

Walk & Talk Activity

Purpose: The *Walk & Talk Activity* is designed to make the sharing of specific research findings about the importance of social-emotional learning more interesting and give participants an opportunity to get to know each other.

Materials:, Traveling music, audio player, and *Walk & Talk Cards* (can be downloaded at: <http://ecep.uark.edu/5931.htm>)

Directions:

1. Print and cut out a set of the *Walk and Talk Cards* (32 cards). If desired, they can be printed on a color printer using card stock and laminated so they can be used again.
2. Explain to participants that they will be moving around the room and forming small groups to learn and discuss some interesting research findings about social-emotional learning.
3. Give each participant a card.
4. Direct participants to form small groups of three to five people (assign groups or let participants mix it up).
5. Ask them to introduce themselves, tell where they teach, and tell one interesting fact about themselves.
6. Instruct participants to share the information on their card with the other group members and to discuss one or more of the focus questions on the card.
7. Have participants take turns reading and getting the other group members to respond to the information.
8. Explain that when they hear traveling music they will move and form new groups and repeat the process.

Variations: Divide participants into small groups of three to five and:

- Hand each group two or three cards. Have them share and discuss as above. When they regroup, hand them a new set of cards. This way each group is given the same cards and you can be sure that all participants hear the same facts. You will need four to five copies of each card (they won't be able to do all 32 research findings due to time).
- Display on a transparency or PowerPoint slide one or more research finding and instruct each group to discuss it. Have them regroup (using traveling music or some other method) and display another research finding. This insures that all participants discuss the same information (they won't be able to do all 32 research findings due to time).
- Put all 32 research findings on a handout. Give each participant a handout. Have each group discuss the first three. Have participants regroup and then discuss the next three. Not all of the research findings will be discussed in any of the variations, but you can encourage participants to read the rest of them on their own.



What the Experts Say:

The quality of the experiences and relationships at home and at child care set the stage for children's social and emotional development and school success.

When preschool programs use good teaching practices that emphasize children's social and emotional development, they provide the basis for long-term social, emotional, and cognitive benefits.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Raver, C., & Knitzer, J. (2002). *Ready to enter: What research tells policymakers about strategies to promote social and emotional school readiness among three- and four-year-old children*. New York: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty.



What the Experts Say:

Preschool programs are ideal settings for promoting children's competence because they have access to children and their parents on a regular basis over an extended period and can serve as an agent of developmental change for children.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Pianta R., Steinberg M., & Rollins K. (1995). The first two years of school: Teacher-child relationships and deflections in children's classroom adjustment. *Development and Psychopathology*, 7, 295-312.



What the Experts Say:

Based in an increasing body of research, the National Association for Young Children's publication, *The Teaching Pyramid: A Model for Supporting Social Competence and Preventing Challenging Behavior in Young Children*, offers a model for effectively promoting social-emotional competence and addressing problem behavior. The model focuses on: 1) promoting social-emotional development; 2) providing support for children's appropriate behavior; and 3) preventing challenging behavior.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Fox, L., Dunlap, G., Hemmeter, M., Joseph, G., & Strain, P. (2003, July). The teaching pyramid: A model for supporting social competence and preventing challenging behavior in young children. *Young Children*, 58, 48-52.



What the Experts Say:

Good relationships are critical to effective teaching and guidance in social, emotional, and behavioral development. Giving children positive attention for their prosocial behavior and providing *consistent routines and expectations promotes social-emotional development*.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?



What the Experts Say:

Emotional literacy is the ability to recognize, label and understand feelings. It is one of the most important skills children learn in early childhood. It is a prerequisite skill to emotion regulation, successful interactions with others, and problem solving.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Denham, S. (1998). *Emotional development in young children*. New York: Guilford Press.



What the Experts Say:

Adult-Child Interactions. Children's capacity for emotion regulation begins in infancy and is strongly influenced by adult-child interactions. The way that adults help children handle their emotions makes a significant difference in their development of emotion regulation and later mental health. Caregiver sensitivity and responsiveness is important. If adults fail to respond sensitively and appropriately to a child, it sets the stage for later behavioral problems.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Crockenberg, S., & Leerkes, E. (2000). Infant social and emotional development in family context. In: C. Zeanah, (Ed.), *Handbook of Infant Mental Health*, (pp. 60-90). New York: Guilford Press



What the Experts Say:

Feeling Vocabulary. For children to correctly recognize, label and understand their own feelings and feelings of others, they must first have words for those feelings (develop a feeling vocabulary). Many children are either happy or mad with mad being any intense negative emotion. These children miss all the subtle feelings in between happy and mad because they do not have labels and definitions for those emotions.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?



What the Experts Say:

Children from low income families and children with disabilities or developmental delays are more likely to have fewer feeling words than typically developing children and, therefore, may require targeted efforts to promote emotional literacy.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Eisneberg, A. (1999). Emotion talk among Mexican-American and Anglo American mothers and children from two social classes. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 45(2), 267-284.

Lewis, M., & Michalson, L. (1993). *Children's emotions and moods: Developmental theory and measurement*. New York: Plenum Press.

Hart, B., & Risley, T. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks.



What the Experts Say:

The preschool years are a period of rapid growth and development as children learn new skills and refine them into increasingly more complex and sophisticated responses. If there are delays or problems in mastering social-emotional skills, a child may experience later problems in academics, social relationships, and mental health.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Frick, P., & Dantagnan, A. (2005) Predicting the stability of conduct problems in children with and without callous-unemotional , 14, 269-485



What the Experts Say:

The preschool period is the critical time for children to learn to control their thoughts, feelings, attention, impulses, and behavior. Emotional development is the process of learning to recognize and express emotions, regulate or manage emotions, and understand the emotions of others. Social development is the process of developing skills to form positive relationships with adults and peers, play with others, and handle challenging situations.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Knitzer, J., & Lefkowitz, J. (2005). *Resources to promote social and emotional health and school readiness in young children and families*. New York: National Center for Children in Poverty.



What the Experts Say:

When negative developmental trajectories are established early in childhood, they can be self-sustaining throughout the lifespan. Research indicates that emotional and behavioral problems in young children may be less likely to respond to intervention after age eight.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Eron, L. (1990). Understanding of aggression. *Bulletin of International Society for Research on Aggression*, 12, 5-9.



What the Experts Say:

The Science of Early Childhood Development identifies one of the three major developmental tasks of early childhood that highlight the importance of social and emotional development:

- **Relationships:** Children learn to trust adults, relate well to other children, and form friendships that include the emerging capacity to trust, to love and nurture, and to resolve conflicts constructively

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Shonkoff, J., & Phillips, D. (Eds.) (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.



What the Experts Say:

In *Resources to Promote Social and Emotional Health and School Readiness in Young Children and Families*, the National Center for Children in Poverty identifies social and emotional skills young children will need to succeed in school:

- Identify emotions accurately in themselves and others.
- Relate to teachers and friends in positive ways.
- Manage feelings of anger, frustration and distress.
- Work attentively, independently and cooperatively in a structured classroom environment.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Knitzer, J., & Lefkowitz, J. (2005). *Resources to promote social and emotional health and school readiness in young children and families*. New York: National Center for Children in Poverty.



What the Experts Say:

Children who develop social-emotional skills:

- Are more likely to make a successful transition to kindergarten.
- Are less likely to be labeled as delayed.
- Have fewer problems with later behavioral, emotional, academic and social development.
- Are less likely to have poor academic achievement, be retained, or dropout of school.
- Are less likely to be delinquent, have antisocial behaviors, or have a teen pregnancy.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Thompson, R., & Raikes, H. (2007). The social and emotional foundations of school readiness. In: D. Perry, R. Kaufmann, & J. Knitzer. (Eds.). *Social and emotional health in early childhood: Building bridges between services and systems*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H Brookes.



What the Experts Say:

Children are less likely to succeed in school if they fail to learn social-emotional skills and competencies. Children with poor social-emotional skills participate less in school and do worse in school than children with positive social-emotional skills. Aggressive children who are unable to make friends are more likely to be held back a grade, drop out of school, and commit delinquent and criminal juvenile offenses in adolescence.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?



What the Experts Say:

Disruptive children spend less time on task and receive less instruction from teachers. Children's acting out behavior at age five predicts low educational achievement at age 30. Characteristics of children who lack social-emotional skills include:

- Frequent episodes of fighting, hitting, shouting or other aggressive behaviors.
- Inability to control impulsive behavior.
- Inability to pay attention to tasks or follow directions.
- Oppositional, non-compliant or defiant behavior.
- Failure to cooperate with others.
- Constant attention-seeking from teachers and friends.
- Ignoring teachers or friends.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Thompson, R., & Raikes, H. (2007). The social and emotional foundations of school readiness. In: D. Perry, R. Kaufmann, & J. Knitzer. (Eds.). *Social and emotional health in early childhood: Building bridges between services and systems*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H Brookes.



What the Experts Say:

One targeted area to promote emotional literacy is: **teach feeling words**. All children need to develop a feeling word vocabulary to discriminate among finer emotions. Parents and teachers can increase children's feelings words by directly teaching different feeling words and definitions and through conversations, play and special activities.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Joseph, G., Strain, P., & Ostrosky, M. (2005). *What works brief 21: Fostering emotional literacy in young children: Labeling emotions*. Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning. Retrieved on October 8, 2006, from <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/briefs/wwb21.pdf>



What the Experts Say:

One targeted area to promote emotional literacy is to: **model feelings**. When adults talk out loud about feelings as they are experienced throughout the day, children are exposed to expressions, feeling words, and using those words to cope. For example, when a teacher or parent knocks something over, she says, "Oops. That is so frustrating. I was in too much of a hurry. I'd better take a deep breath, calm down, and clean it up."

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?



What the Experts Say:

One targeted area to promote emotional literacy is: ***label children's feelings.*** Sensitive adults help children identify their feelings and then validate those feelings. To validate feelings means adults let children know their emotions are real and acceptable and show them how to deal with them in socially acceptable ways. Labeling children's feelings throughout the day helps them learn to identify their own internal feelings ("I'm frustrated") which is an important step in learning to regulate emotions ("I need to calm down.").

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?



What the Experts Say:

Recognizing Others' Emotions. Preschool children's ability to recognize and understand emotion cues in others' facial expressions has a long-term effect on social behavior and academic success. Consistently missing or misinterpreting others' emotional cues interferes with the development of social and emotional competence.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?



What the Experts Say:

Young children experience a range of emotions every day and can easily be overcome by them. They experience conflict and intense, negative emotions such as anger, frustration, and disappointment. Preschoolers vary in their ability to control their emotion due to differences in temperament, developmental readiness, and background experiences.

Emotion regulation is the process of controlling thoughts and responses to emotions. It is a second cornerstone of social-emotional development. When a child is continuously overwhelmed by emotions, it may interfere with development, cognitive learning, and relationships with others.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?



What the Experts Say:

Learning to manage intense and negative emotions in early childhood is critical to school success and the prevention of later behavioral and emotional problems. Children's emotions have both inward and outward expression.

- **Internal responses** – Increase in heart rate and blood pressure, sweating, stomach problems, tensed muscles and increase in stress hormones (cortisol).
- **Outward expressions** – Change in expressions, crying, yelling, screaming, physical aggression, or hysterics.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?



What the Experts Say:

Emotional Thinking. Emotion regulation begins with emotional thinking. Emotional thinking links ideas with emotions. It is the ability to use cues from reading and labeling emotions of self and others to guide one's actions to: brainstorm a variety of solutions to a problem, predict the consequences of one's own actions, and link cause and effect in interactions. When children lack these skills, they are more likely to have frustrating social encounters which lead to a cycle of misbehavior, hurt feelings, frustration, and more bad behavior.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *Problem-solving program teaches kids how to use their heads instead of their fists*. Retrieved on October 8, 2006, from <http://www.psychologymatters.org/shure.html>



What the Experts Say:

Emotional Competence. Emotional competence is the ability to successfully manage emotions in different situations. Children who are emotionally competent get along better with friends, are more aware of their own and others' emotions, are less likely to use aggression, are more caring, are better able to concentrate and cope with problems, are more resilient, and do better in school.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Landy, S. (2002). *Pathways to competence: Encouraging healthy social and emotional development in young children*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.



What the Experts Say:

The following is *one* factor that can affect emotion regulation:

- Caregiver sensitivity - When children are overcome by their emotions, they need adults to help them calm down until their own coping skills can take over. Adults help children by easing negative emotions and reinforcing positive emotions.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

Thompson, R. (1994). Emotion regulation: A theme in search of a definition. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 59*, 250-283.



What the Experts Say:

The American Academy of Pediatrics provides recommendations for ways adults can help children develop healthy, constructive ways to express their negative feelings by modeling appropriate and mature handling of frustration, anger, and unhappiness so children learn by example; letting children know it is normal to feel angry, sad, disappointed or hurt; encouraging children to go to ask an adult for help for problems they can't solve alone; and setting clear limits so children know violence is not permissible.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?

American Academy of Pediatrics. (n.d.). *Parenting Skills: Nurturing and Guiding*. Retrieved on October 16, 2007, from http://www.medem.com/medlb/article_detailb.cfm?article_ID=ZZZBC8WCEEC&sub_cat=106



What the Experts Say:

When children enter preschool lacking emotional competence, teachers will play an important role in helping them learn to express and manage their emotions in healthy ways. Parents and teachers can jointly teach children strategies for handling negative emotions and praise children when they 1) problem-solve, 2) remain calm, 3) handle disappointment, and 4) ask an adult for help.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?



What the Experts Say:

It is important for adult caregivers to distinguish between children who are emotionally overwhelmed, are unable to regulate their emotions, or are having a tantrum (resisting adult authority). This is critical because adults must respond differently to each of these episodes.

Parents and teachers help children develop emotional regulation and competence when they:

- Provide sensitive, consistent and responsive care.
- Develop nurturing relationships with children.
- Soothe children's intense emotions.
- Help children master new emotion regulation skills.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?



What the Experts Say:

Just as adults can promote children's social-emotional health, they can also undermine it. Adults undermine children's social-emotional competence when they:

- Make empty threats.
- Use praise inappropriately (non-specific praise, group praise).
- Ask confusing questions.
- Give confusing directions.
- Overuse the phrases "I need..." or "You need..."
- Use timeout inappropriately.
- Ignore a child's distress.
- Predict failure.
- Remind children of past failures or misbehavior.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?



What the Experts Say:

Preschool children vary in their ability to get along with other children. Some children use strategies that are appropriate, positive and lead to success for both children. Some children may grab, push, or hit to get what they want and ignore overtures from other children, leading to conflict and isolation. Children may have difficulty interacting with friends because they have language delays, social delays, or disabilities such as mental retardation, autism, conduct problems and emotional problems. When preschool children have difficulty getting along with others, it is important to look for the reasons why and identify and teach the needed skills.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?



What the Experts Say:

Prosocial skills contribute to the foundation for social-emotional learning. Prosocial skills include sharing, taking turns, using words, getting a friend's attention, offering play ideas, playing cooperatively, saying nice things, using self-control, and self-directing activities. Children who have these skills are accepted and develop friendships. Children who interact well with their friends are more popular, have stronger friendships and are included more often in activities than children who lack these skills. Children who are accepted by their peers and have friends tend to feel more positive about school, participate more in activities, and learn more than children without friends.

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?



What the Experts Say:

Social competence is the ability to get along with others in a positive and constructive manner that allows a person to achieve their own goals while maintaining positive relationships with others. Children who are socially competent show prosocial behaviors (*i.e. empathy, cooperation, positive interactions with other children, problem solving, sympathy, pretend play with multiple roles, comforting others, understanding another's point of view*).

Focus Questions:

Does the information or idea on the card match your experience?

Had you considered this information before today? Why? Why not?

How do you see this information as important to your teaching principles?