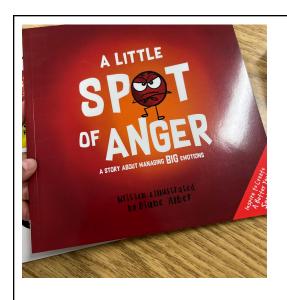




Appendices R



Appendices S



Appendices T