

Growing Foundational Skills in Early Childhood

How to Use the Course Modules and Discussion Guides Together

Growing Foundational Skills in Early Childhood  is an online course developed by **SEEDS**.

The course focuses on how early childhood trauma may impact young children and how to apply trauma informed skills to support children's ability to build strong relationships and their readiness to learn.

Each module of the course takes 5 - 15 minutes to complete. While individuals within your team or agency can complete these modules independently, we recommend that you pair each module with its accompanying *SEEDS Discussion Guide* and incorporate them together into team meetings or in-house professional development sessions.

The guides are designed to give you maximum flexibility to “choose your own adventure” within your professional development sessions.

How you use these guides will help you promote one or more of the following objectives:

Connect

Build connections among participants

Reinforce

Reinforce and deepen understanding of key concepts and skills

Practice

Promote use of targeted skills in professional practice

Problem Solve

Encourage problem-solving regarding barriers to using the targeted skills



Facilitator Tips:

How to Lead Professional Development Sessions with Course Modules and Discussion Guides

- **Complete the entire Growing Foundational Skills in Early Childhood course** before leading any professional development sessions. When you are fully familiar with all the key concepts and skills, you can decide how to best use the modules and guides to meet the needs of your team or agency.
- **Plan to facilitate the two foundational sessions first.** These are called “Early Childhood Trauma Informed Care” and “Building the Relationship.” The remaining modules and guides can be used in any order, based on the needs and interests of your team or agency.
- **First, view the video(s)** for each module together as a group during the session or assign them ahead of time for participants to watch prior to the session.
- **Then, use the guides flexibly** to tailor each professional development session to your preferred session length (15 - 60 minutes) and objectives (see above). Decide how much time to spend on each discussion question and/or how many questions to discuss during each session.
- **Finally, share the listed resources.** You can print copies and distribute to each participant, or you can share the link to the **SEEDS website** (dphh.ucla.edu/SEEDS/resources) for digital access.
- **Optional: Use these sessions to build your participants' leadership and facilitation skills.** Invite specific participants to serve as small group leaders during the session. Prior to the session, provide the module and guide so they can prepare to facilitate discussions in groups of 3 – 8 participants and then report back to the larger group at the end of the session.



Log in to the Wellbeing For LA Learning Center
(learn.wellbeing4LA.org)

Search for the course:
“[Growing Foundational Skills in Early Childhood](#)”

Select: “[Revisit course](#)”

DMH + UCLA
Wellbeing for LA Learning Center

Growing Foundational Skills in Early Childhood



Type: Course
Duration: 1 hour, 30 minutes
CE credits: 1.5 CE's
Presented by: DMH | UCLA Prevention Center of Excellence
Developed by: SFEDS for Family School Readiness
Relevant categories: Birth to Five Early Education

You rated this resource
★★★★★

Congratulations! You have completed this course.
Visit [My Learning](#) to download your certificate of completion. You can earn CE credit for this course by completing a CE questionnaire.

[Revisit course](#)

Plan to facilitate the two foundational sessions first.

Early Childhood Trauma Informed Care

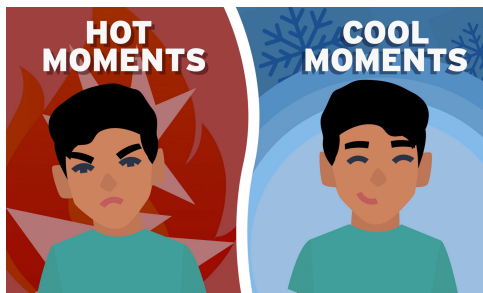


Building the Relationship



The remaining guides can be used in any order, based on the needs and interests of your team or agency.

Self-Regulation in Hot and Cool Moments



Promoting Behavioral Control



Promoting Emotion Regulation in Hot Moments



Promoting Emotion Regulation in Cool Moments



Promoting Executive Functioning



Growing Foundational Skills in Early Childhood

SEEDS Discussion Guide – Early Childhood Trauma Informed Care

This module and discussion guide explore what it means to provide **early childhood trauma informed care**.

Participants will:

- Define trauma and trauma informed care
- Explore the importance for young children of having nurturing relationships



- 1 **Navigate** to the *Meet the Course Participants* section, then continue to the *Early Childhood Trauma Informed Care* module.

Review the module by viewing the videos and completing the activities (*together as a group or assigned ahead of time*).

Meet the Course Participants module:

- ☐ **Read:** Meet the Course Participants

Early Childhood Trauma Informed Care module:

- ☐ **Watch:** ► *Early Childhood Trauma Informed Care* (3:42)
- ☐ **Review:** Recognize, Understand, Respond
- ☐ **Practice:** How Does Trauma Impact Young Children?

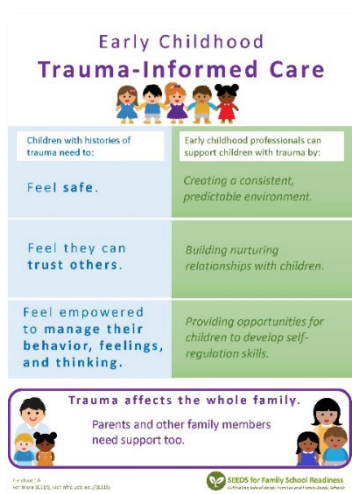
- 2 **Select** the discussion questions (on the next page) → to present to your group.

 For a 15-minute discussion select *one or two* questions.

 For a 45-minute discussion select *three or four* questions.

- 3 **Share** resources.

A handout is unlocked at the end of the module and is also available on the **SEEDS website:** dpbh.ucla.edu/SEEDS/resources .



SEEDS Handout:
Early Childhood Trauma Informed Care
English and Spanish

Discussion Questions – Early Childhood Trauma Informed Care

Select one or more to present to your group.

Connect

Build connections among participants.

How has your understanding of early childhood trauma changed since you began working with young children?

- *Considering that a child's negative behavior may be a reflection of trauma may lead us to respond to those behaviors in a more patient and supportive way.*
- *Knowing that a child has been impacted by trauma may guide us to focus on helping that child to strengthen certain skills, such as building their emotion vocabulary so they can communicate in an adaptive way when they are distressed.*

Reinforce

Reinforce and deepen understanding of key concepts and skills.

How does trauma impact young children?

- *Trauma may interfere with the development of key self-regulation skills (i.e., managing their behaviors, feelings, and thinking processes).*
- *Problems with self-regulation may be reflected in a number of challenging behaviors, such as aggression, impulsivity, inattention and off-task behavior.*
- *Difficulties with self-regulation can affect other aspects of development, such as language and cognitive skills, and social skills, such as making and keeping friends.*

Practice

Promote use of targeted skills in professional practice.

How do you build nurturing relationships with the children you work with or care for?

Follow-up: **What do they learn from having a nurturing relationship with you?**

- *In nurturing relationships, when we respond sensitively and reliably (i.e., co-regulate with them), then children learn that they can rely on us when they are distressed.*
- *When we reliably co-regulate with them, then children begin learning the skills to manage their behavior, feelings, and thinking processes.*
- *Having consistent and predictable routines and rituals (like reading books together or having a special way of saying hello or goodbye) are a great way to build nurturing relationships.*

Problem Solve

Encourage problem-solving regarding barriers to using the targeted skills.

What might be challenging about working with or caring for a child with a history of trauma, and how might you address those challenges?

- *Since children with trauma may have difficulty trusting others, we may need to build a relationship slowly with them by being patient, persistent, and consistent.*
- *Children with trauma may communicate their needs and wants in ways that are confusing or difficult to understand. We may have to try out different ways of responding to their distress (e.g., verbal reassurance, physical contact, changing their environment) to see what helps them regulate best in each situation.*

Growing Foundational Skills in Early Childhood

SEEDS Discussion Guide – Building the Relationship

This module and discussion guide explore how to build relationships with young children using **child-led play**.

Participants will:

- Understand how child-led play builds relationships and promotes opportunities for children to learn to manage behavior, feelings, and thinking processes
- Explore how intentional observation can help them recognize and respond to children's cues during child-led play
- Discuss how they can reframe questions as narrations to promote children's self-awareness of their behavior, feelings, and thinking processes



1 Navigate to the **Building the Relationship** module.

Review the module by viewing the videos and completing the activities (*together as a group or assigned ahead of time*).

- ☐ **Watch:** ► *Building the Relationship* (5:52)
- ☐ **Practice:** Turn Questions into Narrations
- ☐ **Watch:** ► *Carlos Demonstrates Intentional Observation and Narration/Listening Walk* (3:24)
- ☐ **Review:** Let's Take a Closer Look
- ☐ **Reflect:** How Does Child-Led Play Impact Children?

2 Select the discussion questions (on the next page) → to present to your group.

- 🕒 For a 15-minute discussion select *one or two* questions.
- 🕒 For a 45-minute discussion select *three or four* questions.

3 Share resources.

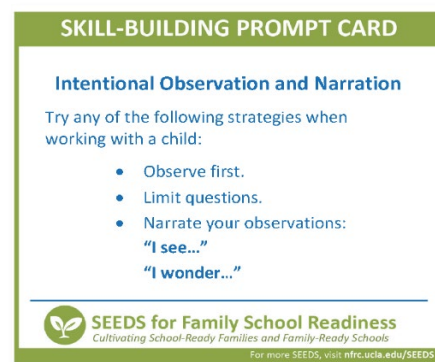
A handout, an Activity Guide, and a prompt card are unlocked at the end of the module and are also available on the **SEEDS website**: dpbh.ucla.edu/SEEDS/resources



SEEDS Handout:
Child-Led Play
Builds Relationships
English and Spanish



SEEDS Activity Guide:
Nature Clay Sculptures
English and Spanish



Skill-building Prompt Card
for download and print as a
back-pocket reference
English and Spanish

Discussion Questions – Building the Relationship

Select one or more to present to your group.

Connect

Build connections among participants.

How have you built a strong relationship with a young child in your care or in your life?

Follow-up: What are your favorite activities that promote the relationship or your favorite ways of building that connection?

- *Building a supportive relationship with a child often starts with observing the child, finding out what they are interested in, and then joining them in playful moments.*
- *Child-led play (actively engaging with a child while allowing them to direct the play) communicates that their interests, feelings, and thoughts are important to us. We can focus more on connecting with them rather than teaching or correcting them.*

Reinforce

Reinforce and deepen understanding of key concepts and skills.

How are the skills of intentional observation & narration utilized in child-led play?

- *Slowing down to intentionally observe (wait and watch) is the first step.*
- *Narrating (describing in words what the child is doing, might be feeling, or might be thinking) is the second step.*
- *If the child seems open or invites you to play, join in!*
- *Slowing down to observe and narrate with young children increases their awareness of their internal experiences, a key component of self-regulation.*

Practice

Promote use of targeted skills in professional practice.

When would be a good time to try out intentional observation and narration with the children you work with or care for?

- *We can observe and narrate with young children at almost any time, including indoor or outdoor playtime, mealtimes, group or individual activities, and transitions, including hellos and goodbyes (a great opportunity to model for parents and caregivers).*

Problem Solve

Encourage problem-solving regarding barriers to using the targeted skills.

What would you do if a child seemed to be uncomfortable with child-led play, including you observing them or your narrations?

- *Consider moving at a slower pace. Try observing briefly and from a little further away a few times before narrating. When you add in narration, keep it short and sweet the first few times. Moving at the child's pace is a great example of recognizing and responding to the child's cues.*
- *Some children with trauma may not have experienced child-led play before. Most children will eventually see these interactions as predictable and comforting, which can help build a strong, nurturing relationship.*

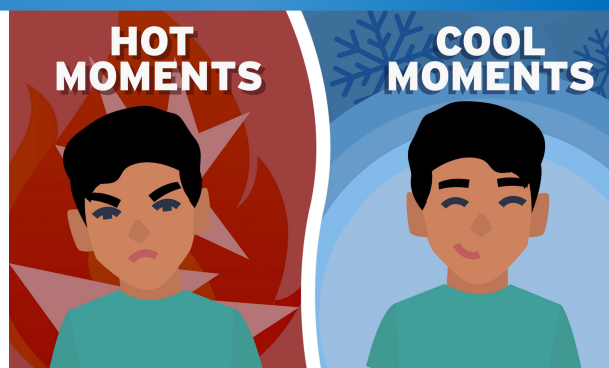
Growing Foundational Skills in Early Childhood

SEEDS Discussion Guide – Self-Regulation in Hot and Cool Moments

This module and discussion guide explore how to build self-regulation skills in **hot** and **cool** moments with young children.

Participants will:

- Explore the meaning of **hot** and **cool** moments, both for children and for themselves
- Understand and apply when to help children learn and practice self-regulation skills



1 Navigate to the **Self-Regulation in Hot and Cool Moments** module.

Review the module by viewing the videos and completing the activities (*together as a group or assigned ahead of time*).

2 Select the discussion questions (on the next page) → to present to your group.

3 Share resources.

- ☐ **Watch:** ▶ **Hot and Cool Moments** (2:49)
- ☐ **Review:** Let's Take a Closer Look
- ☐ **Practice:** Self-Regulation in **Hot** and **Cool** Moments
- ☐ **Read:** Key Takeaway

For a 15-minute discussion select *one or two* questions.

For a 45-minute discussion select *three or four* questions.

A handout and two Activity Guides are unlocked at the end of the module and are also available on the **SEEDS website:** dphh.ucla.edu/SEEDS/resources .



SEEDS Handout:
Self-Regulation in
Hot and **Cool** Moments
English and Spanish



SEEDS Activity Guide:
Nature Sensory Connection
English and Spanish



SEEDS Activity Guide:
Mondrian Freeze Art
English and Spanish

Discussion Questions – Self-Regulation in Hot and Cool Moments

Select one or more to present to your group.

Connect

Build connections among participants.

What was one of your favorite childhood games to play with family/caregivers?

Follow-up: What do you think you learned in those moments?

- Common childhood games (e.g., Hide and Seek, board games) and activities (pretend play, outdoor play) provide opportunities for children to practice self-regulation skills—such as attentional control, initiating (starting) and inhibiting (stopping), taking turns, cognitive flexibility, and cooperating—with nurturing adults there to support them when needed.
- Games and activities help young children practice self-regulation skills in **cool** moments and then they are better able to use those same skills in **hot** moments.

Reinforce

Reinforce and deepen understanding of key concepts and skills.

What can make it easier for children to self-regulate in **hot moments?**

- Children will have an easier time self-regulating in **hot** moments, if (1) we are able to co-regulate with them; (2) they can practice self-regulation skills with us in **cool** moments; (3) they often see examples of us modeling self-regulation.
- For children who have experienced early adversity, dysregulated behaviors (such as pushing another child) may sometimes be adaptive (i.e., pushing when they feel threatened by someone standing too close). We can help them find more positive behaviors that will serve the same purpose (e.g., calmly telling another child to back up).
- When we are dysregulated (i.e., experiencing a **hot** moment), we can first use our own self-regulation tools (e.g., taking a few deep breaths) before supporting a child in a **hot** moment.

Practice

Promote use of targeted skills in professional practice.

What opportunities for helping children practice self-regulation skills during **cool moments exist in your setting?**

- Interactions using simple materials and doing simple activities can lead to the best play. Games such as Freeze Dance and Musical Chairs, cooking, art, music activities, and outdoor/nature-based time all offer opportunities for children to learn positive behaviors, understand and manage their feelings, and develop their thinking skills in cool moments.

Problem Solve

Encourage problem-solving regarding barriers to using the targeted skills.

Imagine you are working with a parent/caregiver who is frustrated with how quickly their child becomes dysregulated during playtime. What could you share with this caregiver to offer support?

- Learning how to tolerate being upset or frustrated is a normal and important part of development for young children and it takes lots of practice! When a child becomes upset, it does not necessarily mean there is something wrong with the child, or that the caregiver has failed in some way.
- Adults will be more successful helping a child through periods of dysregulation if they can stay regulated themselves. It may help to take a moment for some deep breaths or positive self-talk (“I’ve got this”) as they step in to support the child through a **hot** moment.
- Intentionally observing a child’s cues before, during, and after a challenging moment may reveal what a child does or doesn’t like, and what self-regulation skills they may need more support practicing during **cool** moments.

For your next professional development session, consider **Promoting Behavioral Control** or select one that fits the needs and interests of your group.

Growing Foundational Skills in Early Childhood

Discussion Guide – Promoting Behavioral Control

This module and discussion guide explore how to use **effective praise** to promote **behavioral control** skills in children.

Participants will:

- Review behavioral control skills
- Analyze the characteristics of effective praise
- Identify opportunities to practice using effective praise



1 Navigate to the **Promoting Behavioral Control** module.

Review the module by viewing the videos and completing the activities *(together as a group or assigned ahead of time)*.

- ☐ **Watch:** ► *Behavioral Control* (4:15)
- ☐ **Read:** What is Behavioral Control?
- ☐ **Practice:** Positive Behavior flip cards

- ☐ **Watch:** ► *Promoting Behavioral Control - Skill: Effective Praise* (2:40)
- ☐ **Read:** What is Effective Praise?

- ☐ **Watch:** ► *Demonstrating Effective Praise aka Vivian Demonstrates Effective Praise/Listening Walk* (2:40)
- ☐ **Review:** Let's Take a Closer Look
- ☐ **Read:** Reflection & Key Takeaway

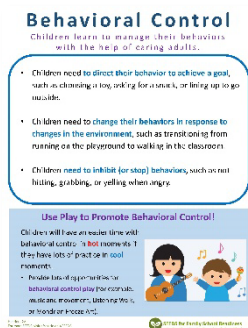
2 Select the discussion questions (on the next page) → to present to your group.

⌚ For a 15-minute discussion select *one or two* questions.

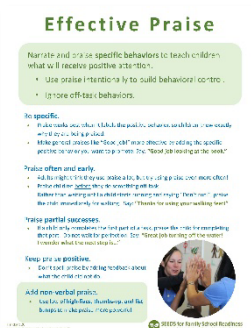
⌚ For a 45-minute discussion select *three or four* questions.

3 Share resources.

Two handouts, an Activity Guide, and a prompt card are unlocked at the end of the module and are also available on the **SEEDS website**: dpbh.ucla.edu/SEEDS/resources



SEEDS Handout:
Behavioral Control
English and Spanish



SEEDS Handout:
Effective Praise
English and Spanish



SEEDS Activity Guide:
Listening Walk
English and Spanish



Skill-building Prompt Card
for download and print as a
back-pocket reference
English and Spanish

Discussion Questions – Promoting Behavioral Control

Select one or more to present to your group.

Connect

Build connections among participants.

Think of a time when someone gave you genuine, supportive praise either as an adult or as a child. What do you remember about that moment or what the person said or did?

- *Genuine praise, especially when specific, can make us feel valued, recognized for our strengths, and give us information about how we can continue to succeed. It can also strengthen our relationship with the person who is praising us.*

Reinforce

Reinforce and deepen understanding of key concepts and skills.

How does effective praise differ from general praise like “Good job!”?

- *General praise does not give a child clear guidance on what behaviors they should continue.*
- *Effective praise communicates what specific behaviors we want to see more of, and it builds children’s awareness of their own behavioral control skills.*
- *Praising often and early can prevent a child from doing something negative or off-task.*
- *Praising partial successes can shape children’s emerging positive behaviors before they have achieved mastery.*

Practice

Promote use of targeted skills in professional practice.

Share a specific situation in which you will try out effective praise this week and how you will use it.

- *Effective praise can be used at almost any time with young children, including when they are playing on their own or with other children, waiting their turn, following an instruction, helping a peer or adult (even if their efforts aren’t perfect), or trying out a new skill or activity.*
- *Look for opportunities to model effective praise for parents and caregivers.*
- *Although off-task behaviors might catch your attention first, try to focus on and immediately praise positive behaviors instead.*

Problem Solve

Encourage problem-solving regarding barriers to using the targeted skills.

Imagine you want to practice using effective praise to help a child transition from playtime to cleanup time. What would you do if the child ignores what you say and continues to play?

- *Center yourself, if needed, by taking a few deep breaths or telling yourself you can handle this.*
- *Remain calm while getting on the child’s level (e.g., kneeling down or sitting closer). Confidently and using a positive tone, restate clear instructions and consider joining the child to get them started (e.g., “It’s time to clean up – let’s put the blocks in this basket – we can do it together!”).*
- *Praise even partial successes toward the desired behaviors quickly and enthusiastically (e.g., “Great job picking the block up. Let’s get it in the basket.”).*
- *Let the child know if there is something positive happening after they finish cleaning up (e.g., “When we’re done cleaning up, then we can have our snack!”).*

Growing Foundational Skills in Early Childhood

SEEDS Discussion Guide – Promoting Emotional Regulation in Hot Moments

This module and discussion guide explore how to use **emotion coaching** techniques to promote **emotion regulation** in children during **hot** moments.

Participants will:

- Review emotion regulation skills
- Explore how to use the 3 Cs (Center, Connect, and Create Space or a Break) to co-regulate with a child during a **hot** moment



1 Navigate to the **Promoting Emotional Regulation** module.

Review the first half of the module by viewing the videos and completing the activities (together as a group or assigned ahead of time).

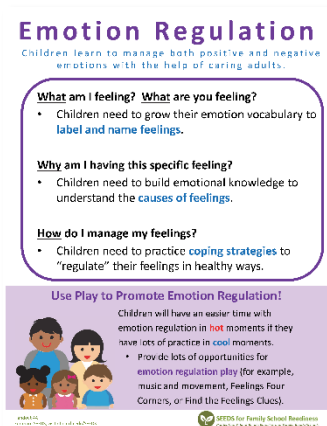
- ☐ **Watch:** ► *Emotion Regulation* (5:28)
- ☐ **Review:** What is Emotion Regulation?
- ☐ **Reflect:** What, Why, How?
- ☐ **Watch:** ► *Promoting Emotion Regulation in Hot Moments* (4:23)
- ☐ **Practice:** Emotion Coaching in Hot Moments with the 3 Cs
- ☐ **Watch:** ► *Vivian Demonstrates Emotion Coaching in Hot Moments with the 3 Cs* (3:30)
- ☐ **Review:** Let's Take a Closer Look
- ☐ **Reflect:** 3 Cs & Key Takeaway

2 Select the discussion questions (on the next page) → to present to your group.

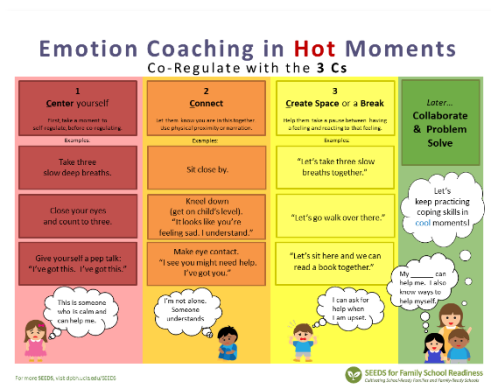
-  For a 15-minute discussion select *one or two* questions.
-  For a 45-minute discussion select *three or four* questions.

3 Share resources.

Two handouts and a prompt card are unlocked at the end of the module and are also available on the **SEEDS website:** dpbh.ucla.edu/SEEDS/resources .



SEEDS Handout:
Emotion Regulation
English and Spanish



SEEDS Handout:
Emotion Coaching in Hot Moments
Co-regulate with the 3 Cs
English and Spanish



Skill-building Prompt Card
for download and print as a
back-pocket reference
English and Spanish

Discussion Questions – Promoting Emotional Regulation in Hot Moments

Select one or more to present to your group.

Connect

Build connections among participants

What has been the best self-regulation strategy for you during **hot moments in your life?**

Follow-up, if needed: **What's one strategy you'd like to try or get better at?**

- *Our self-regulation strategies for **hot** moments can be very brief—for example, taking 5 seconds to take a couple of deep breaths or telling ourselves, “I got this.”*
- *Having a toolbox of different strategies that we have practiced in **cool** moments will help us deploy (or use) those strategies to center ourselves in **hot** moments.*
- *When we center ourselves first, we can respond to children more reflectively rather than reflexively in **hot** moments.*

Reinforce

Reinforce and deepen understanding of key concepts and skills.

What three key skills make up emotion regulation?

- *The What, Why, How framework highlights the emotion regulation skills children need to develop:*
 - ***What** they are feeling and being able to name their feelings (need to grow their emotional vocabulary)*
 - ***Why** they are having a specific feeling (need to connect their experience to their feelings)*
 - ***How to cope** with their feelings in healthy, adaptive ways (need to develop the ability to do something to feel better (less sad or mad, more calm, safer)*

Practice

Promote use of targeted skills in professional practice.

What is a specific strategy you can use to help a child (in your care or in your life) create space or a break between their feelings and their reaction to those feelings?

- *Possible strategies include:*
 - *Narrate + Breathe Together + Praise: “Jordan, it seems like you’re sad that your toy broke. Let’s take a couple of deep breaths together and then see if we can fix it. Great job taking deep breaths!”*
 - *Pivot to another activity quickly and positively: In response to a child who is frustrated and is starting to yell and kick some toys: “Hey Cam, come help me set up snack – I could really use your help carrying these” [hand him paper plates as you’re redirecting him]. The goal is to interrupt the sequence of Cam getting frustrated and then immediately reacting by yelling and kicking toys.*

Problem Solve

Encourage problem-solving regarding barriers to using the targeted skills.

Imagine you are working with a child who has a history of trauma and does not like it when adults are physically close to them or touch them when they are upset. How might you try to connect with the child during a **hot moment?**

- *Try comforting the child verbally (“I’m right here,” or “Let’s figure this out together”), using a calm tone of voice. A calm tone of voice signals that we are confident we can help this child.*
- *Try narrating what you think they might be feeling (“It looks like you might be feeling mad.”). It shows we are invested in understanding how they are feeling even if we didn’t get it right.*
- *Try increasing sensory inputs that the child seems to like (play relaxing music) and/or decreasing sensory inputs the child seems to dislike (dimming the lights).*
- *Some children with trauma may have little experience with someone comforting them when they are upset, so they may need many repetitions of a nurturing adult responding supportively to their emotional dysregulation before they trust that adults are a source of help rather than a source of threat.*

For your next professional development session, consider **Promoting Emotional Regulation in Cool Moments** or select one that fits the needs and interests of your group.

Growing Foundational Skills in Early Childhood

SEEDS Discussion Guide – Promoting Emotional Regulation in Cool Moments

This module and discussion guide explore how to use **emotion coaching** techniques to promote **emotion regulation** in children during **cool** moments.

Participants will:

- Review using intentional observation and narration to promote children's emotion vocabulary
- Analyze how to best leverage an emotion coaching activity using children's books.



1 Navigate to the **Promoting Emotional Regulation** module.

Review the second half of the module by viewing the videos and completing the activities (together as a group or assigned ahead of time).

2 Select the discussion questions (on the next page) → to present to your group.

3 Share resources.

- ☐ **Watch:** ► *Promoting Emotion Regulation in Cool Moments (4:38)*
- ☐ **Practice:** Emotion Coaching with Intentional Observation and Narration.
- ☐ **Watch:** ► *Anne Demonstrates Emotion Coaching in Cool Moments (2:18)*
- ☐ **Review:** Let's Take a Closer Look
- ☐ **Reflect:** Key Takeaway

⌚ For a 15-minute discussion select *one or two* questions.

⌚ For a 45-minute discussion select *three or four* questions.

A handout, an Activity Guide, and a bookmark are unlocked at the end of the module and are also available on the **SEEDS website**: dpbh.ucla.edu/SEEDS/resources

Emotion Regulation

Children learn to manage both positive and negative emotions with the help of caring adults.

What am I feeling? What are you feeling?

- Children need to grow their emotion vocabulary to label and name feelings.

Why am I having this specific feeling?

- Children need to build emotional knowledge to understand the causes of feelings.

How do I manage my feelings?

- Children need to practice coping strategies to "regulate" their feelings in healthy ways.

Use Play to Promote Emotion Regulation!

Children will have an easier time with emotion regulation in **cool** moments if they have lots of practice in **cool** moments.

- Provide lots of opportunities for emotion regulation play (for example, music and movement, Feelings Four Corners, or Find the Feelings Clues).

SEEDS Handout:
Emotion Regulation
English and Spanish

FIND THE FEELINGS CLUES

Add the language of emotions to everyday book reading.

PROMOTE
labeling feelings • understanding causes of feelings

BY NARRATING

"I wonder what [the character] is feeling..."
"I see some clues from her face. Hmm... I wonder what you see..." (Circle character's face with your finger.)
"Let's look for other clues..." (Circle character's body with your finger.)

SEEDS for Family School Readiness
Cultivating School-Ready Families and Family-Ready Schools

MATERIALS

- Children's books
- Bookmark(s)
- Magnifying glasses (optional)

BOOKLIST (suggested)

- Those Shoes by Marjorie Boels
- Love by Mame de la Peña
- All the World by Li-Caron Scanlon
- The Lion & the Mouse by Jerry Pinkney
- A Ball for Daisy by Chris Raschka
- Susan Caught by Jeanne Willis

STEPS

- Place bookmarks in children's books on pages that clearly show characters' emotions.
- Give each child a book and a magnifying glass.
- Invite children to hunt for a feeling on the page where the bookmark is placed.
- Invite children to share their observations.

EXTENSIONS

For younger children, focus on books with clear, simple illustrations of happy, sad, mad, and scared.

SEEDS Activity Guide and bookmark:
Find the Feelings Clues
English and Spanish

Find the Feelings Clues

Add the language of emotions to everyday book reading

Practice

Observing and Narrating

- what characters are feeling
- why characters might have specific feelings
- how characters might be coping

Say

- "I wonder what he is feeling..."
- "I see some clues from her face. I wonder what you see..."
Circle character's face.
- "Let's look for other clues..."
Circle character's body.
- "You think they look sad. I wonder if anyone thinks something different..."

EXTENSION

Use magnifying glasses and put children in charge of finding clues!

SEEDS for Family School Readiness
Cultivating School-Ready Families and Family-Ready Schools
For more SEEDS, visit dpbh.ucla.edu/SEEDS

Discussion Questions – Promoting Emotional Regulation in Cool Moments

Select one or more to present to your group.

Connect

Build connections among participants.

What was one of your favorite children's books (or book series) as a child? What made this book so important or memorable to you?

- *When we are young, reading a book with a nurturing adult can make us feel safe and secure. Having our favorite books read to us likely provided a predictable and comforting routine.*
- *Reading books with young children can provide **cool** moments to build our relationship with them. It can also promote their understanding of what might be causing feelings in the story's characters, and how the characters are expressing and reacting to their feelings.*

Reinforce

Reinforce and deepen understanding of key concepts and skills.

When promoting emotion regulation, why is it helpful when we give an external voice to the child's internal process/experiences?

- *Young children may not even be aware that they are experiencing an emotion when they react impulsively to that emotion (e.g., immediately hitting when they are angry).*
- *Observing and narrating children's emotions and the causes of their emotions can slow that process down so that children can begin to develop an understanding of their own and others' feelings and different ways to manage those feelings.*

Practice

Promote use of targeted skills in professional practice.

Share a specific activity or situation in which you will try out emotion coaching in a **cool moment.**

- *Emotion-related narrations can be used during any activity/situation, including individual or group activities, indoor or outdoor play, and transition times.*
- *Narrations, more so than questions, can encourage children to reflect on their own emotional experiences. Examples of narrations might include "I wonder if you're feeling mad that she took your ball," or "It looks like you're excited to see your grandpa today."*

Problem Solve

Encourage problem-solving regarding barriers to using the targeted skills.

Imagine you are working with a parent/caregiver who wants to practice Find the Feelings Clues with their child, but they struggle with naming a variety of feelings and aren't sure which books are best to use. How could you support them?

- *A feelings wheel or developmentally appropriate list of feelings can be helpful to adults who might be building their own emotion vocabulary. Offer to practice Find the Feeling Cues with the caregiver for a few minutes to build their confidence to try it at home with their child.*
- *Books with illustrations or pictures of characters (human or figures/animals) with different emotions in their facial expressions or body positions can help build children's emotion regulation skills. Consider some of your own favorites or check out the list of recommended books (see SEEDS Activity Guide: Find the Feelings Clues).*

Growing Foundational Skills in Early Childhood

Discussion Guide – Promoting Executive Functioning

This module and discussion guide explore the **executive function (EF)** skills of **attentional control, initiating and inhibiting, working memory, cognitive flexibility, and organizing, planning, and sequencing.**

Participants will:

- Review executive function skills
- Practice narrations that promote specific executive function skills



1 Navigate to the **Promoting Executive Functioning** module.

Review the module by viewing the videos and completing the activities (*together as a group or assigned ahead of time*).

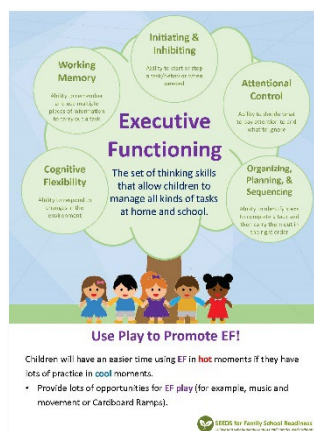
- ☐ Watch: ► **Executive Functioning** (6:17)
- ☐ Activity: What is Executive Functioning?
- ☐ Practice: Everyday Examples of Executive Functioning
- ☐ Watch: ► **Promoting Executive Functioning** (4:02)
- ☐ Activity: How Can We Promote Executive Functioning?
- ☐ Practice: Choose a Narration
- ☐ Watch: ► **Stephanny Demonstrates Promoting Executive Functioning with Intentional Observation and Narration/Cardboard Ramps** (2:52)
- ☐ Review: Let's Take a Closer Look
- ☐ Reflect: Key Takeaway

2 Select the discussion questions (on the next page) → to present to your group.

- 🕒 For a 15-minute discussion select *one or two* questions.
- 🕒 For a 45-minute discussion select *three or four* questions.

3 Share resources.

A handout, an Activity Guide, and a prompt card are unlocked at the end of the module and are also available on the **SEEDS website**: dpbh.ucla.edu/SEEDS/resources



SEEDS Handout:
Executive Functioning
English and Spanish



SEEDS Activity Guide:
Cardboard Ramps
English and Spanish



Skill-building Prompt Card
for download and print as a
back-pocket reference
English and Spanish

Discussion Questions – Promoting Executive Functioning

Select one or more to present to your group.

Connect

Build connections among participants.

Which EF skill is a strength for you? Which EF skill is a challenge for you?

- *EF skills are essential for both adults and children as they move through their daily lives. Consider how much you use EF skills every day and then imagine how difficult it is at home and at school for a child who struggles with EF.*
 - **Attention control** - ability to decide what to pay attention to and what to ignore.
 - **Initiating and Inhibiting** - ability to start and stop a task/behavior when needed.
 - **Working memory** - ability to remember/use multiple pieces of information in the moment to complete a task.
 - **Cognitive flexibility** - ability to respond to changes in the environment.
 - **Organizing, planning, and sequencing** - ability to identify steps to complete a task and carry them out in the right order.

Reinforce

Reinforce and deepen understanding of key concepts and skills.

How does limiting questions when observing and narrating promote EF skills?

- *Asking lots of questions and expecting a child to respond quickly can shift them away from being thoughtful and intentional and instead push them to rush through an activity to get the right answer or finish quickly.*
- *Observing and narrating provides an opportunity for children to become more aware of their own thinking processes. For example, narrating “It looks like you might be thinking about what to do next,” can highlight for the child how they are planning and sequencing their behaviors during a particular task.*
- *Observing and narrating what a child might be thinking invites the child to explore and try to figure things out either independently or with adult support. It also highlights the idea of wondering about or reflecting on our own and other people’s thoughts and feelings.*

Practice

Promote use of targeted skills in professional practice.

What are some narrations that you want to try to support specific EF skills in your class/work?

- *Consider focusing on only one or a few EF skills at a time.*

Attention control

- “I see you watching closely.”
- “Way to stay focused on building that fort!”

Initiating and inhibiting

- “Way to get started on...!”
- “Great choice putting that away...”

Working memory

- “You remembered the first step!”
- “I wonder what we can do next...”

Cognitive flexibility

- “Now we’re going to switch to...”
- “I see you trying out some different ideas.”

Organizing, planning, and sequencing

- “I wonder what materials we’ll need...”
- “I can’t wait to see what you do next!”

Problem Solve

Encourage problem-solving regarding barriers to using the targeted skills.

Imagine you are introducing a new activity with many steps and materials to a child in your care who struggles with following instructions. How could you support this child’s EF skills during this activity?

- *Break down the tasks into smaller, more manageable steps.*
- *Create a visual representation of the activity and mark off the completion of each step.*
- *Praise completion (or even partial completion) of each step (e.g., specific verbal praise, high-fives).*
- *Use a sand timer to show the child how much time is allotted for each step.*
- *Work closely with the child to give hints during each step so they can achieve success during the allotted time.*
- *Use observation and narration focused on EF skills to give an external voice to their internal thinking processes.*