

## **Connections: Learning Environments That Promote Positive Behavior**

Melissa Jaén: Good afternoon and welcome everyone. It is great to be able to be with you again. I see that some of you are participating, are here today, and joining us from California. We also noticed that there is someone here from Florida. And someone from Puerto Rico. Welcome everyone!

Well, and thank you for joining us for this Conexiones Webinar in Spanish. In today's session we will discuss Effective Learning Environments that Promote Positive Behavior.

This year there will be seven Spanish webinars, beginning with this one. As part of the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, we will facilitate four of them, where we will share strategies to use in your programs to promote children's social and emotional development. Our colleagues from the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement will provide information for family services professionals about how to support the growth and development of children and families. They will facilitate three of these webinars.

So, this is just to give you some information about how things will be this year.

First, and before we begin with our session, as usual, we would like to review some of the platform features, and some of the icons we will be using during our webinar. If you have joined us before, this is one more review, but you will see these icons on the back of your screen. We remind you that the size of each icon can be modified, and it can be moved on the screen, according to preferences. If you have any questions, including technical ones, it is very important that you ask them through the purple icon, the Question and Answer icon. This is where we will chat.

Carmen and I will also be checking, and will try to answer all of your questions during the session. You will also find copies of the presentation, and some content-relevant resources that we have included. You can find all of these on the blue icon under the List of Resources. We also have the Participant's Guide there, a document that we will be reviewing and revisiting for the duration of the webinar.

We have captions in English and Spanish, according to your preferences. Lastly, if you have any technical difficulties during the Webinar, you can find information about what to do on the Help icon. We also have some support staff who will be helping us today in case there are any questions.

Well, now we would like to formally introduce ourselves. My name is Melissa Jaén and I am a Training and Technical Assistance Specialist with the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. It's a very long name, but it is known as DTL. And well, as I said, I'm very happy to be here with you again and be one of your presenters for this webinar in Spanish together with my colleague, Carmen.

Carmen Fontánez: Well, hi everyone. My name is Carmen Fontánez. I am a Bilingual Communication Specialist, who together with Melissa, works with the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. Like Melissa said, it is a long name, and so we affectionately call it DTL.

I am extremely happy to be with you in this Webinar in Spanish. Thank you very much for joining us.

Well, we are going to get started, and are going to review our learning objectives. After our time together today, we hope that you can support positive behaviors in children by designing interactive, effective learning environments. We also hope you'll be able to use culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies and resources for children that promote the creation of learning environments, routines, and activities that involve and support learning.

Now we would like to highlight this webinar's Participant Guide. If you have not yet downloaded this guide, we invite you to do so. The goal of this guide is to help you participate and reflect during our time today. All materials for participation in this webinar are included in each section. All resources mentioned today are also included here. We hope that the Participant's Guide becomes your own resource to check once this webinar has concluded.

This year, the Connections series has focused on the Social and Emotional Domain of the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, or ELOF, as we know it. The framework describes the skills, behaviors, and knowledge that programs must promote in all children. Now, let's explore Social and Emotional Development.

Okay, the Social and Emotional Development Domain involves the Subdomains of: Relationships with Adults, Relationships with Other Children, Emotional Functioning, and Sense of Identity and Belonging.

Basic social skills, like cooperating and sharing, form at this early age. Young children need adult support while they practice these skills. Supporting these children's skills in this domain help children acquire knowledge, learn new skills, and set and reach goals. Children learn to successfully navigate those learning experiences that are challenging, frustrating, or that simply take time to achieve.

The way in which children engage in learning affects the development of all the domains and directly contributes to their school success. Therefore, the Early Learning Outcomes Framework helps us consider how these skills develop in young children from the simple to the complex.

During today's session, we will discuss the skills you can promote in all the subdomains. Now we will do an activity with Melissa.

Melissa: Yes. Well, we are going to begin with this activity. There are several steps we would like you to follow in this activity. First, we want you to think about a child who for you has been easy to teach. Once you are thinking about the child, we want you to start thinking about a

child who has been difficult to teach. If you are not working directly with children, think about a child who you have observed, has been an easy-to-teach, or difficult-to-teach child for the teacher.

Then, once you have that thought, of those two children in mind, we want you to think about the easy-to-teach child. We would like you to write and share a behavior you have observed the child has exhibited. And when you have already shared that behavior, we want you to think about, and write a behavior that has been exhibited by the child who has been difficult to teach.

Next, we are going to look at some of your answers. Silvia has shared that the easy-to-teach child was also quiet. We can see here that the difficult-to-teach child was very active. We also read that for the difficult-to-teach child, sharing was not easy. And we can see here another comment, that the easy-to-teach child was very friendly. That's good, please continue sharing these comments.

Now, on this next section, we would like you to think about, and write, and also share with us any skill that the child might not have had, or a skill that the difficult-to-teach child was lacking, a skill the child needed to learn, or that he or she was in the process of learning.

So that is the next step we are asking you to do. I know that here everyone is thinking and sharing their answers with us. I see that someone wrote...that for the teacher it was somewhat hard or it became difficult to teach this child because he or she had no experience in sharing. It was his/her first year with other children in a group, and he or she had not yet learned that skill. And we see that another child could not wait for his/her turn. Another child didn't know how to regulate his/her emotions.

Very Good. I'm waiting to see if there are additional comments, other answers we can share here. So please continue sharing. The goal of this activity was for you to share. Based on your answers, we know that children are still learning, and as Carmen said, these children's skills are learned with experience; children need an adult to help them navigate frustrating experiences, or as it was in this case, new situations they are facing in a classroom for the first time. It is important to support children's positive behavior by promoting these skills.

And well, what I always like to say, is that children have very, very strong emotions, since they are just learning to regulate themselves and need our support. And this is precisely what we are going to discuss today.

As a professional, teacher or education professional, we would like to provide you with some tips. Also, if you support education staff, we would like to provide you with some tips so that you can create a supportive environment to prevent challenging behaviors.

We will then review some of these tips. As I previously said, it does not matter whether you are teaching for the first time, it's your first year as a teacher, or you have many years as a teacher. The tips we are about to share with you will be useful, particularly if you work with children

that are coming to your classroom for the first time, that are new to your classroom, and we hope these tips have – these tips are helpful to you.

So, let's begin. We know there are many things that impact the environment, and we know that learning environments are enriching environments that promote the development of young children. We also know that these environments are play areas. Well, excuse me, these environments include spaces not only in the classroom, but also other areas such as play areas, the areas involving care routines, such as diaper change or eating areas, and outdoor spaces. So, these are all the areas where children spend their time.

And it's important that we create a learning environment that is also engaging for children, that supports and promotes children social and emotional development, so that it promotes their positive behavior.

As you see, we know that there are many components that support learning and help prevent challenging behaviors. For our session, however, we are going to share and only focus on six components that are essential to promote this positive behavior that we see here on the slide, which include setting a schedule and a routine.

The next component is to design a physical environment that promotes children's active engagement. This would also involve a visual representation of the families and classroom rules, as well as transitions, and lastly, a behavioral management system. Today we will discuss, review, and share some tips about these components.

Well, to begin with the first one, the first component is about setting predictable schedules. First, why is it important to set up a predictable schedule? If you would like to share some of your thoughts, you can do it using the Question and Answer icon. We know that this is important for many reasons. One of them is that a continued daily schedule with routines, one that follows those detailed routines provides a predictable day for the child. The child knows what happens during the day.

I am seeing here Amelia, who is sharing that the schedule is also important because children know what happens at a particular moment throughout the day, as well as what comes next. Thank you for sharing.

We see here on the slide, that a predictable schedule is easy to establish, and it's very important to place it in a visible location for all children. It should be used on a regular basis, and ensure that the activities in the schedule are balanced, in terms of free time, small group time, or individual time. And if there are any schedule changes, they should be communicated to the children.

Lastly, we also need to individualize the schedule for children based on their needs. Well, we know that there are many schedule adaptations, but a very important point is that the schedule should be available in the home languages of the children in your classroom. For instance, if you have children who speak Spanish, the schedule here would be in English and Spanish, as well as

include those children who are representative of your classroom. You can see here some photos, but these pictures can show the children in your classroom, and what they are doing or how they are engaged in that routine.

Carmen: Melissa.

Melissa: Yes.

Carmen: Here we have another comment that states that predictability helps children with their emotional security. This is from Edgardo. Thank you, Edgardo.

Melissa: Thank you very much. I also read here that it helps with social and emotional security. I can see it here. Thank you for sharing. So we now have a video that we would like to share, the video shows how to teach them the schedule. It's just to have it. But we need to ensure that we are teaching in a way that children can understand. So, while you watch this video, we want you to reflect on how you are currently using your schedule, and how you are teaching it to your children. So, I'm going to —now let's watch the video.

[Video begins]

Teacher: Let's talk about our schedule. We will start there. Now, our arrival has...?

Child: Ended.

Teacher: Ended. And circle time?

Child: It's almost time.

Teacher: Not yet, we have time. Next, we will go the play yard and the restrooms, and we will sit to eat...?

Children: Lunch!

Teacher: After lunch, we will have story time. And after story time —and during story time, we will talk about handwriting, letters G and H, right here. After handwriting, we will go to...

Children: The gym!

Teacher: The gym. After the gym, we will go to the play yard, and then the restrooms. What will we do after washing our hands?

Child: We'll go home, we'll go home.

Teacher: Right here, what's this?

Children: Snack.

Teacher: Snack. So, we will go get our snack.

Child: And we will brush our teeth.

Teacher: And to brush our teeth. Thank you, DJ.

Child: And go home.

Teacher: Circle time, and then we'll go home.

Child: I said it for him.

[End of video]

Melissa: Very good. Well, hopefully this video will help you once again reflect on how you are currently going over, or teaching the schedule. One of the things I loved about this here is that the teacher uses a pin to indicate what they have already reviewed, and what they are currently doing at the time. I think it's very useful method. Well, and as I mentioned earlier, hopefully some of these tips help you reflect on how you are teaching about your schedule. Let's now continue with Carmen.

Carmen: Yes, well, we will discuss schedules and routines. We will review the importance of establishing routines for the classroom or the family child care setting, and how this helps with challenging behaviors.

So, what is the difference between a schedule and a routine? Well, a schedule represents an overview, and includes the main activities that will take place during the day.

Routines are the steps necessary to complete the various parts of the schedule. If you wish, you can share your ideas about schedules and routines through the Question and Answer icon.

Now let's discuss setting up routines, since it's important to establish routines for the classroom, or the family child care setting. Routines help your classroom and the family childcare setting to function with minimal issues, maximizing learning time and preventing anxiety and challenging behaviors.

Therefore, routines are to be completed in a similar fashion each day, when we observe a learning environment with routines, because children seem to know what to do with little help from the adults. This type of technique allows education staff to be more available to help those children who might need additional support to complete their routines.

A routine also helps prevent anxiety and challenging behaviors. Routines should support the development of children's abilities to do things on their own, but they should not be too complicated, so children are able to learn and remember them.

So, one of the routines we need to pay attention to is arrival time. What is the first thing that children do when they arrive? Do they first sign in, or do they put away their belongings? And when will they wash their hands? And what will they do, if not all of them arrive at the same time?

Well, one tip is to think that the first activity should be one where children can all engage in as they arrive in the classroom. For instance, beginning the day outdoors allows children to exercise their large muscles while other children are still arriving. Once all children have arrived, they can start coming in and putting away their things and backpacks, washing their hands, and sitting down for breakfast. So, now you can share your thoughts about an arrival routine in the Question and Answer section.

We are going to look at...these images we have on the screen. In the learning environment you can see here, as children are arriving, they move their name from the column that says "at home" to the column that says "in school." This routine helps children learn they are in a new environment, with new expectations, and that they'll go back to their families at the end of the day.

Now, if we take into account equity and inclusion, and belonging, we could make this from the family to the school in a way that includes those children who are homeless or who live in homes that look different.

Also, if you wish that children sign in as part of your arrival routine, make sure you place the sign-in book in a location that's close to the first activity. For example, this could be near the cubicles, and the handwashing area. For instance, children arrive, put their things away, sign in, and then they go to the sink to wash their hands. Now we are going to continue talking about routines with Melissa.

Melissa: Yes, sure. Another important point about routines is to consider those routines that happen within other routines. That is, the activities within a given activity. It's very important for the pace of that routine.

So, we see here on the slide the example we have about a large group time, or as we better know it, circle time. We can see here that within the circle time routine, the routine that happen in the same order every day is the welcome song. Next, is reviewing the calendar, a movement activity, and then story time or reading time. This means that songs, movement activities, and even the book are things that change within that routine. But the pace or the flow of the routine remains the same.

Okay, so this type of predictable routine within the routine increases the child engagement and it also reduces challenging behaviors, because children know what comes next after the circle routine.

So, it may be useful to consider the routines that happen within that routine, because, as we said, they are predictable, and this can also reduce stress in the child if he or she knows what's going to happen next, and how long they need to be in that activity.

To summarize then, it's very important that these activities are consistent with the visual schedule, and that the activities and routine schedule are the same. As we stated, the visual schedule helps children know how their day will go, pointing to when activities and/or routines will take place, which gives children a sense of predictability.

And moving on, we have a very useful resource that we want to share, that may be used as a visual support, or to establish schedules and routines. The resource is called, "Visual Supports for Routines, Schedules, and Transitions." You can use it in the classroom, but you can also share it with families, so that it can help them have a visual schedule at home with their children. As we mentioned previously, the use of this visual schedule, not only in the classroom, but also in the class, helps the young child know the activity or routine that will take place.

And well, we have included this resource in the Participant's Guide so that you can later review or share it, as I said, with family parents or families. And Carmen is going to share with us some information about the environment.

Carmen: Yes, okay, now let's look at the physical environment. We are going to talk about the arrangement of the physical environment to support learning and prevent challenging behaviors.

When we think about the physical environment, our goal is to create an engaging environment that children can relate to, and where everyone belongs. If you have suggestions to create an engaging environment, you can share in the Question and Answer section.

Now we are going to look at this picture. We see that the teacher is placing identification cards in the circle area. These identification cards with the children's photos can be used to help them find their place during circle time, or during small group activities.

So, pulling the cards with the names in advance maximizes learning time, because children will know where to go quickly. It also provides good practice for recognizing their names, and when the cards are pulled in advance, the education staff can carefully consider, for instance, who must sit further from the door, closer to the education staff to be able to see the book easier, or closer to a peer who can model finger plays, or in an area that is not distracting to the child.

The education staff can then also recognize all classroom members when they pick up their labels with their names. This way, when a child is absent, the child can communicate that he or she will be missed, which helps develop a sense of belonging.

Learning environment arrangements. Well, when thinking about the learning environment, we have to consider the schedule and the flow. The classroom or family child care environment must support the schedule. We are going to take a look at this photo we see on the screen. You



can see that this area is engaging. This is the reading area and the listening and writing center. They are quite areas, and they are close together.

So, something that you always have to consider is to avoid open areas. When you think about the learning environment, it's important to avoid open areas that could inadvertently invite children to run, or to gather in the space. Intentionally select visual elements and materials. It can be overwhelming for some children to have too many things in the environment. That's why it's important that materials and images are selected carefully. Provide a quiet space for children to take a break from the group. They also need time and space during the day to relax by themselves.

This space can be limited to one or two children, and created in such a way that it still has visibility to ensure safety. So, the way in which children engage in the environment is an indicator of what needs to be adjusted in order to support their learning and development. Through continued observation, education staff can understand what would need to change in the physical environment in the future.

In the Participant's Guide you can find additional information regarding the arrangement of the learning environment. We will continue with Melissa who will talk about families.

Melissa: Yes, well, until now we have talked about the schedule, the environment, and we have also shared with you some strategies to promote a positive behavior in the child.

Now we are going to discuss the next component, the visual representation of the families whose children you have in the learning environment. One very important aspect of our job in Head Start is to understand children's families, build those relationships, and the work that we do together with the parents.

It is important, then, to take the time to get to know the children and their families, before they begin the program, or before they come into our classrooms. It's important so that each child and family feel welcome, and part of this community. And this can be done through a survey the families can complete about their child. It is a popular activity that, I imagine, some of you are familiar with. It is "All About Me", an activity we have included in the Participant's Guide.

So, by understanding what the child knows, what he or she likes, you are able to better involve him in your classroom. This type of survey is very helpful to get to know the child, and families use it to share it with you.

Another way of getting to know the family as well as the children can be done through visits; allow families to visit the program or the classroom, or also during home visits. This visits ahead of time with the families, as I said, help to get to know the child better, what his interests are, what he doesn't like, what frustrates him, and even how to help him. They can help... The information that families share with you alleviates the anxiety they may feel when separating from their families for the first time, if they are attending a classroom after time spent at home.

What I also like about home visits is that you can learn more about the family. I love that. My children always had home visits, and I think at the beginning it was a little uncomfortable, but I think it helped establish a connection with the teachers, even a more personal connection.

This strategy that we use in Head Start is very successful to learn about the families as well as to create this relationship with them. And well, if you have other thoughts or activities that you use in your program to get to know the children or the families, please share them through the Question and Answer Icon.

Well, I am now going to make a quick pause to check if there is something here. Okay, not until now, but good, I will continue and will keep checking to see if we can also incorporate your ideas.

Okay, why is it then that it is important to visually represent the families of all the children in your classroom? Well, first, this brings families into the program. They feel welcomed, and when they feel welcomed, in turn they share very important things about themselves, such as their culture, their language, and also stories about their family, traditions, and what I also like, their tasty foods, and their important celebrations.

Another key aspect is that sometimes there are ways to greet that are culturally different, how to interact, and what is appropriate. So, it is very important to recognize this if you greet the children in a different way. And the most important part of this visual representation is to make sure each child is represented. You can do this by using photos that are visible. You also need to ensure families are represented in a positive way.

Carmen, I am going to pause here, then. I don't know if we see something in the chat, but there is a thought here.

Carmen: Yes, Melissa. Yes, when you are done, we have something in the chat.

Melissa: Oh, good. I was just going to say that a colleague shared that in her program they would create books with each of the families, and this book was included in the reading area. At the end of the year, each child would take home a book of all the families, so that again, he would have a memento of his year in the program. Carmen, you were thinking about something.

Carmen: Yes, right here. I am not sure if I am saying her name correctly. It's Xochitl. She says they send poster boards home so that they can visually represent themselves with photos, and add things that they enjoy, such as foods, pets, celebrations, flags, etc.

Melissa: What a great idea. I had not seen that about the poster boards. But can you imagine the families doing this work with their children? It would be a beautiful representation. Very good. Thank you so much for sharing this strategy.

Good, please keep sharing, we love your ideas. So, we will continue again, we are checking and looking for your comments. But now I want to move on to another component, classroom

rules. The rules are a very important component. We know that classroom rules are helpful to promote positive interactions, but although these rules do not necessarily make the learning environment function without any issues, they do help convey to children and staff the importance of learning together in a group setting, and in a safe and healthy way. This is the goal or reason for having rules.

About the rules, also some important points worth mentioning is that you need to ensure you have few rules in the learning environment. Not too many, because if you do —have many, its not productive, because it's not —it is difficult for the children to follow all of them, but you should have a few, simple, and positive rules that cover the safety and the wellbeing of the children. Again, we are talking here about positive behavior, and this is a way of doing it. Another aspect is the importance of involving children in developing those rules. When they create them, they are more committed to them.

And lastly, here are two more points I want to add. We have to teach the rules in a proactive manner and place them in areas where the children can see them. I have some examples that I wanted to share with you. On the left, we have an example of behavior expectations. We state here how we should walk in the classroom, and how to play quietly. Again, simple rules, easy for children to understand.

And here to the right we see a poster with school rules. You see here that they are classified in three parts, that is us, each other, and our things. Then again, here we see examples of simple rules, and you can also find other examples we have included in the Participant's Guide.

Next, we have other examples that I like a lot, because they represent three areas, that are to make sure to be friendly and also a learner. So, I say that I like them because these rules were created with the children. The rules were developed with the children, and they were considered. If you see the poster boards, here are the children's ideas of how to be safe and be friendly.

Once again, as we mentioned earlier, when you create these rules, by creating these rules you promote not only a sense of community, but also of belonging. So if you have other ideas about rules, particularly how you can include children in the development of rules, please share them with us.

Lastly, we have a video from a teacher who is talking about how to manage the development of rules and standards and expectations for your program. Again, the idea is that you can reflect while you watch the video. Please reflect on how you are setting rules, expectations, and how you are doing this in a manner that reinforces positive behavior. So, let's watch the video.

[Video begins]

Fanny Yang: Some of the questions during the home visits are directly related to rules. We ask what type of rules the family has in the home. We also ask what reward or consequences they use when their children follow, or do not follow the rules. Fortunately, most of the rules

happen to be similar: Follow the instructions, stay safe, things like that. Home rules keep you safe at home, and the school rules keep you safe in school.

Laurie Yarger: We involve families in several ways. In our program we have a weekly bulletin where we announce the classroom rule, we will work on during that week. We give examples about what it is. For example, a safe body behavior is to not touch others, to keep control of your feet and body. Then, we share the language we will be using in the classroom. We also celebrate family evenings once a month where we practice with the families.

Fanny: We ask the children to participate by creating rules and we allow them to help by adding more details. Many times, they give very good and correct answers. When we discuss what it means to be a good friend, many children answer, "It means to share your toys, be kind with others, say good things." This way, they also feel included. Sometimes, different groups of children say different things. It is possible that some groups may say, to use school supplies taking turns, while others focus more on compliments and speak kindly among themselves, and that is good. Both show an expected behavior of a good friend.

[End of video]

Melissa: Well, these were only a few good tips shared by these teachers about how they set rules. And we see here that a participant has shared, that they also send correspondence to the parents, explaining to them or sharing the classroom rules they are currently working on.

I believe an important aspect that one of the teachers mentioned in the video is that rules are for the home, and the rules for this...are not; no, that they have two different sets of rules and that parents also can help reinforce them, or use the same language as the rules. Carmen, okay, I think now you are next with the transition's topic.

Carmen: Yes, well now we are going to discuss supporting transitions.

Each transition is a type of routine, therefore you have to think about the transitions you make with your children in the classroom. Here are some tips to consider when you are thinking about transitions in your classrooms or in the family child care setting.

Eliminate unnecessary transitions and waiting time. Every time that you have children's groups who are transitioning together, for instance, to go to the restroom, if they need to go together to the restroom, some children will have to wait. So, you can avoid some of the wait time by splitting the transition into smaller groups or into separate transitions. But if a large group transition is inevitable, make sure you have a plan beforehand about what children can do while they wait. For example, they can sing songs, listen to a storybook, do fingerplays, but either way, plan the wait time if the transition is inevitable.

Then teach the expectations during transition time. Use a sign that is consistent so that children know when a change is going to take place. For example, ring a bell, it can also be clapping,

music, or blinking lights. Or you may use several of them to include the children's different modalities. But the key is to be consistent.

So, when motivating children for the next transition, try to use a special activity or materials. For example, as you see here, the teacher is encouraging children to make a line to go home blowing bubbles. To blow bubbles reinvigorate children and keeps them engaged as they stand in line, as well as helps motivate other children to hurry up and complete the transition.

You may also consider whether some children are able to make the transition by themselves. For instance, during snack time you can place individual placemats or cards with drawings to indicate the amount of food that they should get, and what they need to do once they have finished. So, this open style of snack time can not only shorten transitions, but also help children to be more independent and give them more control to meet their needs. In the Participant's Guide you can find additional information about what to do when the children's group has to wait.

Now, let's look at transitions with an educator. As many of us have experienced, sometimes the transitions can be a little more complicated when there is only one educator in the classroom.

Let's listen to this teacher, Jenny, talk about how we support transitions in these cases. While you watch the video, reflect on how you can support transitions when there is only one educator in the classroom.

And if you have some ideas that have worked for you, please share them through the Question and Answer icon. Okay, let's watch the video.

Y si tiene ideas que le han funcionado a usted, por favor compártalas en el ícono de Preguntas y respuestas. Bueno, vamos a ver el video.

[Video begins]

Teacher: I believe that wherever you are moving the children to, they have received very clear instructions about what to do there, if there is anything they need to do there. Then, for example, you may be doing a transition from outdoors to inside the classroom to pick up everything at the end of the day. Maybe you have given a clear instruction that there is a basket with notebooks, coloring pencils, and books, and those are really the only limited options about what children can do when they come in after that particular transition. In a way, this serves the same purpose as to have another teacher there to begin the activity, but it is something really clear for the children about what they can do when they enter the classroom, and then remind them each time they come in and say, "remember that we are going back in, what does that mean we can do?" and encourage them to remind each other about what they are supposed to do when they get there.

[Video ends]

Carmen: As you could hear in the video, she says that when you have only one educator it is very important to give clear instructions to the children, to be really clear, so that children understand what they are going to do afterwards as part of the transition, and also give them again reminders of the instructions.

Now, when children have difficulties with a transition, it can be very helpful to give them the option of how to complete the transition. This gives the child some autonomy and a sense of control that can be calming and it can motivate him to complete the transition.

For example, we can ask the children the following questions. Do you want to sit on the green carpet or on the blue one? Or, do you want to use the spoon or the tongs? Or, do you want to play with the blocks or with the farm animals? Studies have shown that children overall choose the last option, because they are two options that work for them and for you.

So, it is also important to prepare children to move from one activity to another or from one environment to another. For some small children, to transition from one activity to another, for instance, from playing outdoors in the play yard to play in the learning areas in the center may result in confusion, frustration, or in challenging behaviors. Adults can help children predict what comes next, which helps transitions to be more manageable for them.

Some strategies may be used during transitions between activities to help the children. Well, you can notify the children verbally that one activity is about to end, and another one is about to begin. You can use language with words like, “first”, and “then”. For example, “first, you place the toy where it was, and then you can play in another area of the classroom.”

You can also use visual aids or sing a funny or familiar song. You can use a timer and individualize your transition strategies, since some children need extra help during transitions. You may also offer positive, specific comments to children immediately when transitions are accomplished without any issues. For example, you can say something like, “Well, Lucas and Jorge helped each other when picking up the block area and then they went to the carpet to be ready for circle time.”

Write down some ideas in the Participant’s Guide and develop a plan to complete the Transition Planning Guide with your education team. Now let’s continue with Melissa.

Melissa: Carmen, I see that one hour might not be enough to cover everything, but this last point, about the aspect that we would like to share to promote positive behaviors is about behavior management systems.

And we know that for the learning environment arrangement to be successful, it requires the education staff, as well as the program to be intentional about it. It’s important to have a behavior management system, because it provide positive feedback, and recognition to all children, it does not include punitive measures, and any communication provided to the parents about their children is focused on the positive things that have happened during the day.

Lastly, that system recognizes all children throughout the day. Well, and we have some resources that we would like to share with you. But what is most important here that we want to stress is that we need to have our own system to encourage children, thinking ahead of time how we are going to encourage children's positive behavior, and how we are going to remember to encourage all children, because sometimes we might only focus on one or on some of them.

And in your Participant's Guide, we have a table that will help you plan for those skills that encourage positive behaviors. I will not review it with you. You have it in your guide, but you can simply plan through that Table which are the challenging behaviors, think what you would like to see instead of this behavior, what would you say in advance, and how you will promote that those behaviors continue with all children.

Carmen, then here, I believe it is important that you share the last two resources, if possible.

Carmen: Yes, of course. Well, now we are going to provide this resource you see here, that has to do with providing positive feedback and motivation. It offers some ideas to encourage children. For example, these are some of the things we can say to the children to encourage them, "Thank you for helping me organize the blocks. You were patient when you waited for your turn to play on the water table and did an amazing job placing the puzzles pieces."

Non-verbal encouragement also works. For instance, to give them a hug, clap, smile, or simply to give them a thumbs-up. Now let's take a look at this additional resource we have here titled, "Preparing for the Pyramid: Classroom Essentials".

Let's briefly review the components. Visual schedules, which include photos and pre-designed clip art for each activity. Another component is Behavior expectations and classroom or family child care rules, and they are positively stated. Families are visually represented and represented in a positive way. The physical environment is designed to promote engagement; centers have clear boundaries. Materials and environmental considerations are essential for the child's success. This means, the visual elements can be simplified for young children.

This document has just been translated and the components we have discussed through this session are based on that document. So, should we continue?

Melissa: Yes. Yes, Carmen. What you have just mentioned, the resource, once again, it is new. I mean, it is not new, but we just had it translated for this webinar. Please share it with our program colleagues, as it is a useful document.

Well, we have arrived to the end. Just another reminder. If you are not a member in MyPeers, please sign up today. It is a great platform for you to be able to exchange ideas. Well, so you can continue there this discussion that we have had today and also, if you have any questions, we can follow you there.

As always, we thank you for your participation once again. We ask you that you fill out the evaluation as we value your feedback. As soon as you complete the evaluation, you will be able to download the Attendance Certificate. It's very important.

So, thank you again for joining us. We hope you can join us for our next Episode on March 22, at the same time, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Please be on the lookout for the information about our next Webinar in ECLKC. We'll see you next time, and have a great day.

Carmen: Yes, bye everyone.