Positive Relationships & Emotional Regulation:

Promoting Social-Emotional Development In Young Children with CVI

Deborah Chen, Ph.D.
May 17, 2023
Deborah.chen@csun.edu
5 Domains of Learning and Development

Approaches to Learning

- Emotional-Social Development
- Cognitive Development
- Health & Physical Development
- Language Development & Communication
Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health

- The developing capacity of the child from birth to five years of age to: form close and secure adult and peer relationships, experience, manage and express a full range of emotions, and explore the environment and learn - all in the context of family, community and culture.

(Cohen & Stark, 2017)
Social-Emotional Development

Ability to create and maintain positive relationships

Experience, regulate, and express a range of emotions

Explore and engage with the environment
Reflective Practice

- Reflect and wonder about the emotional needs of parents and their child and their responses (House & LeMoine, 2022)
- Observe & listen carefully.
- Adopt an attitude of inquiry.
- Ask yourself reflective questions.
- Ask caregivers reflective questions.
- Analyze observation from different perspectives.
- Challenge yourself to improve practice.
Pyramid Model Framework

- **Universal promotion** for all families (all infants and toddlers and their caregivers)
- **Secondary prevention** to address the needs of infants/toddlers at risk for social emotional challenges (including support for their caregivers)
- **Intensive or tertiary intervention** for children with behavior challenges or significant concerns in social emotional development (including support for their caregivers)

*Families’ needs are dynamic, practices accommodate all levels of support.*

https://www.pyramidmodel.org
Influences on Social-Emotional Development

ENVIRONMENTAL  ECONOMICS  PSYCHOLOGICAL  HEALTH & MEDICAL
How CVI may Influence Early Social-Emotional Development

- Difficulty…
- Seeing things that are moving around them. May experience “looming” objects appear out of nowhere
- Identifying facial expressions
- Recognizing faces
- Modulating visual input and/or auditory input
- Looking at the speaker while listening

(Lueck, Chen & Hartmann, 2021)
Possible Causes of Anxiety and Discomfort due to CVI

**Looming:** frightened that approaching objects and people may hit him/her

**May be due to…**

**Optic ataxia:** difficulty using vision alone to guide movements and judge distances

**Simultanagnosia:** someone or something not seen suddenly appears

**Dyskinetopsia/akinetopsia:** things may not be seen because of fast movement, when they slow down may pop into view

**Visual field loss:** things suddenly appear as if out of nowhere
What can we do?

If child cannot communicate what is frightening:

Observe child’s behaviors in unfamiliar and busy places

If child seems to become disoriented or upset...create physically safe space with known boundaries so called “Protective Shields”

Slow down

https://cviscotland.org/documents.php?did=1&sid=40
Protective Shields

Box, tub: small space that child can squeeze into

Yoga mat/baby sling/hammock: tightly wrapped around child

Wheelchair or chair with tray

Pop-up tent

Shopping cart that child pushes

Corner or small space: walls provide protection

Person: trusted caregiver

https://cviscotland.org/documents.php?did=1&sid=208
Identify Facial Expressions

There are 6 universal emotions in all of the world’s cultures.

Happiness  Sadness  Anger
Fear  Surprise  Disgust

Using Social Cues to Understand Emotions

Eye Gaze
Facial Expressions
Tone of Voice
Gestures
Actions
Body Posture

https://modules.ilabs.uw.edu/module/understanding-emotions/using-social-cues-understand-emotions/
Make Facial Expressions Meaningful

- Imitate child’s facial expression
- Label related emotion
- Exaggerate facial expression
- Slow down your facial expression
- Relate to child’s experience
- Tailor tone of voice to match emotion
- Make body posture relevant
- Slow down and repeat gestures
Facilitate Facial Recognition

Decrease
- Decrease distance

Use
- Use contrast

Highlight
- Highlight facial characteristics

Position
- Position your face within child’s field of vision

Wait
- Wait for child to look towards you

Play
- Play game to engage child’s visual attention
Increase Clarity of Speech Input

**Signal/Noise Ratio**
- Eliminate or decrease competing sensory input
- Decrease distance between speaker and child
- Determine size of child’s “Listening bubble”

**Modulate Speech**
- Speak clearly and slowly
- Use intonation
- Stress key words
- Be animated, use gestures, and objects
- Pause between phrases
- Repeat what is said
- Provide time for child to process what is heard

**Eliminate or decrease**

**Decrease**

**Determine**
How big is your child’s listening bubble?

Mommy has a cookie for you!

Mommy has a cookie for you!
The Listening Bubble Effect
Get into the child’s hearing range!

Mary had a little lamb...

Not in range!

In range and listening!
Examples of Visual Cues

- Point or gesture
- A picture
- An object
- Lipreading
- Highlight key word

https://allisonfors.com/auditory-sandwich-language-intervention/
Visual Sandwich

Examples of Auditory Cues
- Speech
- Stress key word
- Vocalizations
- Sounds with objects

Adapted from: https://allisonfors.com/auditory-sandwich-language-intervention/
Promote Social-Emotional Development

- Relationship with adults
- Relationships with other children
- Emotional functioning
- Sense of identity and belonging

Caregiver-Infant Relationship

Serve & Return

(Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University 2008, 2016)
Conduct a Preference Inventory

Find out about child’s interactions with objects, people, and in activities.

• What are characteristics of the child’s preferences?
• How can these preferences be used to build social interactions and play?
• How can this activity be made meaningful and motivating for the child?
Facilitate Play with Peer

• Identify preferred peer to engage in mutually enjoyable activity
• Make adaptations as needed
• Structure activity to facilitate turn-taking
• Provide verbal and physical supports as appropriate
CONNECT Modules & Division for Early Childhood

Video 5.4 Perl using a Switch & Stander
https://connectmodules.dec-sped.org/connect-modules/resources/videos/video-5-4/

Video 1.17 Routine in a program- playing red light green light
https://connectmodules.dec-sped.org/connect-modules/resources/videos/video-1-17/
Major Emotional Stages in Early Childhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth-1 yr:</td>
<td>Noticing Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 yrs:</td>
<td>Expressing Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 yrs:</td>
<td>Managing Emotions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/education/blog/stages-of-emotional-development/
What caregivers can do:

- Create a safe, consistent, and nurturing environment
- Provide predictable routines
- Encourage self-soothing and self-regulation
- Show your own emotions
Expressing Emotions

What caregivers can do:

- Stay calm when the child is not
- Use language to label and explain feelings
- Provide specific praise
Managing Emotions

What caregivers can do:

• Give child strategies
• Have realistic expectations
• Validate the child’s feelings
Ages & Stages
Social Emotional Development Guide

2 Month Milestones

Your baby...

- lets you know she is happy by cooing, smiling, laughing, and gurgling.
- likes to play with her fingers, hands, feet, and toes.
- looks at your face and may look in your eyes, but only for a few seconds at first.

6 Month Milestones

Your baby...

- responds to your affection and may begin to show you signs of affection.
- sometimes sucks on her fingers and hands to calm down.
- will sometimes stop crying when you talk to him rather than pick him up.

12 Month Milestones

Your baby...

- shows many emotions, such as happiness, sadness, anger, and discomfort.
- responds differently to strangers than she does to family members and friends.
- imitates other children and adults. She may imitate sounds, actions, and facial expressions.
## Encourage Imitation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What child does</th>
<th>What caregiver can do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Vocalize</td>
<td>• Imitate child’s vocalizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Vary or extend child’s vocalizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Moves body</td>
<td>• Imitate child’s movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Vary child’s movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Actions with/on objects</td>
<td>• Imitate child’s actions with/on objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Vary child’s actions with or on objects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18 Month Milestones

Your toddler...

- is generally happy and smiles at other people, including other children.
- enjoys playing near other children but not with them quite yet.
- is showing different emotions, such as fear, guilt, sympathy, modesty, or embarrassment.

24 Month Milestones

Your toddler...

- likes to imitate you, other adults, and her friends.
- likes to use the words mine, no, and me do it.
- enjoys simple pretend play. He may like pretending to cook or talk on the telephone.

30 Month Milestones

Your child...

- greets familiar adults and is happy to see friends.
- likes to be loved and cuddled—but not in the middle of playtime.
- is getting louder and bossier at times. He may talk with a loud, urgent voice.
## Teach Emotional Literacy

### Focus on Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observe and interpret</th>
<th>Observe and interpret within context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imitate and label</td>
<td>Imitate and label child’s facial expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect</td>
<td>Connect facial expression to emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relate</td>
<td>Relate emotion to what child is experiencing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expand Conversation

- Amplify your own emotional expressions
- Talk about emotions
- Use relevant songs and books

(Lueck, Chen, & Hartmann, 2021)
# Learning Environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• More control over environment</td>
<td>• Less control over environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Limited number of children and adults in home</td>
<td>• More children and adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Easier to decrease background noise and movements</td>
<td>• May be difficult to decrease background noise and movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Differing expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**36 Month Milestones**

Your child...
- uses imagination to create stories through pretend play.
- can sometimes use her words to express her feelings.
- is learning to follow simple rules, although he sometimes needs gentle reminders.

**48 Month Milestones**

Your child...
- now understands short and simple rules at home.
- loves silly jokes and has a sense of humor.
- is beginning to share. He takes turns but is possessive of his favorite toys.

**60 Month Milestones**

Your child...
- may play with small groups of children at the park or at school.
- now plays simple games such as Candy Land and Go Fish.
- is beginning to understand the meaning of right and wrong. She does not always do what is right, though.
Provide Simple Rules

• Clear expectations
• Meaningful “rules”
• Consistent routines
• Visual and/or tactile supports
• Accommodations for learning needs
Emotional Bank Account

- Stephen Covey (1997). *The 7th habits of highly effective families: Building a beautiful family culture in a turbulent world*

- Research on relationships conducted by John Gottman, Gottman Institute

- Used by the Pyramid Model and others to support social-emotional development
Balance Positive and Negative Feelings in Relationship

DEPOSITS
positive interactions
- hugs
- praise
- empathy
- play
- special time
- validation
- words of affirmation

WITHDRAWALS
demands and negative interactions
- scolding
- questions
- consequences
- directions
- yelling
- nagging
- shaming

Emotional Piggy Bank

https://helpingfamiliesthrive.com/the-emotional-piggy-bank/
Questions to Guide Reflective Practice: Promoting Social-Emotional Development

• How do I facilitate positive relationships?
• How to I make facial expressions meaningful?
• What words do I use to label emotions and facial expressions?
• How do I help maintain a positive balance a child’s emotional bank?
Social Emotional Development is the Foundation for all Learning

**Promote**
- Promote positive relationships
  - Caregiver-child
  - Teacher-child
  - Child-child

**Relate**
- Relate facial expressions and emotions to child’s experiences

**Use**
- Use words to label emotions and facial expressions

**Maintain**
- Maintain a positive balance in the child’s emotional bank
  - 5 deposits to 1 withdrawal