

## Teacher Time: Emotional Literacy in Preschool

Announcer: Places, everyone. Are the lights ready? Three, two, one.

Saameh Solaimani: Hi, everyone. I'm Saameh Solaimani. Welcome to Teacher Time. Thank you so much for being here with us today.

Gail Joseph: Hi, everyone. I'm Gail Joseph, and I'm so excited to be joining you on Teacher Time today. Now, Saameh, I always think it's better when we start with a song, shall we?

[Music plays]

Group: Teacher Time.

Teacher Time.

Teacher Time.

Teacher Time.

Teacher Time.

Teacher Time.

[Music ends]

Gail: Hi, here we are. No longer puppets, but magical transitions. Well, hi everyone and welcome to our second episode of Teacher Time this program year. I'm Gail Joseph.

Saameh: I'm Saameh Solaimani.

Gail: We are from the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning, which we often call DTL. We're so excited to have you here with us today. We're going to be focusing on positive behavioral supports this entire program season. Last time we talked about the importance of building relationships, which is at the foundation of anything we are doing related to positive behavioral support. We're going to be talking about emotional literacy.

Saameh: This season, our viewer's guide is a little different. It's a viewer's guide for birth through five, including specific age group information for infants, toddlers, and preschool children. It's packed full of information about development, teaching practices, helpful, quick tips, and reminders that you can cut out and post in your learning space. There's also note-taking space and a resource list at the very end. You can download the guide and use it throughout our time together for taking notes, reflecting and planning how to use the Teacher Time practices in your own settings. Please feel free to share the viewer's guide with colleagues. I think that's all for logistics. Let's get started.

Gail: I just want to say that I printed out our viewer's guide before we got started. And the viewer's guide is really amazing. We printed out black and white. It still looks great. But there are things to cut out and post in your room or to use with a home visit. I really encourage you if you haven't explored it yet, to do so. If you have used our viewer's guide, let us know in the Q&A how you've been enjoying it because we would really appreciate knowing that information.

Let's talk about how we're going to spend our time together. We have a short time together. We're going to try and get through a lot. First of all, we are going to be talking about practical strategies related to positive behavioral support. You're going to hear some of that focusing specifically on emotional literacy today. We are going to take time to talk about your wellness. We know that we are our best educator selves when we are feeling well and healthy. We're going to spend some time with some strategies on that.

We're going to connect effective practice to what we know about brain development in one of our new segments called Neuroscience Nook. We're going to cover the Teacher Time BASICS because we think those are great strategies to use anytime in the classroom with any content area. We're going to discuss in our segments on small changes, big impact, and on our focus on equity segment, we're going to talk about how we can individualize support for young children and how we can also be really aware of our implicit biases that we might bring to this content as well. You're going to hear about that.

Then, as we always do, we're going to wrap up with our segment, The Bookcase, and have a special visit with our Teacher Time librarian, Emily. Remember to keep all those questions coming. Saameh and I will be answering them, but you'll also have our wonderful Krista and Becky online to answer some questions as well. Because we're talking about emotional literacy specifically, but anytime we're doing Teacher Time, we like to check in with how we're feeling. Here is our Teacher Time feeling creature tree. You can find out more about that in the viewer's guide as well.

But for you all that are watching right now, participating with us, log in and tell us in the Q&A, which of these feeling creatures are you feeling right now and why? Let's just do a little check-in with how we're feeling. I have to say, I haven't been on Teacher Time for a little while now. I'm so excited to be back, but I also have to admit I'm feeling nervous, I'm feeling a little bit like one there, looking a little bit maybe nervous, a little out on the limb. Saameh, how are you feeling?

Saameh: Well, when I hear you say that I'm feeling like 10, like giving you a hand and also feeling like we can do this together.

Gail: I'm already not feeling like a one anymore. I'm feeling like I'm getting support. We see some of our viewers are checking in, number 10, lots of 10s. It's great to have that feeling.

Saameh: Very happy to be here. Very happy to have you here. Thank you for being with us.

Gail: And thank you for being with us. And remember, this is something you can do with young children as well. In fact, we're going to talk all about emotional literacy today, and feeling creature could be one of the ways you check in.

Saameh: We're very excited to be focusing on positive behavior supports this season, as some of you who have tuned in earlier this season know, and social and emotional development, as you may know, is one of the domains in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, or ELOF.

The practical strategies we will be discussing today will focus on the emotional functioning category of the social and emotional development domain, as you can see highlighted here. As we mentioned last month, this season of Teacher Time, we will be working our way through the Pyramid Model. The Pyramid Model is a positive behavior support, or PBS, framework for addressing the social and emotional development and challenging behaviors of young children.

This framework offers a continuum of evidence-based teaching practices that are organized into four levels of support, as you can see here. The very bottom sort of foundational level is nurturing and responsive relationships. On top of that, we have high-quality supportive environments and then social and emotional teaching strategies, and at the very top of that pyramid, we have intensive intervention. Today, what we're going to be focusing on is that third level of the pyramid, social and emotional teaching strategies.

If you want to learn more about the Pyramid Model, you can check out the resources from NCPMI and your viewer's guide in the resources list section. We'd love to hear what strategies and practices you have in place to support emotional skills with the preschool children in your care. Please feel free to share in the Q&A.

Gail: Yes, and our wonderful Q&A support, Becky and Krista, when our viewers are adding in some of their ideas, we know that you'll be sending that out so everyone can see these great ideas that you're already doing and practicing in terms of supporting emotional literacy. We're excited to see those coming in.

I'm going to take us back and say a bit more about positive behavioral support. That whole pyramid really is positive behavioral support, but we're going to focus in a bit about what is positive behavioral support. Positive behavioral support, sometimes it's called positive behavioral interventions and support. You'll hear PBS or PBIS. Sometimes you might even hear a multi-tiered system of support, MTSS.

All of those types of letters really are referring to this approach that we use to prevent and address challenging behavior or behaviors that adults find challenging. The number one thing to remember about this is that it is a proactive strategy. We're proactively thinking about ways in which we can prevent challenging behaviors from occurring. It's a positive approach and it's a proactive approach.

The other thing that's really important to remember with positive behavioral support is that at the hallmark of it, the foundation of it, is the recognition that challenging behavior is communication, that challenging behavior is used to communicate a message. Maybe it's, "I want that block." Maybe it's that, "I want that loud music to stop." Maybe it's that, "I want that cracker right now." Maybe it's, "I want a new teacher" – sometimes that's what the message was when I was asking a child to do something that they would find challenging.

It could be used to say I want something. It could be used to say I want to get away from something. I want something to stop. And really that's at the foundation of positive behavioral support is for us to be our best detectives and find out what message is that child trying to communicate with their challenging behavior? How can I teach them a healthier way to express that? It's not just about getting rid of hitting, but it's what message are they trying to send when they're hitting that friend? Is it that they want them to play, and then how do I teach them another way to do that? And emotional literacy is really a big part of doing that.

Saameh: Thank you, Gail. So important to remember. While we're doing all of that, it's really important to take a moment for ourselves, so that we can be more present and obviously first we need to take care of ourselves before we can take care of anybody else. We're going to turn our attention to you. We do our best caregiving and teaching when we feel well ourselves. Teaching and self-care practices can help us educators build greater social and emotional capacity to deal with challenging times.

Before we can support children's behaviors positively with PBS, as Gail was just discussing, it's important to find ways to regulate our feelings throughout the day. Emotional literacy and regulation is the ability to recognize and express our feelings and manage our actions and behaviors, which, as we all know, can be very challenging. Before we can support children with emotional literacy and regulation, it's important to find ways to regulate our own feelings throughout the day.

Our ability to self-regulate is foundational to our ability to support the children in our care. What we're going to do today is a color visualization technique, which is one way to strengthen emotional literacy and the ability to regulate. If we can do this together, let's take a few seconds, maybe we can start with a deep breath. Taking a few seconds to pause, focus on a color, breathe, and to feel can help support you in responding intentionally to children's cues, behaviors, and communications.

We invite you to follow along in this color visualization exercise. We're going to sit in a comfortable position with your body relaxed, and you're going to allow your eyes to softly close. I want to invite you to imagine a color that feels soothing or happy to you. Inhale and visualize that color entering your body. Allow the color to wash over you, feeling calm, safe, and fresh. Feel your color travel through your body from head to toe, relaxing your muscles. Exhale and return to this moment. We would love to hear what color came up for you in the chat., and let's see what color came up for you, Gail, in that.

Gail: I was like teal, I was kind of blue, kind of green. I love the idea of starting at the head and letting it wash over. How about for you? What color?

Saameh: Yellow. I relate it to a positive and hopeful feeling.

Gail: Nice.

Saameh: I could definitely feel that one here in the heart area.

Gail: I love that. I'm just looking at all these great colors coming in. Purple and pink and yellow and blue and green and hot pink. I love that distinction.

Saameh: I love that one.

Gail: Soft, soft slate blue. My eyes are failing me here, but I'm just seeing lovely colors.

Saameh: All the colors of the rainbow.

Gail: This is really resonating. I love this idea. Lavender. Great color descriptions. Our Q&A team will be sending these out to you because there's just a really great amount of different colors that are coming in here.

Saameh: Thank you so much for sharing.

Gail: I love that. We are going to start talking about emotional literacy and what a great way to ground us by thinking about our own emotional state and how we can feel calm ourselves. But let's dig into emotional literacy in terms of supporting young children's emotional literacy.

Emotional literacy is often defined as the ability to understand our own emotions and others' emotions or to monitor our own emotions and to be monitoring the emotional state of others. That is noticing and being able to identify and name it, not monitoring as if we're trying to impact it. The other thing to know is that all young children need support and guidance in learning emotional literacy. Just like we would learn early numeracy or early literacy; we want to support young children in learning that early emotional literacy.

Being able to name, identify, and express just an ever-increasing number of emotions is what we're trying to do in our early learning years – building that nice foundation of emotion-feeling words. We also know that emotional literacy is about being able to regulate those strong emotions as we have them. For young children that's going to start with co-regulation. It's going to start with having an adult help regulate emotions with young children.

We know that when young children can manage their emotions, identify them and express them in a healthy way, they're more equipped to establish those healthy reciprocal relationships, those friendships. We know that they can persist at tasks longer, so have better focus on learning and engage in more positive behaviors in the early learning setting. Emotional literacy is really foundation.

Now we're going to talk about some key ideas for building emotional literacy with young children. And one I already started talking about is helping young children identify emotions. It's really powerful to do this. We talk about that sometimes as incidental teaching, meaning that in the moment when a child's experiencing an emotion, taking that time to connect with that child and label that emotion.

Emotions start really with a physiological sensation often inside the body. Maybe my stomach starts to clench up, my jaw maybe starts to clench up, or my heart is beating more rapidly when I'm nervous or I'm afraid or I'm excited. It's healthy, it's joining a child in that moment, and offering perhaps an emotional label for that. Saying, "wow, I can see that it looks like your jaw's a bit tense, and I'm wondering if you're feeling frustrated right now?" Let's take a deep breath together.

It's joining in that moment, and it's offering perhaps a feeling word for that child to map on to the physiological sensations that they're having in their body. What's key here is really starting to build beyond happy, sad, and mad. It's with those feeling words that children can start to draw finer and finer distinctions, and they can be better at identifying their feelings, so they can start to be better at regulating those feelings.

We always want to individualize too. If a child is deaf or hard of hearing and is using sign language, we would map the sign for the feeling words. Or if a child is a multi-language learner, we would give multiple words for that feeling. The words in English, the words in their home language, and maybe even others as well.

Saameh: Our next key idea is practicing empathy. As we know, young children calm more quickly when they feel accepted and understood. I think that goes for all of us. Supportive educators validate children's feelings and help them determine what may have happened to trigger those feelings. When children make these connections, they're more likely to understand their own emotions and be able to have empathy for others.

In this picture, as you can see in the middle, the adult might have picked the preschool child up after the child fell and began to cry. Maybe the adult held the child for a while, patted their back, and said something like, I know, that felt really scary to help the child co-regulate and feel seen and heard in that moment.

Gail: We would also move into helping that child start to empathize with others as well by that adult modeling. That also sets a nice foundation for moving into the third key strategy, which is teaching self-regulation strategies. I talked about this a little bit earlier. With young children, it's going to start with co-regulation. It's going to start with an adult joining the child in an upsetting or super exciting moment and helping the child to express that emotion in a healthy way, to regulate that.

If it's a big negative emotion, helping to regulate that, to calm down. If it's like a super, super, super positive, super exciting, I can barely sit still emotion, helping to regulate as well so we can express that in a healthy way. You can see in that photo there too, it looks just like a teacher is doing that in that moment. Joining the child actually physically with that child and helping them maybe to make a different choice, which might be the right regulation strategy to use at that moment. Those are our three key strategies that we are hoping you'll start using in your practice or tell us how you're using those now.

Saameh: Now for our next segment, research tells us that the early years are foundational for brain development. Adults play an important role in supporting healthy brain development connections and architecture. In this segment, Neuroscience Nook, we are excited to connect this research to everyday teaching practices. Here is a quick way to think about the brain that was developed by Dr. Dan Siegel, a clinical professor of psychiatry at UCLA'S School of Medicine.

I'm going to do a demonstration with my hand. Your wrist is the spinal cord upon which the brain sits, and this would be the pathway from the brain to the body. Your palm is the inner brain stem, which regulates autonomic functions. This would be things like heart rate, blood pressure, digestion. Your thumb is your amygdala, an area of the brain involved in experiencing of emotions. If you place your thumb in your palm, you'll form the limbic system. Your other fingers are your cerebral cortex for things like language, memory, and reasoning. The tips of your fingers are your prefrontal cortex, which is in charge of decision-making.

Close them on top of your palm and thumb, and there you have it, the hand model of the brain. The brain stem and the limbic system work together to release cortisol and prepare our body for the fight, flight, freeze response to feeling overwhelmed or large amounts of stress. This can be a good thing when we need to react to danger. Usually, the prefrontal cortex kicks in and calms us down once we realize that the threat is unreal or over. But when we are in survival mode, we flip our lid, and the limbic system takes over. When we have flipped our lid, our cortex is no longer in control. We can no longer effectively communicate with others, control our emotions, or respond to reasoning.

An example of this is, have you ever tried to reason with a preschool child during a meltdown or in a situation where the child is experiencing big feelings? We know that it's likely very challenging to do at that moment. We need to help them close their brain, so the cortex is back in control. We don't have to be in real danger to flip our lid. Any stressful situation can cause our cortisol levels to rise, making it challenging to access our reasoning, regulating brain. Since the prefrontal cortex isn't fully developed until we're 25 years old, children find it much harder to respond to stressful situations and regulate their emotions.

For young children, the caregiver must be responsive to the child's needs, supporting the child with co-regulation. In stressful situations, we adults can also flip our lids, as we know, and it's important that we have strategies to help us put our lids back on for our own well-being,, as we discussed a little bit earlier, so we can best support the children in our care. Let's watch a video of what this might look like for a child.

[Video begins]

Teacher: Look, she's thinking about a plan. What do you say, Megan?

Child: I said we can keep room.

Teacher: We can keep room. How will we do that?

Child: We can scoot over.

Teacher: We can scoot over? And what happens when you scoot over? Who's going to come?

Child: Maybe Aiden.

Teacher: Aiden? That is a good plan.

Child: And Chase.

Teacher: Well, look at you. You're calming your body down. I can understand your words, Sarah.

Child: You can stay in here and I can paint it. How about that?

Teacher: What a great plan. Wow.

Child: Fine. We're going to do it when that part is over.

Child: We'll do it together.

Teacher: We'll do it together. But that is a great plan, Sarah. Look at you.

Child: And then your turn. It's going to be our turn at the house. We're going to paint it for them. That's how we're going to do it.

Teacher: What a great plan you have.

Child: So, nobody else can get in.

Teacher: Look at that. You're opening a room for your friends. You're sharing the house and you say, we paint the house for them. They will be so happy about it.

Child: Chase. You can actually come in here and we're going to paint the house. And we can come.

Teacher: Oh, what a great plan.

[Video ends]

Saameh: The child who is crying has flipped her lid and was unable to process the steps of this event or self-regulate, as you could see. The adult noticed this and responded to it intentionally by sharing what she notices about the child's emotion, using emotion words like, "look at you, you're calming your body down. I can understand your words, Sarah."

The child was able to calm down, put their lid back on, pause and regulate which provided the opportunity for the child to work on coming up with a solution with her peer, one that involves sharing the house and all working and playing together.

Gail: I just love that video. I just think that what's great about it is the teacher is guiding. Like it's just such a great example of this co-regulation. She's just coaching them through that. It's really lovely. I think about when I was teaching, I might have just burst in there and tried to manage the situation, but she really has great faith in the children and is able to regulate and help them regulate, which is, it's just lovely. It's such a great example of that facilitation.

We are ready to talk about our Teacher Time BASICS. This is the Teacher Time BASICS section. And not that BASICS means it's easy to do. It just means that these are strategies that are great for whatever it is that you're teaching. If you haven't joined us before, I'm going to quickly go over what the BASICS acronym stands for. It's a collection of strategies that we can use in really any setting with young children.

The Teacher Time BASICS are B stands for behavioral expectations in advance. The A is for attending to and encouraging positive behavior, which you imagine plays a big role in positive behavioral support. The S is for scaffolding with cues and prompts, much like that co-regulation is a lot of scaffolding. I is for increasing engagement, children's active engagement with whatever it is that we're teaching or supporting. C is to create or add a challenge. And S is to provide some specific feedback.

On each episode of Teacher Time, we cover a couple of the BASICS. You can always watch our previous versions on PushPlay if you want to see what the behavioral expectations in advance and attend to were. In today's segment, we are going to talk about the S with scaffolding with cues and prompts. I want to talk about what scaffolding might look like with emotional literacy. I know from some of the things that you're writing into the Q&A that many of you are already doing a lot of these strategies.

But scaffolding here, when I think about scaffolding with emotional literacy, I might think first about using emotion words as just a scaffold. You see some of these little scenarios on the screen there – it could say something like, "yes, it's going to be your birthday party tomorrow. And I can hear how excited your voice sounds. I feel so happy for you." A really nice scaffold. The child might have just exclaimed, "it's my birthday!" And the teacher takes that moment to scaffold now using an emotion word by saying, I can hear how excited your voice sounds. Really providing that word.

Another one is, “that was such a nice hug. Thank you so much. That makes me feel loved.” What I love about this scaffolding statement is that they use the word feel loved instead of just that makes me loved. That's a really great tip to pass on is that we like to say, it sounds like you feel, or I feel versus you're mad. It might be you're feeling mad. We're not describing their whole being. We're just saying you're feeling, your emotion right now is that you feel happy, or you feel sad, or you feel excited. I might model that when I'm talking, I might feel frustrated right now or I might feel really happy or I might feel nervous.

The next scaffolding is about helping children read cues, because a lot of emotional literacy is not only being able to name and identify emotions in themselves, but being able to name emotions in others and being able to notice how others might be feeling. That scaffolding might be to cue children to look at their peers' face or maybe how they sound or maybe even their body language and that that would help them to then start to cue into how somebody else might be feeling.

You might say to a child after they ran into their peer, “you ran into Leo. Look at his face. He has tears coming down his cheeks. I wonder if he might be feeling upset.” Then you could wait and see how Leo responds and try asking Leo, “how are you feeling.” You can help scaffold in that way as well.

Always remember that we would be thinking about individualizing these strategies for a child. A child might need even more support, more scaffolding. They might need you to use fewer words or repeat some words. In children that might be less attentive to cues, it might be that we're really, we have to more explicitly gain their attention by maybe touching their face gently, et cetera. That is for scaffolding with cues and prompts. Another great way to scaffold – I was thinking about this when Saameh was doing the color visualization with us to relax, it reminded me a lot of the relaxation thermometer.

I would love to know from our Teacher Time viewers how many of you might be using a version of the relaxation thermometer in your programs right now as a scaffold for young children to understand not only how they might be feeling, but how they might calm themselves down. If you're using a relaxation thermometer, tell us how you're using it. Is it posted in your room? Do you bring it out at Circle Time? Tell us how you might use it. I'll tell you how I've used it in the past while you're entering some things into Q&A that I know Becky and Krista will help push out to others.

But the way that I use a relaxation thermometer is you can see a picture of it on the slide there. And at the very top is red. The idea would be that there's a lot of different colors between that red and that blue. The one that we're seeing right there is just red and blue, but ideally there's a lot of different colors in there and children can start to associate a different color with a different feeling. The blue is that feeling content, feeling calm, feeling relaxed. And the idea is that's how we want to feel. That feels so great, that person down there in the blue. I want to feel like that guy. How do we get from feeling in the red to feeling in the blue?

The relaxation thermometer helps remind us that one of the best ways to do that is taking a deep, deep, deep breath, getting ourselves calm. You can also use the relaxation thermometer to help cue children because when you're feeling in that red is when you might be feeling a little bit out of control and dysregulated. That might be how you feel when your hands start to make fists, or your jaw starts to clench, and you might say some unsafe or mean words. Ideally, we want to catch ourselves right before that moment and get ourselves calm. What color might that be? That might be that orange color that I experienced.

You can start to, if you use the relaxation thermometer a lot, you can cue children. You can say, "uh oh, it looks like you might be getting into the red." That might be enough of a cue to help a child regulate down into that blue. I love the relaxation thermometer. Viewer's guide, if you want to know more about it, go to the viewer's guide and you can see more about using the relaxation thermometer.

Saameh: Thank you, Gail. Just hearing you talk about it helped me come down into the blue. For the next letter of the BASICS that we're going to focus on today is I for increased engagement. Having children check in when they enter a learning space or at the beginning of a home visit is a way to increase active engagement with emotional literacy.

The How Do I Feel Chart that we just mentioned is a great resource for this routine. Key things to remember when using the checking in routines are, is the check in routine developmentally appropriate? For example, are the photos, complexity of words and languages representative of the children in the unique learning community that is ours? Also, it's important to pay attention, keeping their routine fresh, relevant and engaging to the community. You can use this time to validate and scaffold naturally nurturing a positive relationship with the child.

The positive relationship is that foundation of the PBS pyramid that everything else is built on. It's the most important thing. Then, for example, "I see you're feeling excited today. I'd love to hear more about that." Encouraging the child's elaboration on sharing of their emotion. If they enter in and they're sharing, oh, maybe on the how I feel today chart, pointing to excited. You can understand more about why the child's feeling excited and make that connection upon entering the classroom. We would love to know; do you use checking in? And let us know what your checking in looks like in the Q&A.

While you're doing that, I wanted to share something we used to do in our preschool classroom is that when children entered, they would find their name from the name baskets. We had all the children's names laminated. They would find their name and would take their name and they could put it next to the emotion that they were feeling. There were a couple of steps and that would keep it fun – that name recognition literacy piece added in. And we'd love to hear your thoughts. Thank you for sharing.

Gail: I love all those ideas. I've seen teachers have children sign in and then pick a feeling face next to it. Then they can use that signing in, periodically grab that for their portfolios as well. It gets two things, the child's emerging writing skills as well as their emerging ability to match the feeling to how they're feeling. I'll tell you a little bit of trivia. The picture there that you see, this

is how I feel today. Those little feeling faces, which a lot of people might actually have because they have been around for a while on the Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning website. But those were from my classroom.

Saameh: Oh wow.

Gail: My husband drew those for me on a Mac computer. You're seeing the OG check-in chart there.

Saameh: That's amazing. I'd love to know the background about that.

Gail: Yes. He never got credit for it. I'm giving him credit today.

Saameh: A shout-out.

Gail: Nice drawings. He'll be so excited. If you have them in your room, those exact pictures, let me know and I'll pass it on to him too. We all have family members that help volunteer, I think when we're teachers, that's for sure. Lots of great ideas about checking in. I love all the things there. I wish I could just stop for a moment and absorb everything that's coming in because we know that the growing edges of this work of checking in is happening right now in the classrooms of the teachers that are tuning in today. I can't wait after to go back and look at the Q&A and all the different ideas that are coming in.

Here's another idea for increasing engagement, and this is around building emotional literacy and building that empathy muscle by using something called paper dolls. This is another great reason to go to your viewer's guide if you haven't downloaded it yet because there will be links to where you can get the paper doll activity. But the idea here is that, as you can see, there's a picture. Those are both laminated, and you can make these as big or as small as you want.

In my classroom, we had them big, like almost the size of a preschooler. We did them on a big poster board, and they have detachable faces. That might not sound so great right now. But the idea is that you tell a story. And it's great because you're telling a story, and you could tell a story about something that happened in your own classroom or that happened on the playground. But you're telling a story with these two characters, and then you would stop periodically and say, how do you think you could give them a name? Maybe the one on the right is Nikki, and the one on the left is Christopher. And you could stop and say, "how do you think that made Nikki feel when Christopher said, hey, you can come play with me?"

Then the children would find the face that matches, and then they could help put it on the face. You'll see when you download them that the faces are separate. As you're telling the story, the children help change the faces. Now you can do it. In my classroom, we had it big and enlarged, and children could come up and change the faces as an interactive story time. But one other idea is to make folder games out of it. It takes a lot of prep time. If you've got some family members that want to help, come in and volunteer, this is a great thing to have them prep.

But each child could have their own file folder. They could have the pictures that could be colored. and more exciting than what I've done, which is just the black and white. But Then you could have their faces Velcroed on. As you're telling a story, each child could have one of these. And as you're telling a story that you're going to make up about the two children, Christopher, and Nikki, then children could change the faces to how the characters might be feeling in the story based on that.

It's a great way, or you could even work individually with a child and tell a story and see what faces they came up with to get a good idea of their emotional literacy state at that moment. They're a lot of fun. You can do lots of different things with them. We have a link to where you can download them on your own. I know that we have lots of Teacher Time artists out there, too, so you might make your own as well. And if you do, we hope you'll share those in my peers. But another great way to increase active engagement.

Saameh: I love that. Thank you, Gail. So much fun. I've never done that one before, but I love the Velcro idea. We're going to watch how one educator uses puppets and dolls to talk about different emotions.

[Video begins]

Educator: [Speaking Spanish] We are going to talk about something very important, right? Our emotions. When I cry, what do I do? Right? When I laugh... ha-ha-ha-ha. Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. When we are angry, right, yes. We go like this... angry. Let's find the different faces here. How does he feel? Look at his tear here. Right? He is sad. Why do you think he is crying? Why do you think he cries? It's normal, right? Is crying normal? Is it okay to cry? It is, right?

Child 1: [Speaking Spanish]

Educator: Ohhh, and that's why we cry, right, because we're sad. [Speaking Spanish]

[Video ends]

Saameh: The educator talked about several different emotions, and in addition to using the puppets, they have little feeling face dolls, and they made facial expressions for each emotion. And you can see the children were so engaged in that activity.

Gail: I love puppets. You don't have to sell me on puppets.

Saameh: We have our puppet friend here with us today. Our turtle.

Gail: Or Tucker, depending on where you learned it from. Tiny or Tucker, keeping us company.

Saameh: Now our segment, Small Change, Big Impact, where we share how small adjustments to the way we set up our learning environment, modify our curriculum, or engage with children can make a big difference in a child's learning.

We know that children vary in their learning characteristics and how they engage with people and materials in their learning environments. These small changes, also known as curriculum modifications, are made based on the individual needs of a child to promote their engagement and participation. We know that when children are more engaged, they have more opportunities to learn. We know that some children might need more highly individualized teaching strategies, teaching to help them learn emotional literacy, such as embedded teaching or intensive individualized teaching.

Making curriculum modifications based on a child's individual learning needs can be a great place to start to support engagement. In today's segment, we will share examples of visual supports, like we saw in the last video clip where the teacher used little stuffed faces to discuss emotions with a group of children. Visual supports are an environmental modification where adults intentionally add visual information to their environment to help children engage in activities and routines or with others.

While visual supports can be helpful for all children, they can be especially effective for children with disabilities or suspected delays. Some children may have a difficult time attending to, understanding, or processing verbal information, and visual supports can be very helpful here in providing static, concrete information about a variety of information, routines, expectations, or as we've been talking about today, language and vocabulary related to a specific concept or skill. Using visuals along with verbal language presents information in a way that can help children focus on key elements.

They can be designed to meet the individual needs of a child, their age, developmental level, or learning style by using different visual formats to share the information. And that might be objects, photographs, drawings, or prints. An emotional regulation kit, as we can see in the photo here, is one wonderful example of how visual supports can be used to support learning emotional literacy. The kit is also a reminder of choices that children can choose from depending on what feels best for each individual child.

It's always great when we can give children choices, and they can choose what works best for their own needs and feelings in that moment. It might change from time to time, whatever feels best at that time. Check out your viewer's guide for a link to a webinar from our inclusion series that shares some highly individualized teaching practices, including visual supports to support social and emotional learning for children with disabilities.

Gail: I love that. For those of you that have or have not downloaded the viewer's guide yet, I love this. I think it's on page 8. There are little visual cue cards to go in that emotional regulation kit, like hug something, squeeze a ball. I just love those ideas. You can even cut those out right now and use them, or you can go grab more examples from the links that are on there. I love that idea of giving them choices and visual cue cards.

The feeling face poster that you see here is an example of another visual support that we can help children learn emotional vocabulary. Of course, they do that again, with this visual support as well. I love this because it has illustrations of different emotions. One reason I like illustrations, as young children are learning in the beginning, is that you can overemphasize different parts of the face that can help children detect how they're feeling better than sometimes you can in photographs, but then eventually move to photographs.

But the other thing that's great about this is that it's in English and in Spanish, representing the languages of the children in the classroom. This type of visual can be used to help many different learning environments. It can be used in many different learning environments to help children. But some children might not benefit from a visual like this. They might not be attending to it. They might need more individualized support in terms of building their emotional vocabularies.

We would love to hear from you if you have supported a child that just needed a little bit more individualized support in learning some emotion words. What did you do? If you can enter those in the Q&A, we would love to hear from you and share your ideas with others. While they're doing that, I'm going to move on.

Saameh: Thank you so much, Gail. I just wanted to quickly show another example of what individualizing visual supports might look like. Here we have actual photographs of children, and it could be the children in your classroom. While you're sharing your comments, you can see there are many different ways to do this. Again, if you want to learn more about visual supports and other environmental supports, you can check out the 15-minute in-service suite on environmental supports on the ECLKC website, also linked in your viewer's guide.

Gail: Love that. Throughout this webinar, we have been discussing ways to foster social and emotional skills for all children. Today on our focus on equity segment, we will use our equity lens to take a closer look at implicit biases that we might have and how the impact of those can really impact the ways in which we're building relationships with young children, but even the ways in which we are building emotional literacy with young children.

Saameh: The way emotions are expressed and valued differs across cultures, as we know. In some cultures, overt expressions of emotions is encouraged, while in others, people are more reserved. For example, looking at these representations of emotions on the left, the different expressions could signify, be interpreted, or received differently depending on the culture, background, or experience of the person.

It's very important to think about how emotions are expressed with different cultures and, more specifically, how it's expressed in each family, as there are nuances in each culture as well. Sometimes subtle biases that we might not be aware of can interfere with our ability to interpret and respond to children's emotions, especially when children come from backgrounds and traditions that are different from our own. The process of uncovering these implicit biases takes time and reflection.

Gail: Absolutely. We're going to watch a quick video from Dr. Jeanne Tsai at Stanford University at the Bing Nursery and learn more about this idea of culture and the ideal affect. Let's take a listen. While you're watching, think about the ways in which culture can vary and how they value different emotions and why this might be important for you to know.

[Video begins]

Teacher: The little girl is far from home.

Reporter: As schools across America become more diverse, what are the implications of culture in the classroom? Dr. Jeanne Tsai who directs the Culture and Emotions Lab in the Psychology Department at Stanford, says for starters, culture greatly influences what's known as our ideal affect.

Dr. Jeanne Tsai: Ideal affect refers to the affective states or the feelings that people value, desire, ideally want to feel. And this is really as opposed to the feelings that people actually have or what we call their actual affect.

Reporter: Dr. Tsai initially conducted a series of studies with adults, some European American, some East Asian, to measure the specific feelings they ideally wanted to feel or their ideal affect.

Dr. Tsai: What we found was that North American contexts, European American contexts, really value these excitement states or what we call high arousal positive states, like excitement, enthusiasm, and elation. More than many East Asian contexts, which really value the more calm states, calm, peacefulness, serenity, what we call these low arousal positive states. And what's interesting is that across a variety of different studies and samples, we always find these cultural differences in how people want to feel or their ideal affect.

And we often don't find any differences in how people actually feel. And we think that this is because culture teaches us what's desirable, what's moral, what's virtuous. A lot of cultural psychologists have talked about that as being one of the primary roles of culture. And we apply this to the idea of emotions, that culture also teaches us what emotions are moral, right, and virtuous.

Reporter: At what age do culture and cultural differences affect ideal affect?

Dr. Tsai: Kids begin to develop an understanding of the emotions that they should feel or that they should display on their faces right around preschool age, between the ages of 3 and 5. We reason that once they develop this understanding, that's when we should see cultural differences in ideal affect.

I think it's really important to consider not only how culture shapes the languages that people are speaking or the kinds of foods they're eating, but also how culture shapes the student's psyches and how they're thinking and feeling and relating to others. And I think if educators can be sensitive to those cultural differences, then we can reduce the likelihood of

misunderstandings, mischaracterizing a child as disengaged or as not being creative or not having the potential to be a leader when they might have all of those things. They're just coming from a culture that manifests those qualities in a different way.

Teacher: Still exploring all the colors.

Dr. Tsai: If we could have classrooms that could accommodate that and really benefit and capitalize on the cultural differences, I think we would all learn much more rather than being restricted to just one way of being.

[Video ends]

Saameh: As we can see, culture shapes how children are thinking, feeling, and relating to others. If educators are sensitive to cultural differences, we can reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings. Very important things to remember. One way we can connect with families and ensure that our learning environments are more equitable spaces and representative of the children in our care is to ask families to share labels for emotions in the child's home language and use familiar words with children. We can include visuals. We can also include visuals of emotions that represent the children and families in the learning community.

Here on the slide, we see emotion words in four different languages, Spanish, Farsi, my home language, Somali, and Mandarin. Becoming aware of our biases, as we were discussing a little bit about, is important and challenging work. Some helpful questions to reflect on are here. For time's sake, I'm not going to read through them, but just so you know, they're in your viewer's guide. You can print them out, have them, maybe put them somewhere in the classroom to remind you. Last but certainly not least, we are going to visit our bookcase with Teacher Time librarian Emily Small.

Saameh: Hi, everyone, and welcome to our Teacher Time library. I'm Saameh Solaimani, and it's a pleasure to be here today with our Teacher Time librarian, Emily Small.

Emily Small: Thanks for having me back.

Saameh: Thank you so much for being here. Emily has picked some wonderful books for us that are in line with our theme of emotional literacy. She's going to share those with us, and she will make the CASE for one of them.

Just to remind you, CASE is an acronym, and it's a way for us to be very intentional about the books we're selecting for children. C stands for connecting. Connecting the book to something from the ELOF, our Early Learning Outcomes Framework. A stands for advanced vocabulary. Books are a great way to extend and deepen a child's vocabulary, to stop and connect advanced vocabulary with words that a child already knows. S stands for supporting engagement. We want to think about how to support active engagement. Last but not least, we have E, extend learning. What can we do beyond the book that might keep the book theme and learning alive in your learning environment?

Now Emily has brought some wonderful books to share with us today. I'm so excited to hear all about them.

Emily: Before we dive into the books, I just want to mention that please utilize your local library for these titles. If your library doesn't have these titles, ask your local librarian for books about feelings and emotions, and they will definitely have things on the shelf for you.

Saameh: Thank you. Such a great tip.

Emily: Our first book is *You Have Feelings All the Time* by Deborah Farmer Kris, and it follows this little girl and her cute little cat going about life. It has this fantastic phrase on every page, which is, you have feelings all the time, which is a great reminder for kids, especially as they're learning to identify what they're feeling, that this is a natural thing.

Saameh: Wonderful.

Emily: It also does a good job of talking about feeling multiple emotions at the same time and that that's normal.

Saameh:, I love that.

Emily: We also have *The Color Monster, a Story About Emotions* by Anna Llenas, and this book has fantastic artwork. I'm going to find a page to show you. We have this beautiful collage style, and they're saying that yellow is a happy color. This book would be great for talking and doing some art projects around how color makes people feel.

Saameh: It's stunning. I love the detail. It's almost three-dimensional looking.

Emily: I imagine you may have some kids really interested in collage after this book.

Saameh: Very inspiring.

Emily: We have *Some Days* by Karen Kaufman Orloff, and this follows two friends just going about their days together and the things they experience. They have days where they're rolling out the dough, watch the fire glow days. It's full of a nice rhythm to the words as well as showing, some days we have there are great days, and then other days, some days are waiting at the store days. The child looks bored and, like, a little frustrated. A good one to incorporate into your daily life.

Saameh: Wonderful. I love that.

Emily: Our final book for the case is *B is for Breathe*. This is by Dr. Monroe Boyd, and this is an ABC book full of really simple activities that people can do and also that will help children feel grounded in their emotions.

For our advanced vocabulary, we have words such as self-esteem, clutter, organize, and boost are just a few examples. This is a great book to spark some conversations and keep kids engaged. For instance, we have I is for Imagine a Favorite Place. I'm sure children would love to share a favorite place of theirs. J is for Telling Jokes. Four- and five-year-olds always have lots of jokes to share.

Saameh: Right, the best jokes.

Emily: Yes, a great one to keep kids engaged.

Saameh: I love that.

Emily: Then for extending the learning, people do a lot of work already around emotions and feelings, but maybe adding a feelings chart to the classroom, giving kids an opportunity to practice labeling emotions, playing different games around that.

Saameh: I love that. Thank you so much, Emily.

Emily: You're welcome.

Saameh: Thank you for sharing these wonderful resources to support around emotional literacy, and we look forward to seeing what books you have on your bookcase.

Gail: We had so much fun today.

Saameh: Unfortunately, we don't have time for Q&A, but thank you so much for joining us. Join us for our next episodes on February 2nd, and then we have another one on March 2nd.

Gail: And join us on MyPeers, too.

Saameh: Right.

Gail: Continue the conversation over on MyPeers, and we have seen lots of your questions, and if we haven't gotten to them today, we'll get to them over in the MyPeers space.

Saameh: Thank you so much.

Gail: Thanks.