

## Supporting Preschoolers' Emotional and Behavioral Self-regulation

Gail Joseph: Hi, everyone! I hope you've been grooving out to our new "Teacher Time" theme song. It means we are here, and shout-out to our colleague Craig Corvin for writing that for us. Welcome to "Teacher Time." I am Gail Joseph.

Dawn Williams: And hi, everyone. I am Dawn Williams. We are from the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. We are so excited to have you here with us today for the first episode of our new season of "Teacher Time." "Teacher Time" is a webinar series just for you, teachers and family childcare providers. This season we'll have eight episodes. Four will focus on preschool-age children and four on infants and toddlers. We'll have four topics throughout the season so that we can cover the same concepts for all children ages birth to 5.

Gail: This year, we are so excited because we're going to thread our topic of approaches to learning together through all of our webinars. Ed managers, disability coordinators, home visitors, coaches will all be focused on the same content area. We'll talk about the topic as it applies to the different roles and really hope that everyone hearing the same thing is going to support learning and teaming across all the education staff teams, which ... How can it hurt? I think it's going to be great. We look forward to hearing more about how you are collaborating across this topic.

Dawn: OK, and I would like to call your attention to the Viewer's Guide. This is one of the things you'll find in the Resource widget, and you can download the guide and use it throughout our time together for taking notes, reflecting, and planning how you'll use the "Teacher Time" practices in your own settings. The resource guide also has resources if you want to dive deeper into the topic. How many of you have used some ideas in the past Viewer's Guide? Let us know some of which ones you've used in the QA box.

Gail: Let's see if we have any coming in. I know I hear people using them in the past, and they're just filled with great information. There's always something you can use in your practice right away. That's so great.

Dawn: Good.

Gail: All right, well, we are very excited to be focusing this season of "Teacher Time" on supporting young children's self-regulation and learning, I think a topic we all always want to know a little bit more about. Now, supporting self-regulation and learning is also referred to as "approaches to learning," which as many of you know – you all know, probably – that this is one of the domains of the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, or as we call it, ELOF.

Dawn: Approaches to learning – what is it? It focuses on how children learn. It refers to the skills and behaviors children use to engage in learning. It also incorporates emotional, behavioral, and cognitive self-regulation, as well as initiative, curiosity, and creativity. And

cognitive self-regulation skills are often also referred to as executive functioning. As we fully return to in-person services, some children will experience a big transition. It's happening to children and adults alike. These big changes can mean calling on emotional, behavioral, and cognitive self-regulation skills. We hope this topic will be especially helpful for you as you support these changes for children.

Gail: Like every day, these topics are so important to us, I feel like.

Dawn: Every day.

Gail: Every day. The approaches to learning domain is comprised of four subdomains of development: the emotional and behavioral self-regulation, cognitive self-regulation – sometimes we think a lot about this in executive functioning – initiative and curiosity, and creativity.

Dawn: And today in particular, we are focusing on emotional and behavioral self-regulation. Over the rest of our “Teacher Time” season, we'll talk about the other subdomains of approaches to learning.

Gail: Let's dive a little deeper and learn about the emotional and behavioral self-regulation ELOF goals for preschool-age children. That's what we will be focusing on.

This subdomain is made up of four goals. Goal one, the child manages emotions with increasing independence. Goal two, the child follows classroom rules and routines with increasing independence. Goal three is that the child appropriately handles and takes care of classroom materials. And Goal four, the child manages actions, words, and behavior with increasing independence. One of the things I want to say is that I like how these goals are written for increasing independence, not that the children are able to manage all of these on their own in the preschool years. It just shows how important the adults are to supporting their learning and development.

Dawn: You might wonder what all the letters at the front of the listicle mean, so let's break it down. First, we have word “goal.” Next, the “P” stands for “preschool,” and when it's for infant and toddler, you'll see “IT.” Next, the “ATL” in this case stands for approaches to learning. For each domain, the letters will align with the domain, and the numbers are the numbered goal.

Gail: OK, so back to the goals. Today we are going to focus on goal one, the child manages emotions with increasing independence. Now, if this one looks familiar to you ... You're like, “Wait, that's an approaches to learning?” It is the same goal in the emotional functioning subdomain of the social-emotional domain. It is so important, it's there twice. It's in the ELOF twice. It's under two domains.

Dawn: Now, why should we care about children developing the skills to manage their emotions? As adults, we know exactly why that is. We know why it's so important for us to have as well. But in particular, being able to manage emotions is critical for academic

achievement, school readiness, and mental health. Emotional regulation supports performance on cognitive tests, such as working memory and planning, and predicts academic outcomes. Also, children who appropriately regulate emotions have been found to display greater social competence, better social skills, and friendships. And children's ability to regulate the emotions facilitates their transition to kindergarten and school readiness by supporting the ability to acquire academic information.

Gail: All right. Now, before we begin talking about supporting children's emotional regulation, let's focus on ourselves as adults, as educators. Teaching can definitely elicit so many big feelings, strong emotions, especially when we are working with young children who might exhibit some challenging behaviors or behaviors that we find challenging. What we want to know ... Now, get ready with your Q&A widget there because we want to know: How do you feel when a child is engaging in a behavior you find challenging? What's that feeling word that comes to you? We're going to wait. We want to see some of those feeling words being entered into the Q&A. What are some of those feelings that you have when you're in the presence of a child engaging in a behavior that you find challenging? I'm seeing ... They're rolling in here. I'm seeing "frustrated." I'm seeing "frustrated" in call caps. I think that says a lot. "Overwhelmed," "feeling triggered," "feeling like I'm not a great teacher," "feeling overwhelmed," "feeling anxious," "feeling scared."

Dawn: "Curious," "stressful," "stressed," "empathetic." Oh, wondering what you're doing wrong, "irritated," "inadequate." Yes. "Out of control." Gosh, all of these things, right? We often hear that children's challenging behavior can bring out these big feelings in teachers like they do. And sometimes we think about these behaviors as hot buttons or another person's behavior that creates really big feelings in us. And let's listen to how these teachers feel when their hot buttons are pushed. We're going to check out a video.

[Video begins]

Teacher: Just feels like everything's sort of caving in in the moment, and it just feels really disruptive, even if it's not as disruptive as it feels.

Teacher 2: Anxious.

Teacher 3: Worried.

Teacher 4: Disrespected.

Teacher 5: When I am dealing with screaming, I feel very irritated.

Teacher 6: When that's happening, I feel really frustrated. I feel overwhelmed, like I don't know what to do in that situation because it's happening over and over again.

Teacher 7: But, honestly, I totally feel disrespected.

Teacher 8: It makes me feel like I'm not in control of the classroom.

Teacher 9: I feel stressed and ineffective.

Teacher 10: I feel frustrated, like something already went wrong in the classroom.

[Video ends]

Dawn: And I hope everybody's feeling very seen right now. That video clip and what we saw in chat is exactly what people are feeling.

Gail: Exactly. If nothing else, we're hoping that you feel validated that so many people share these feelings as part of being a teacher. Now, what we want to say, though, is that clearly when we feel this way and if this feeling is left to kind of fester in us, it's going to affect the way that our own mental health ... It's going to affect – certainly not allowing us to show up, I think, and be our best teaching selves. I know that for a fact when I was a teacher that it just wasn't a way to help me support – and I know – support children's emotional regulation development.

OK, here's a great question for you. You all felt validated and seen, I think, when you heard those things. Now share some of your strategies. What are the strategies that you're using every day to manage your own emotions as an adult in that classroom or in that family childcare or in a home-based setting? What are the strategies that you are using to manage your emotions? And we want to see some of those answers coming in to the Q&A box to see what we're seeing here.

I'm going to look down. Breathing, balloon breathing, taking a deep breath, counting to 10, know when I need a break and ask for help. Tap-out policy – I love that. I love that. These are great strategies. We have some support with some of the Q&As kind of in the back end here, and I'm hoping that Q&A folks can kind of push some of these out to respond to all so people can see these ideas coming in. These are great because we want to make sure that these are shared with each other. So many great strategies that are helping you self-regulate so that you can be a great support to the children.

Dawn: In addition to all these great strategies we're hearing, we want to share one with you. It can be helpful to manage our own strong emotions, and it helps to notice when you're engaging in red-light thinking and how you can switch to green-light thinking.

Here's an example. Let's say you've been working to save money and you finally manage to save a little and then you get a big bill to pay. So frustrating. The red thoughts would be, “This is hopeless. I've worked hard. I'm never going to save the money. I'm always going to struggle, and it's going to be so awful.” You would feel sad and depressed, and then the behavior that would follow that is you'd probably just give up trying to save money. It's breaking down this process into thinking, feeling, and behaving.

A green thought you might have, instead of thinking that it's so hopeless that, “This is a setback, but it's not the end of the world.” You'll have to plan to pay for those type of bills in the future, and maybe you set up a plan and start paying them off a little bit at a time. The feeling you

could adjust is that you'd say, "Instead of feeling sad and depressed, I'll feel OK and hopeful about the future because I've got a plan and I can do something about it." And then the behavior would be working out how I forgot about those bills and plan for them in the future and pay them off a little bit at a time, right? You would make a plan to do that. Here the green-light thinking, recognize the challenge or hard feelings about the new bill, but also tries to be solution-oriented and trying to make it a better solution and focus on the plan.

Gail: Yeah, it's so true. I love that that strategy really helps us realize that thinking, feeling, behaving are all related, right? Sometimes it starts with this feeling of challenging behavior that then starts getting us thinking in unhelpful or a "red-light" way that then leads to us feeling even worse and kind of negative, unhelpful thinking, that then it leads to some behaviors that might not be the most supportive of a young child who's also having a difficult time regulating their emotions.

Let's try one out together. You are starting to lead a circle time, and one of the children starts getting a little bothered by their neighbor. They start to kind of hit – and they start to scream and hit some others, right? Somebody's kind of maybe in their space. I think that's happened to many of us before, a similar situation. If we were in our red-light mind, in our red-light thinking, our thinking might be, "Ugh, this is frustrating. I can never lead circle in a smooth way. I had all this planned. It's not going well." Then the feeling I might have is that I'm going to feel frustrated and disappointed. The behavior is that I'm probably just going to tell the children, "All right, just go play.

We're going to stop trying to lead circle time at this moment." Let's think through this, then, if we could switch to some green-light thinking. What might be kind of the alternative to that red-light thinking? Go ahead and enter that into the Q&A. Let's get some collective thinking here. We've got a great team of people joining us today. What might be a green-light thought that you could have in that same situation? You're starting to lead circle. One of the children bothered by their neighbor starts to scream and hit others. What might that be? What might a green thought be?

I'm going to just check in here on our Q&A activity. Yeah, a green might be like, "All right – Right?" This happens. We're in close quarters. Children maybe haven't been back in a group in a while. Just thinking about what's going on, right? They're young children. They're currently learning some new strategies. And then think about what feelings might that affect, right? People are already writing that in. That might help you to feel a little bit more like, "All right, I've got this. I know how to handle this, right? It's a little bit irritating, but this is part of the job, right? My job is to help support this approaches to learning, this social and emotional regulation here, self-regulation." And then the way I might behave is – yeah, people are already writing some great things in. I might behave by redirecting the behavior. I might have the child that needs a little extra support, in maybe a little bit more of a space bubble, sit closer to me. Maybe we'll stand up and do some wiggle activity. So many great strategies are coming in.

The idea here is that when we start to feel those feelings that we have, that we all noted, that we all heard that those teachers had, that we check that, and it helps us to start thinking a

different way, move into green-light thinking. I love that strategy. Thank you, Dawn, for bringing that to us, feelings, thoughts, behaviors.

All right. Back to you. Oh, it's back to me. [Laughter] I tossed it to myself. We're live, by the way. Did you notice that? [Laughter] Now that we have thought about how we can use our strategies, these thoughts, feelings, behaviors, to regulate our own emotions and behaviors so that we can be more available to young children, let's think about what emotional and behavioral regulation looks like in preschoolers.

Emotional regulation skills will develop throughout early childhood, and when children have support, the developmental progression can look like what is on the slide here. By the way, if this information that you're seeing on the slide, the text underneath those slides ... If that's looking familiar, that is directly from the ELOF. The ELOF can be so helpful to us in helping us understand the developmental progression of certain skills. And a link to the ELOF and the handy ELOF2GO that you can have on your phone is in the Viewer's Guide so that you can always have this developmental progression at your fingertips.

We're going to take ourselves through this a little bit. Let's first look at the 3-year-old-ish time. At 3, we might see a child who can manage some less intense emotions, such as mild frustration independently and may need an adult or a peer to support them to manage a little bit more intense emotions. Now, of course, all children differ, so you might see some younger children more able to self-regulation than older children, and you might see some differences day to day, depending on what's happening in that child's life. And this is a guide to keep in mind, though, as you interact with children in your care. We're going to check this out.

Dawn: Now we turn our attention to supporting young children to manage emotions. What does it look like when a child is actually managing their emotions? We're going to watch this video, and we want you to note in the Q&A what you see the child on the left in the pink do. Let's check it out.

[Video begins]

Child: [Singing indistinctly] [Indistinct conversations]

Teacher: Are the lenses going in? Now what color are you seeing?

Adrianna: Yellow and blue.

Teacher: Yellow and blue? Your eyes look yellow and blue. Adrianna, if it doesn't work, you can ask Samson to help you. He knows how to put the lenses in. Can you show her how to put the lenses in, Samson? Show her where the slots are. There they are! That's how they slide in. Thank you, Samson.

[Video ends]

Dawn: What did you notice? What was the little girl in the pink doing? I'm going to take a look at the QA there.

Gail: I love it. People are noticing that she's getting a little bit frustrated, but really able to manage that, right? Whatever she was doing was a little bit frustrating and kind of putting those different lenses in.

Dawn: Right, right. There was just a little bit of mild frustration, but still figured out a way to – even with a peer's help – to do it independently. She was staying with it, and someone noticed she didn't speak, but used gestures. She was persisting. The teacher had a calm demeanor the whole way through. Yes.

Gail: That teacher was so calm and sweet. And clearly they've built such a nice kind of peer relationship, too. Let's look at another age group. Around 4 years old, we see that a child has a range of strategies for managing emotions, a little bit more than in the 3-year-old space, both some less intense emotions, as well as those that cause a little greater distress. And they might look to adults for some support.

Dawn: We're going to watch the children in this video. You'll notice that there is an expanding range of strategies for managing emotions. They're both less intense emotions, as well as those that may cause greater distress and frustration. They may still look for adults for support in managing the most intense emotions, but there's increasing skill in being able to successfully use those strategies. In this video, we want to know what you notice about how the children regulate their emotions. And you can put those ideas in the QA. Here we go.

[Video begins]

Teacher: He asked you. He asked, can he share that now?

Child: [Inaudible]

Teacher: Look at him and tell him. You look at each other, at each other. Tell each other. Talk to each other. Look at the ice. What do you think?

Child 2: One minute.

Child: OK.

Teacher: OK.

Child 2: Three.

Teacher: You just said one minute. Three is four. You want one or three? Three? OK, we're going in soon, so start shoveling. We're going to go in ...

[Video ends]

Dawn: All right, what did you all notice? Into this QA here.

Gail: I love that he's getting some strategies. You see them both have some strategies. A little bit more intense emotions. Mm-hmm.

Dawn: Mm-hmm, yep. People noticed they were problem solving together. Mm-hmm, and that they agreed to a set amount of time. Yeah, one person noticed that when they made eye contact, it seemed to help them to come to an agreement a little bit easier.

Gail: That's a nice observation. Very astute. All right, move us along, Dawn. We got a lot of content to cover here.

Dawn: OK. Sorry.

Gail: Let's move on to –

Dawn: [Inaudible]

Gail: No, we're so excited. Let's move on to around age 5 years old, close to when the child is going to transition to kindergarten. Children are expressing emotions that are appropriate to the situation, and they have a range of strategies to cope. They can actually start employing lots of solutions from their solution kit, if you will. Now, they might still need an adult for assistance. They might still look to an adult for assistance when their feelings are pretty intense. But they are much more independent at being able to manage than a 3-year-old.

Dawn: In this clip, you'll watch the child in the denim shirt. And what do you notice about their emotional regulation? Let's look.

[Video begins]

Teacher: Congratulations. Keep up the good work, OK? OK. All right. Let's go.

Child: [Inaudible] Teacher: You what?

Child: I wanted a sticker.

Teacher: Oh, really?

Child: Yeah, it hurt my feelings.

Teacher: Hurt your feelings? You feeling a little disappointed? Oh, that's a problem. Oh, he's taking a deep breath. Look at – Louise, Simran is taking a deep breath because he said he was feeling a little disappointed. That's a great solution. All right. Feeling better? That's great. I'm glad. All right. Ooh, there's a friend. A friend comes to your rescue. That's great.

[Video ends]



Dawn: Oh, my gosh, love this video because the teacher is so phenomenal at supporting but not interrupting their emotional regulation. How many of us would have just given the child the sticker? [Laughter] Instead, the teacher is there to support if needed, but allows the child to practice the strategy they're learning, take a deep breath. It just works out so well. Also, I just quickly want to point out in the viewer ... Go ahead, Gail. Sorry.

Gail: No, you go.

Dawn: I was going to say, in the Viewer's Guide, there's also links to visuals to help support emotional regulation.

Gail: I love it. We saw this great progression from what it looks like at 3, 4-ish, and 5, and just knowing that children will be somewhere on that developmental continuum.

We know that a big part of starting to support children's emotional regulation is building their emotional vocabulary. We have this saying that you've got to name it to tame. You really have to start to identify those emotions, and that comes from growing your emotional vocabulary. We are actually going to watch a video of several teachers talking about the ways in which their teaching emotional literacy, expanding emotional vocabulary, and emotional regulation. And get out that Viewer's Guide because you're going to want to know what some of these teachers are doing.

And that video's going to play. [Laughter]

[Video begins]

Roxanne Hiller: Also building on feelings and emotions, and we spend the first whole several months of our year talking about emotions and that emotions are OK. It's what we do with emotions and then showing them how to handle that emotion in the proper way.

Teacher: [Imitating crying] Everybody make a mad face. Mm! [Laughter]

Woman: Going to make a mad face.

Teacher: How about an excited face? [Gasps] Oh, that's a surprised, excited...

Traci Huxtable: It's just being able to name the feelings, and I feel like our kids have come a long way on that because a lot of them wouldn't even say words before. They'd just kind of grunt or, "Ahh!" But now it's like they can say, "I'm mad," and different things. We're still working on – They teach you to take belly breaths when you're mad [Breathes deeply] and name the feeling.

Teacher: Remember how I was telling you guys I was frustrated because I hurt myself?

Logan: Can I see?

Teacher: Yeah, you want to see the picture of how I felt when I hurt my back? I think it's in here. There it is. This is how I felt when I hurt my back. That says "Frustrated." Logan is going to feel this way because look what he figured out. He's pumping himself on the swing. Look at him go! He's going to be happy and proud. Do you remember what proud means?

Logan: Yeah.

Teacher: What does it mean?

Logan: Happy.

Teacher: It means you feel happy inside about something you've done, like, "I'm proud –" Oh, watch out, Ella. Logan's going to be proud that he figured out how to pump himself on the swing.

Diana Lopez Roxanne Padilla: We encourage the child to express their feeling and to name their feeling and, if they want to be left alone, to understand, "I'm feeling sad, I need to be left alone," or, "I'm feeling sad. I need you to give me a hug." If they don't say that, I say, "Do you need a hug? Will a hug help you feel better?"

Teacher: All right, Sierra! Are you excited, Sierra? I see the big smile on your face. That shows me you are excited. Are we ready? Are we ready to have Brittany place the necklace over Sierra? Drumroll, please!

Kimberly Montgomery: We're watching. Go ahead, Chase. Let us know, buddy. Come on. Sad and loved and mad and happy, all four of those things. And I had one other boy who was distraught when his mom left this morning, and he cried for 30 minutes. He doesn't normally do that. Their family's going through a lot of stuff. When it was his turn, he came up and he did happy, mad, sad, and loved. He pointed at all of them. And I thought, "Geez, that's right on. That's exactly right. You're feeling happy because we're having fun. You're mad because you got left at school and you didn't want to be here. You're sad because you miss your mom. But you know you're loved and she's going to be back." It was just this beautiful little connection that, "I'm feeling all of these things right now."

Look through the binoculars and see how she's feeling.

Child: How you feeling?

Kimberly: Loved? Awesome. Why are you feeling loved this morning? Tell me why. [Indistinct conversations] What makes you feel loved?

Woman: What do you think?

Kimberly: Look at her happy face.

Child 2: Mom!

Kimberly: Your mom makes you feel loved? Oh, I love it. Thank you for telling me that.

I have a new girl who hasn't used any words in my classroom yet. And today she pointed at "loved," and I said, "Oh, when do you feel loved?" and not really expecting to get her to answer. And she said, "Mom!" really loud. And it was really the first time I've ever really heard her speak out loud.

Teacher: [Singing] It's a story of when I cry. When I'm feeling sad, that's when I cry, and it makes me feel better. This is a story of when I sigh. [Sighs] [Singing] When I'm feeling peaceful, that's when I sigh. [Sighs] [Singing] Help me feel better. It makes me feel better. You know it makes me feel better after I sigh. [Sighs]

"Then Little Bird came by to visit. 'Will you help me find the moon?' asked Bear. 'I'm getting so frustrated.'"

Child: I'm frustrated!

Teacher: He's frustrated. He can't find the moon.

Child: Frustrated!

Teacher: Frustrated!

Teacher: Yes, he jumps over the moon. What happens? He looks like he's going to run right into the house. How do you think he's going to feel if he runs into the house?

Child: Sad.

Teacher: Sad? You know what? What else could he feel?

Child: [Inaudible]

Teacher: Look at my face. How do you think I feel?

Child: Sad.

Teacher: Or mad. Mad. Or how about – Have you ever heard the word "furious"? "Furious" means really, really angry. Do you ever get really, really angry?

Child: No.

Teacher: No?

Child 2: Sometimes I do.

Teacher: Yeah, sometimes you do? Sometimes I do, too. Not very often, though. Usually I just get mad. The cow could be sad, mad. He could even be furious.

Traci: They can name the feelings of other people. I think it's kind of made them a little more empathetic, too. It's like they know how the other children are feeling, and they kind of feel it with them. because a lot of times when we're reading books, that's one of the things I like to ask them, is, "Oh, look at their face. How are they feeling?" Like in the book today, someone was crying. "Why do you think he's sad?" They're coming up with reasons why they think he might be sad and then talking about how he can feel better. "Maybe he can try taking some belly breaths," you know? [Chuckles]

[Video ends]

Gail: All right, I love that video. It's filled with ideas. And one big question came in, which is, how do you do the feeling, like drawing attention to someone's face, if it looks like that most of the time? I know that masks are something that we're thinking about. Like, how do we do that?

One of the things I like to say is that when we're teaching young children to detect emotions on somebody else's face, we do have them look at the mouth, but there's another critical feature about how someone's feeling, and it is the eyebrows, right? It's not even just the eyes. It's the eyebrows. What a great opportunity to draw someone's attention to how somebody might be feeling based on if their eyebrows are furrowing or if they're up and they're lifted.

The other cue that we ask – or clue, I should say, that we ask children to be feeling detectives with is the tone of voice. You can do some fun games. You can say – You can show children maybe a picture of a different feeling face at circle time and say, "All right, say the word 'marshmallow' in a mad voice," but nobody else hears what you're saying. The child has to say, [Mad voice] "Marshmallow." And children guess what the feeling is. Lots of ways to take advantage that they don't maybe have their mouths exposed, but you can draw attention to the eyebrows, the tone of voice, and it just makes building that emotional vocabulary all the more important.

I just wanted to say that because I know that people are like, "Hello, lady, have you been in our rooms lately? Everyone has a mask on, so it's hard to draw attention." All right, Dawn?

Dawn: Thank you, Gail. That is one of the biggest issues right now, right? We have another example to show you real quickly. It's the Hearts & Feelings Kit. It comes from a Head Start program out of California.

Gail: Shout-out to Dan, bro!

Dawn: Thank you! It is one way a program connects school and home to support emotional regulation. The Hearts & Feelings Kit is sent home with children and provides families with materials used in the classroom to support emotional regulation. Some of those materials include a weighted stuffy to help the children physically feel calm, an alone tent to provide a child with the space to cool down or be alone, and books about emotions to help children learn new words and see how other children learn about their emotions.

If your program did a Hearts & Feelings Kit, what would you include? Think about the families in your programs. How would you be sure they are represented in the materials? And would you include books in multiple languages or instructions in multiple languages? Just think to yourself what would you do in a Hearts & Feelings Kit.

Gail: I love that idea. I love that, like kind of a weighted stuffy. I love the connection. I know sometimes services might get interrupted and we might have children that have to stay at home for a little bit. Having the consistency of what you're using in the classroom available too – I just think that's a great, great strategy.

All right, I'm moving us along. We've got so much content. We need “Teacher Time” to be ... We need an epic kind of two hours for this, but we're going to move along. New to this season, not only is my co-host, Dawn, coming back from the original “Teacher Time” ... and so she's new to us this season, but old friend of ours. But another thing that's new to our season this time of “Teacher Time” is what we're calling the “Teacher Time” BASICS.

These are just a collection of teacher moves or strategies that can be used in any setting where you're interacting with preschool-age children. And we're going to review these each “Teacher Time” episode because you can use the basic skills, the basic teacher moves no matter what content you're covering. Each time we cover a new content area, we're going to talk about how you can use these basic moves. I think that in this time that we're in, programs are getting more and more in person, and sometimes we're unsure of what we should be doing in this new situation. I think we want to say, “Let's get back to the basics. Let's go to these moves that we know work well.”

I'm going to tell you what they are. You can see them on the screen there. But let's just tell you what these moves are. “B,” the “B” in “BASICS,” is for behavioral expectations in advance. We're going to give some more information about that, but that “in advance” is the key there. The second is attending to and encouraging appropriate behavior. Sometimes we say this “catch them being good” idea. Where is my time and attention going to? It's when children are engaged in appropriate behavior. “S” is for scaffolding with cues and prompts, helping support a child learn a new skill. “I” is for increasing engagement, like always thinking about, “How can I get this child re-engaged or increase the engagement, active engagement?” “C” is for creating or adding challenge, making sure that we're meeting children where they are at, but also keeping in mind that zone of proximal development: “Where can I take them, give a little bit more challenge so their skills can grow?” And then, “S” is for providing specific feedback, and that is really essential to helping young children learn new skills.

Dawn: All right, let's break down this “B,” behavioral expectations in advance. We can support young children's emotional regulation skills by stating those expectations in advance. This means that before the children start a new activity or are getting settled into a new activity or transition to a new place, we share what the expectations are ahead of time. This helps children understand what they are supposed to do.

Here are some examples. “When I say your name, use your walking feet to walk to the small group table,” or using a gentle touch, or “We are going to let everyone have a three-minute turn with the sit and spin,” or “Raise a quiet hand if you want a turn.” The key is stating all those things before they happen so children know what to do. In your Viewer's Guide, I invite you to write down some of those things that you use in your learning environment.

Gail: Absolutely. And behavioral expectations in advance don't always have to be shared through verbal language. You can use visual support. The visual supports you see are telling children what they need to do through pictures. The one on the left shows children where they line up on the floor – shows where they line up the door, with pictures of the feet. That's a great way to keep some distancing. This helps children visualize where they need to be, where their bodies need to be in space when they're lining up.

And then, the second picture on the right is an illustration of a child with a calm body raising a quiet hand, and this is an example that can be used as a reminder during circle time. It doesn't always have to be verbal. Using visuals really help all children, but it can really especially help children who might be dual language learners or children that might have a language-processing delay, but again, really helps everyone.

Dawn: Mm-hmm. The “A” in “BASICS” is for attend to and encourage appropriate behavior, like Gail said, catching them doing the right thing. All the children in our care are learning to regulate their behavior and emotions. Let's make sure we catch them and encourage them while they're doing it.

Here are some examples of what it is to attend to and encourage appropriate behaviors. You could say, “I saw you take a deep breath before asking Gia to stop touching your paper. What a great strategy to keep calm.” Or, “Tua, when Jojo told you it was his turn to use the swing, I heard you ask for one more minute. And it worked!” Isn't it so great when it works? “Can I give you a fist bump for that?” Or, “Asma, I heard you saying you were feeling excited. That is such a great feeling word. What are you feeling excited about?” Lastly, “Theo, I heard you saying you are angry, but look at how calm you are staying. It is so hard to do.” And that is such a ... It's just so great and helpful to reinforce that.

Gail: Absolutely. Now, we can attend to and encourage appropriate behavior not only with our words, but we can also use gestures. A safe high five, thumbs-up, a fist bump, a little side hug there. All of those things can send a message to a child that their efforts are being noticed and are important. Think for yourself, how are all the ways that you're providing children encouragement in your program?

Dawn: And then when children need some help with managing their emotions, we can scaffold their behavior with cues and prompts. Here on the left we see a visual cue for children, the choice chart. When a child is frustrated, an adult can help by showing these visuals and offering choices about how to respond when feeling frustrated. That top-right photo is a visual support to help a child picture a feeling they're having, and sometimes this is easier than using words. And in that lower corner right there, adults can have prompts, too. That's what that “I wonder if

that could hurt anyone's feelings” prompt is on the bottom right. Prompts for adults can be placed higher up on the wall, where adults are able to see it. And in this case, the prompt is a cue to address the problem between peers. It's saying, “I wonder if that could hurt anyone's feelings,” and this cue serves as a reminder for the adult and can help a child come up with solutions to a problem.

Gail: I love that. We always need reminders ourselves. Now, another way we can support emotional and behavioral regulation is to increase children's active engagement in learning the materials. Let's just look at these pictures. There's a few ways here. We heard so many great examples in the video montage. But children can check in when they arrive and put their name next to a picture of how they're feeling. This helps the child start learning, identifying, and naming the emotions and also helps you understand how they are arriving that day. The feeling wheel that you see in the middle – that's another visual support to actively engage children in sharing how they are feeling or being able to identify and name feelings when they look at the picture. Then finally, one of my favorites is the feeling photo booth, and this is a fun kind of way to set up in any learning environment where children can choose kind of a written word about how they're feeling. The adult might snap a photo of it, and great way to put those feelings up around the classroom. Another great way, if a child has a mask on and you can't quite tell, they can use the little photo booth there and you can snap it and put it up. But most importantly, each of these examples are really about the act of engagement. Children are active in each of these examples that we're sharing. Having them actively engaged and learning how to regulate their emotions is going to help.

Dawn: Mm-hmm. And it's also important to support children learning by continuing to create the next challenge. For example, if a child is identifying and naming basic emotions, start teaching more complex emotions, like excited, frustrated, or angry. Or if a child has learned to use some basic solutions like ask for a turn or get a teacher, we can teach additional solutions like wait and try again.

Do you have a solution kit in your classroom or family childcare? Solutions kits are sets of ideas or solutions for children to use when they have a problem to solve. These visual cues can help children and teachers generate ideas. And then you can also create or add challenge by extending the time we expect a child to wait for a turn.

What are some of your ideas for creating or adding challenges to develop children's emotional regulation skills? Share them in the QA, and we'll share some of the ideas you write in.

Gail: I love that. A solution kit – I needed that every day when I was teaching. I love the solution kit, and I'm sure we have some ideas in the resource guide about how to expand that.

For the last letter in “BASICS,” we have “S,” which is providing specific feedback. When children are learning emotional and behavioral regulation skills, or any skill for that matter, we can help them learn by understanding – help them learn by understanding what they're doing and what they can do more of, like sending them specific feedback. We can use the example of what the

child did or said and then give specific feedback to help them learn more, like maybe a new emotion word.

I love ... There was a great example of providing specific feedback when the teacher said, "Oh, that word is 'proud.' Do you know what 'proud' means?" And the boy says, "Happy," and she gives specific feedback. She says, "Yes, it means happy about something that you've said or done." And that's specific feedback. It deepens the child's understanding. Here are some examples of providing specific feedback. "You used a really big feeling word: frustrated. And another word like feeling frustrated is exasperated." What a great word to teach. "You've tried the same solution three times. Let's try and find another one in the solution kit." And "I heard you say the girl looks happy in the picture, but look at her mouth. It looks turned down. Can you think of another feeling word?" The idea here is to kind of scaffold, provide the feedback for the child to learn more deeply or learn that skill. I love all those examples.

Dawn: There you have it, the BASICS. We're excited to keep using the BASICS to share examples of how to use these strategies throughout our learning this season in "Teacher Time."

Gail: Absolutely. Now, sometimes children we work with need extra support to be successful, so we always have this little segment in "Teacher Time," which is called "Small Change Big Impact," which is just a little tip for making a modification or adaptation for children who may have a disability or suspected delay or may just need extra support with a specific routine or activity. And here's an example.

Dawn: Some children have an extra difficult time waiting for a turn or understanding how to know when their turn is. The counting card is a modification to help children who may need extra support to wait.

Here's how it works. While waiting, the child uses the visual support to help them count while they wait. It is also an opportunity to practice counting and can also give children something to do during a transition. This small change can have a big impact on a child's emotional regulation skills.

I want you to think of a child who has a hard time waiting or knowing when their turn will be. Use your Viewer's Guide to write a plan for a modification or a small change you will make to support the child. We also guide you through evaluating if the small change has a big impact. If you find successful strategies, share them with the child's family so they can have success at home, too. And you can also learn from families what's working for them.

Gail: Love that segment, "Small Change Big Impact." Another segment we are going to have every episode in "Teacher Time" this season is to focus on equity. As we learn more and talk about emotional and behavioral regulation, it's also important to think about how we do or do not use equitable teaching practices. When we talk about equitable teaching practices, it means using practices that meet each child where they are to support their full ability to fully participate and belong in their learning environment. Practices that we talked about in the BASICS and "Small Change Big Impact" can be considered equitable teaching practices because



they're helping to individualize a child's learning needs. But often, before we can implement equitable teaching practices, we must pause and reflect on our own behavior and what might be getting in the way of our equitable teaching.

One of those things is this idea of implicit biases, which we all have. Studies have suggested that teachers perceive some children to have more disruptive and more aggressive behavior when they actually do not. And I know we're running short on time, but we are going to show a quick video of Walter Gilliam, who is a leading researcher in this area. He did a very clever study, I think, about studying bias in the classroom. We're going to turn our attention to Dr. Gilliam to explain his research on implicit bias, and we'll be right back after this.

[Video begins]

Dr. Walter Gilliam: Hello. I'm Walter Gilliam. I'm a professor of child psychiatry and psychology at the Yale University Yale Child Study Center and director of the Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy.

Woman: What is implicit bias?

Dr. Gilliam: Implicit bias is the ... They're the biases that you have that you don't know that you have. They're the ways in which you look at individuals, the way in which you look at other people and reach conclusions or reach assumptions that you may not even know that you've reached, and as a result of that, you change your behavior.

Woman: What evidence do we have of implicit bias in a preschool setting?

Dr. Gilliam: A few years ago, in 2016, we completed a study where we were looking at implicit biases in preschool teachers. And in the study, what we did was we had teachers look at videos. And these were videos of children sitting at a table, a boy and a girl, one white boy, one white girl, one Black boy, one Black girl. And they were sitting at the table, and they were just playing with Play-Doh.

There was an eye tracker that was attached to the video, where the teachers were looking at the video screen, and on the eye tracker we could track down to a thousandth of a second and just right down to a pixel on the screen exactly where they were looking. And we asked the teachers ... We said, "This is a study to see whether you can find challenging behaviors before they become too problematic. Now, please watch this video, and any time that you see a child do something that could become a behavior problem if you didn't intervene quick enough, hit this button."

What we didn't tell the teachers was this – that there are going to be no challenging behaviors in any of the videos because they are all child actors and that what we were really interested in was when we'd led you to believe that a child might misbehave, where did you look? Where did

you look first? Where did you look most? Where did you go back because you must have missed something?

What we ultimately found was that teachers overwhelmingly looked more at Black children when they were led to believe that somebody's going to misbehave, especially the Black boy. And that was true for teachers regardless of their race – white teachers, Black teachers, and brown teachers – because we all have implicit biases in us.

Those biases predetermine who it is that we expect certain behaviors from. When I said challenging behaviors, teachers looked more overwhelmingly at the Black children, especially the Black boy, which then raises this other question – what if I said, “This is a study to look for evidence of creativity, to look for evidence of brilliance and genius?” Who would they have looked at then? Because ultimately, that's what biases are about. They're about expectations. Where do you expect certain behaviors to be happening? And if a teacher's looking more for challenging behaviors with the Black children, you know where she's going to find them? With the Black children. Because that's where she's looking. She won't find it with the white children as often because they're not looking there.

[Video ends]

Dawn: I can spend three weeks on that topic. However, with time, what we'd love for you all to do is use the Viewer's Guide to do some reflection. The first next great step you could take right now is to do some reflecting on what your own implicit biases are because we all do have them.

Gail: I am totally on mute. Did you hear any of that? [Laughter] All right, I'm back.

I just wanted to say that we're going to focus on that topic every time in “Teacher Time.” We will be returning to that. We have so much great information that we're going to hurry along really quickly. We just want to make sure that we give you a little bit of what's on our “Bookcase” this week.

Each time we have “Teacher Time,” we have “The BookCASE,” and that is our segment where we highlight books that are connected to our theme and we make a case for them. And “CASE” means that we connect it to the ELOF goal, that we think about the advanced vocabulary we can use and teach through the book, that we think about how we can support engagement while we are reading that book, and how to extend beyond the book to deepen the learning that's there. So many great books.

They're all in the Viewer's Guide. I love these books. “The Boy with Big, Big Feelings,” such a great one, rhyming, rhythmical text. I love it so much. Your kids will love it, as well. Then, the one that we just want to make the case for right now is this beautiful book called “Saturday.” I bet you have it on your bookcase, and if you don't, get it. [Laughter] Get it from your library, “Saturday,” by Oge Mora. And there you see that lovely author. This is a great book about a girl who has a mom that works Monday through Friday and Sundays, too, and Saturday is the day she gets to spend with her mom. They go out for a great little ... They've got all these big plans,

and all the plans kind of fall apart along the way. You can imagine all the ways that they have to regulate their emotion as that is happening. It's definitely connected to the ELOF goal.

Then, the advanced vocabulary – lots of great words in here. “Canceled” – unfortunately, that's a word we hear about a lot. Like, the event is canceled, and so pairing that with a child-friendly description, it means it won't happen, it's closed, etc. Great vocabulary words like “splendid,” “reassured,” “relief,” “cherished.” Those are some of the words I pulled out from here. A great way to support engagement is that every time they're going on to the next thing, there's a really fun part where they say, “Zoom!” and off they went. You can imagine really engaging children in a choral reading of that about “Zoom.” Or they could jump up every time they hear a “Zoom.” And then the activity that we think could extend the learning is using the relaxation thermometer, and that's the picture that you see of the girl on the right. The relaxation thermometer is just a thermometer, and you have children kind of color it in. And the colors denote the different feelings that you have from blue and being in the calm, feeling cool, to that red level, where I might just, like, yell or express myself in a way that's not going to be helpful, and how do I get myself from being in the red to being in the blue? And we might dig into that in another episode. But that relaxation thermometer – there's some tips and tricks, I think, in the Viewer's Guide for you to go a little bit further with that.

Dawn: Join us for our next episode. Yeah. The next episode is going to be November 4th. It's about infants and toddlers and their emotional behavior self-regulation. We'll see you next time.

Gail: Bye, “Teacher Time”!

Dawn: Bye!