



Feeling, learning and
behaving: *Emotional
development, school
readiness and self control in
preschoolers*

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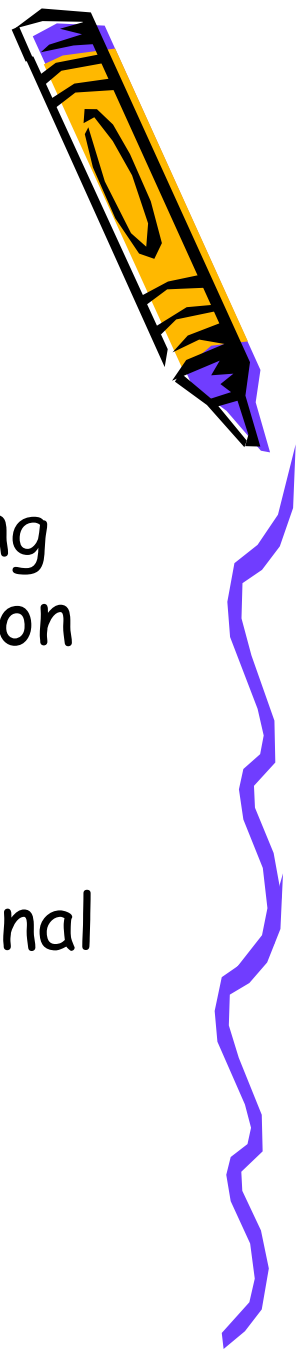
Overview of Presentation

- Review the milestones of emotional development in young children
- Visit the nature/nurture debate related to emotional development and behavior
- Discuss basic brain development
- Review temperament and its role in behavior and emotional functioning



Overview of Presentation

- Review environmental factors that promote emotional development including positive discipline techniques and emotion coaching
- Present the connection between emotional functioning and later school success

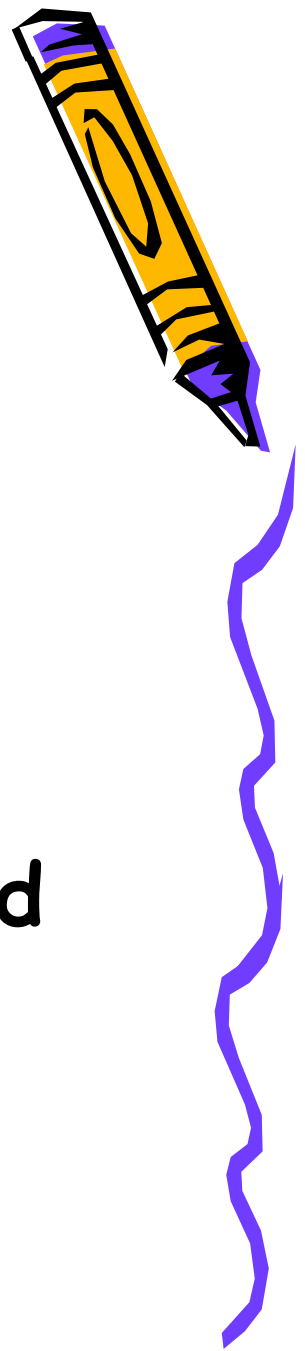




Milestones of emotional
development in young
children

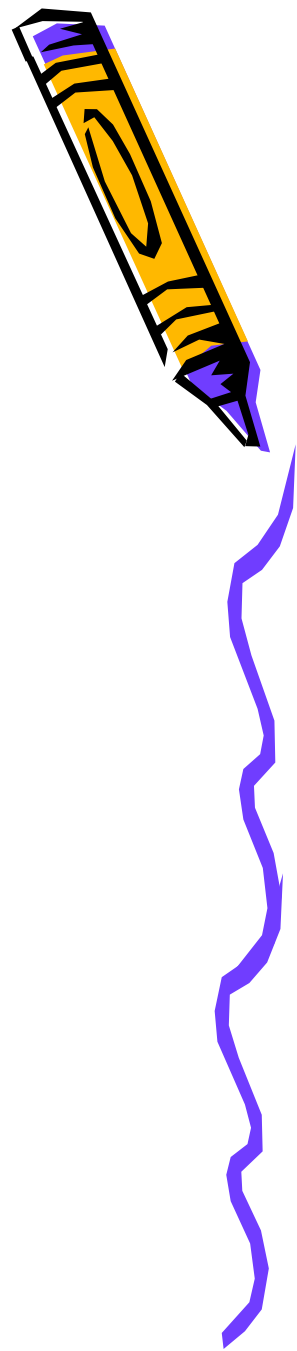
WHAT ARE MILESTONES?

- Milestones are observable and unobservable factors that represent development
- *Nature and nurture are evidenced*

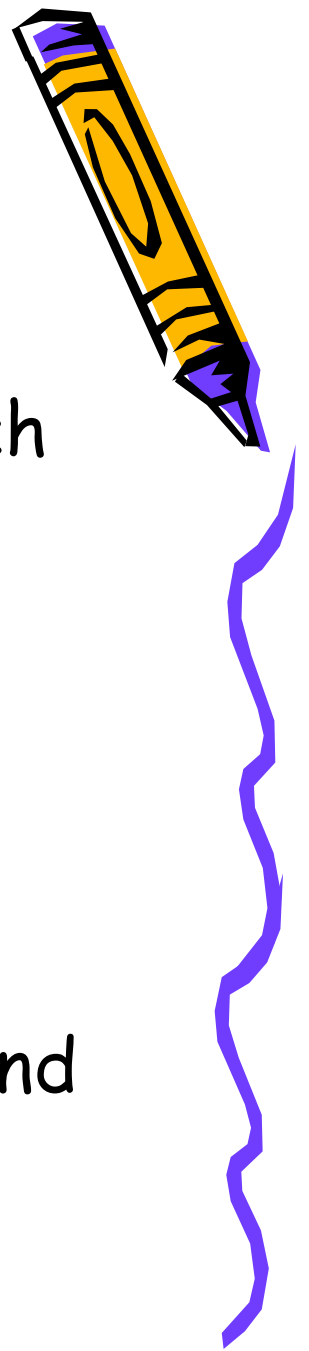


Birth to 12 months

- State control
- Intentional interaction with caregivers
- Shows enjoyment
- Being comforted by others



One to three years



- Responding to environmental stimuli such as name and affection
- Using adult as a secure base for exploration
- Ability to self sooth with pleasurable activities
- Increasing independence
- Empathy, sharing, playing such as pretend



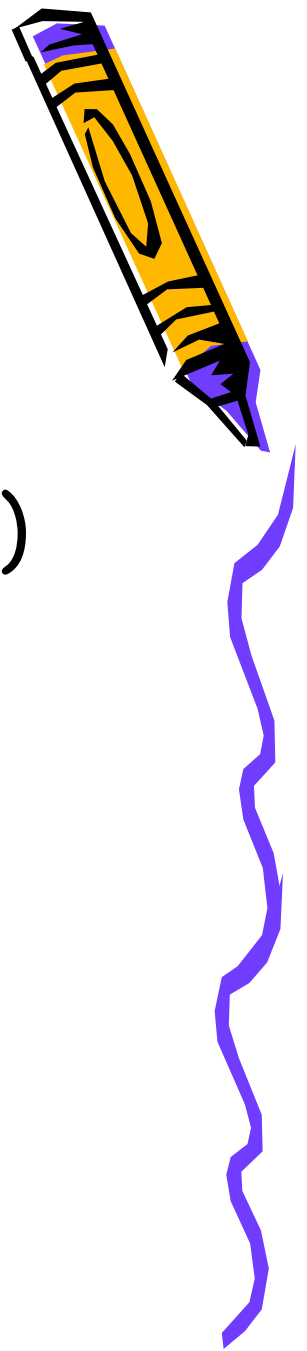
Three year olds

- Independence "Me Do"; individuation
- Playing with others
- Beginning to name emotions
- Imagination
- Fearfulness, nightmares
- Increasing attention span



Four year olds

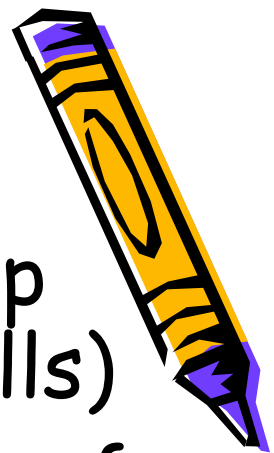
- Play becoming more cooperative, sharing, turn taking (on a good day)
- Understand rules, danger, humor
- Advancing empathy and sympathy
- Advancing thought about consequences
- Advancing fantasy and pretend

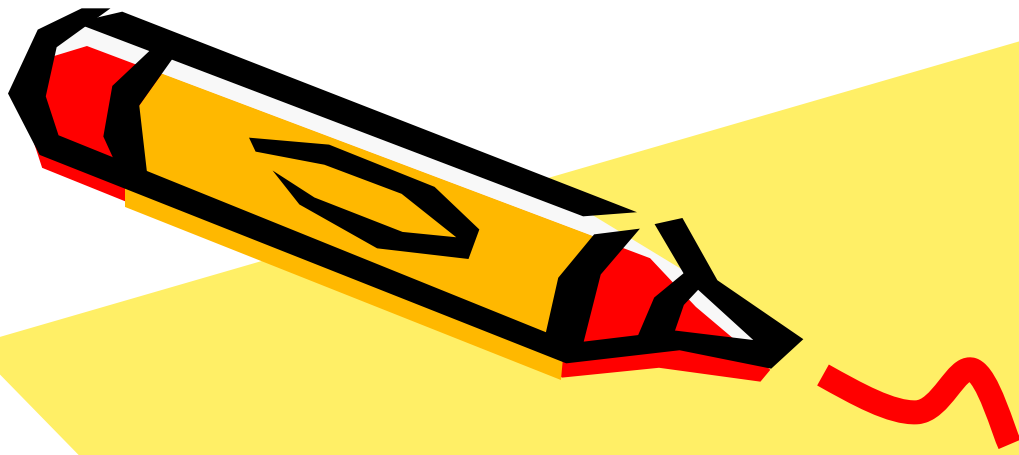


Five year olds

- Has preferences for friends- group play (social development; social skills)
- Can identify his own feelings those of others, gets jealous (emotional awareness)
- Internalization of standards of behavior and rules (self control and compliance)
- Attention span increasing (cognitive development and self control)

» Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional





How emotional
development is
reflected?



Relating to Others

- Emotional intelligence
- Understanding Feelings
- Empathy
- Engaging in cooperative play
- Getting along with others



Self Esteem



- Confidence
- Mastery
- Self understanding
- Persisting in a task



Self Awareness



- Knowing what we are feeling in the moment
- A growing ability to think about ourselves and our emotions (triggers)
- The growing knowledge of personal coping skills (soothers)



Social skills



- Reading cues of others
- Social vocabulary
- Thinking when upset
- Motivation to get along with others
- Conflict resolution



Self Control



- The ability to manage strong emotions
- The ability to manage one's own behavior
- The ability to control attention



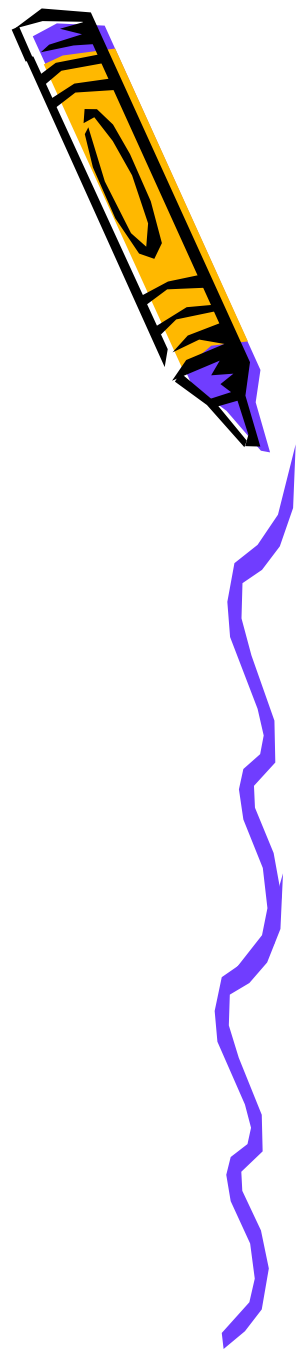
Responsible decision making or "committed compliance"



- Thinking about consequences for self and others
- Taking responsibility for one's actions
- Behaving well because it is right not just to avoid punishment



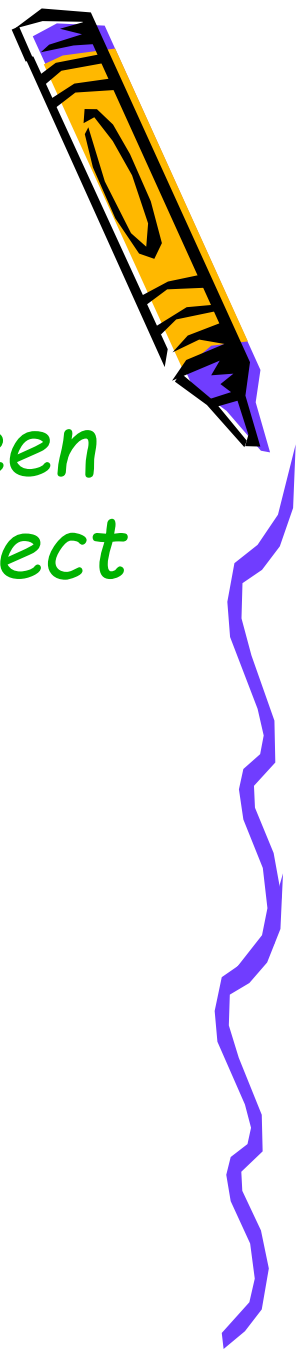
How is emotional well being related to functioning at preschool?



- Attention
- Making friends
- Self control
- Mastery and Motivation
- Mental health and social-emotional wellness



How is social/emotional development important for "big" school success?



Social emotional development has been shown to increase mastery of subject material, motivation to learn, commitment to school and time devoted to school work

- Reference: (Collaborative for academic, social, and emotional learning or CASEL)





Brain Development and Social/Emotional development

The "nature" of social/emotional
development



General brain development



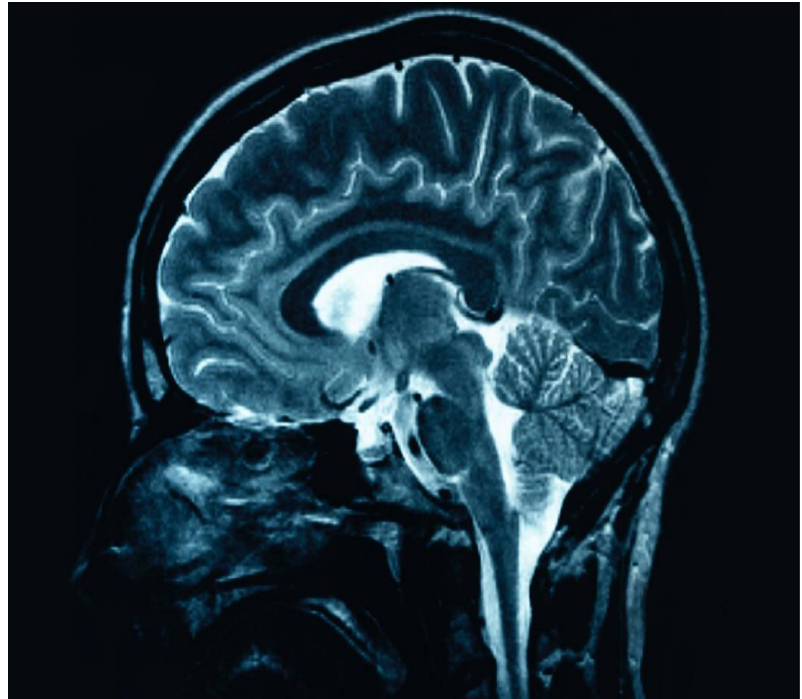
- Progression of development:
 - Sub cortical structures
 - motor control
 - frontal lobe (development not complete until adulthood)
- Brain growth represented by
 - number of neurons
 - glial cells
 - neural connections
 - Myelination



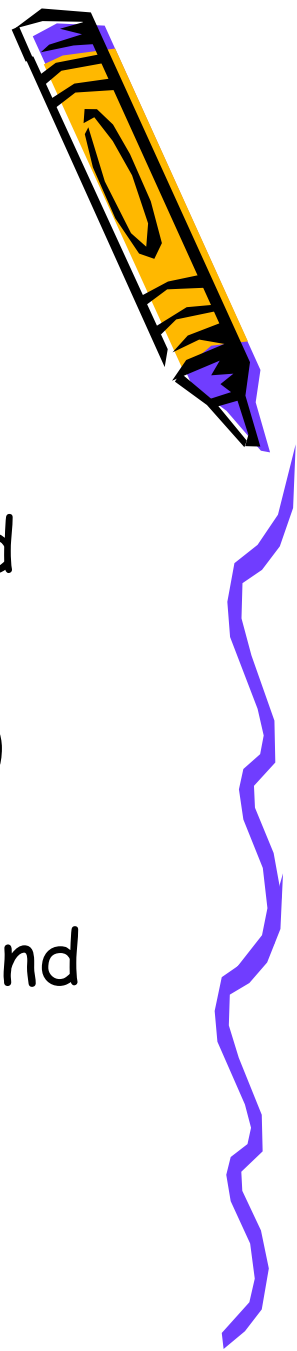
Brain development and control of emotion



- Brain development especially in the frontal lobes supports regulatory ability including
 - Attention, working memory, problem solving
- The frontal lobes have many connections with the emotional centers of the brain- Limbic system



5 Executive frontal lobe functions that support self regulation

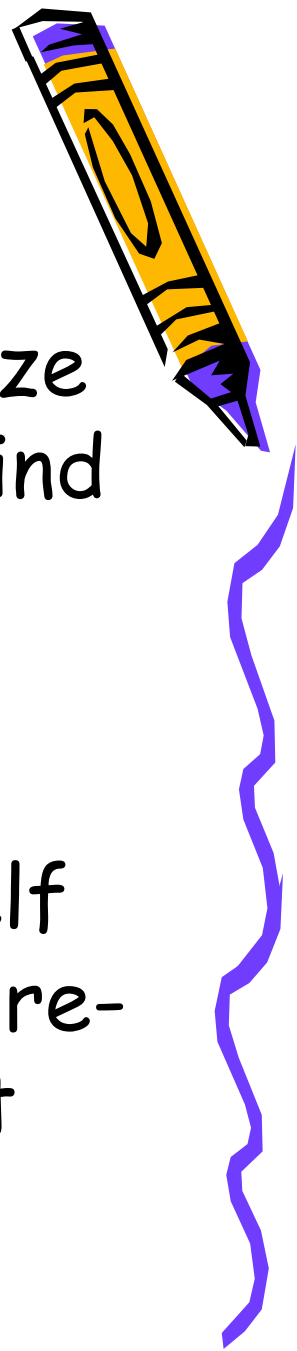


- Inhibitory abilities
- Working memory (remember, revise and plan)
- Internalized speech (supports thinking)
- Motivational appraisal
- Intellectual reconstitution (to ponder and plan)

• (Barkley, 1997) cited in Bronson, M.2000. *Self regulation in early childhood*. Guilford.



Development of executive functions



- The brain has an instinct to organize itself (motivation to explore and find meaning)
- Interactions with the environment impact the quality of the five executive systems that support self control (executive capacities are pre-wired, but the environment nourishes them)



Neurological Milestones: preschoolers



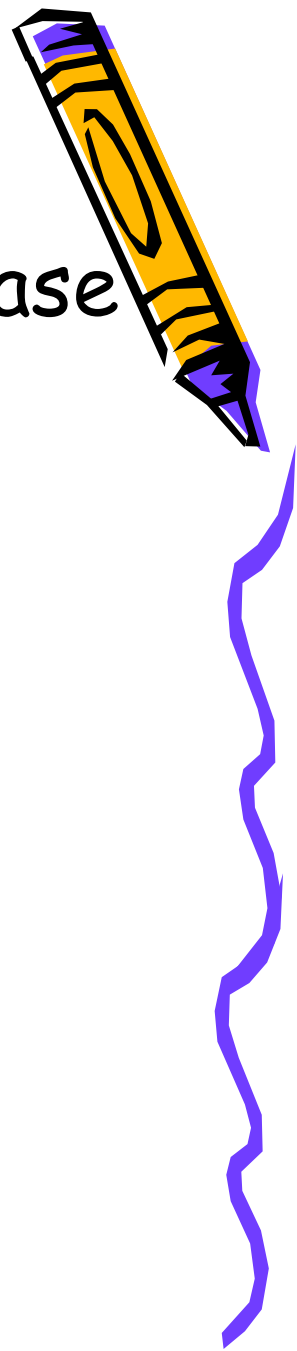
- **Voluntary Control:** Preschoolers begin to understand the distinction between emotions and behavior. They can choose how to express their strong emotions.
- **Executive functions** are on their way in preschool but there is a marked increase in self regulation between 5 and 7 (due to advances in frontal lobe).



Barkley, 1997 (cited in Bronson, 2000)

Cognitive processes

- With development comes an increase in intellectual development- This supports self control in many important ways
 - Separation of emotion and behavior (making a deliberate choice)
 - Pondering and planning
 - Self awareness
 - Motivation



Brain Development and Environmental Factors (Nurture and Nature)



- Parent-child interaction and secure attachment supports:
 - healthy development of emotional centers in the brain and
 - the frontal areas that regulate emotions.

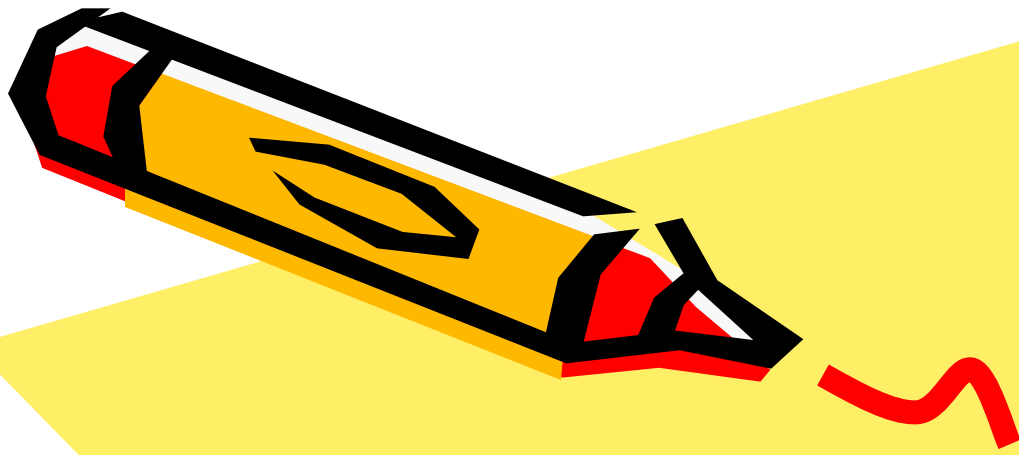


Brain Development and Environmental Factors (Nurture and Nature)



- Disorganized and stressful environments impair brain development and the development of self regulation.
- Warm responsive interactions can help repair the negative impact of stressful caregiving environments.





Temperament and social/emotional development

The genetics of personality



EXERCISE

- Think about your temperament.
- What are your triggers?
- How do you regroup when stressed?



Temperament

- Intensity of reaction
- Persistence
- Regularity
- Sensitivity
- Perceptiveness
- Adaptability
- Energy Level
- First Reaction



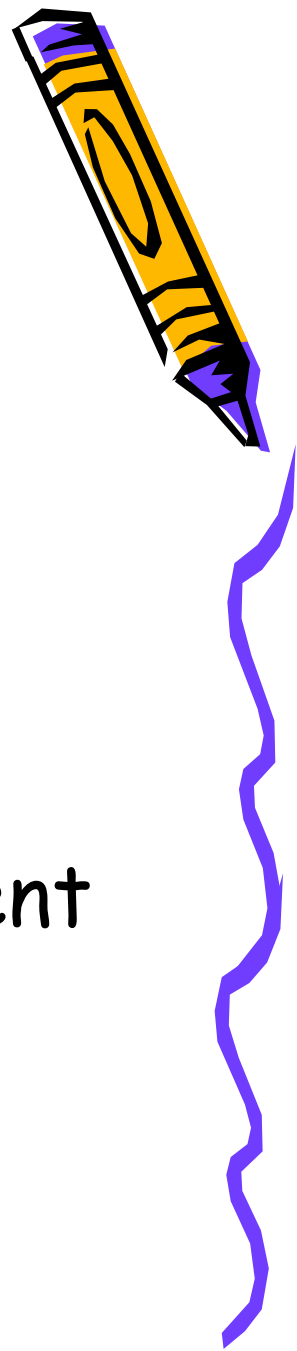
Discussion question:



- "How is temperament related to social/emotional behavioral and development?"



Using temperament to aid self control



- Temperament is only somewhat flexible
- But children can learn to manage their temperament
- Cognitive awareness of temperament leads to management of behavior (triggers and soothers)





Part two- NURTURING
social/emotional
development

Overview



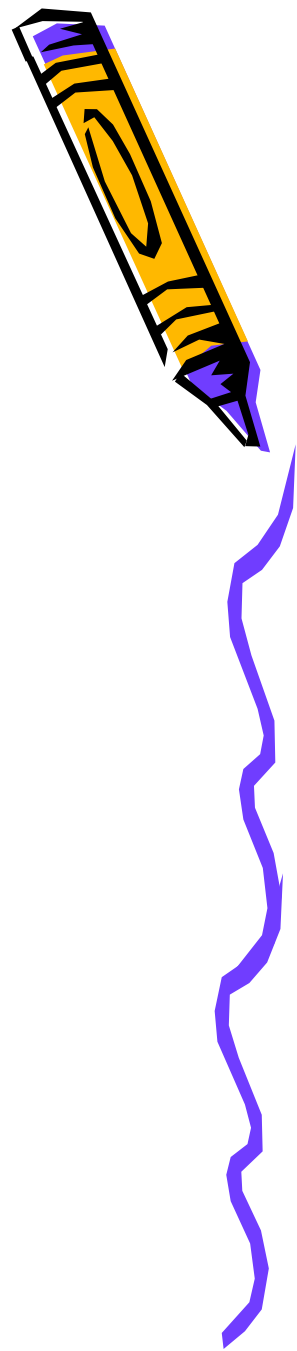
- Aid development of social skills via the 7-C's
- Promote self control with positive discipline
- Teaching Conflict resolution skills
- Emotion coaching



Social skills tools- The 7 C's Pyramid:

- Conflict resolution
- Community building
- Communication
 - Curiosity
 - Coping
 - Control
- Confidence

• Olhoff & Olhoff, 2004



Building the 7 C's



- Bottom 4 skills are intra personal skills. The top three are interpersonal skills.
- One skill builds upon the next
- Observe each child and help him/her develop in the areas represented on the pyramid through daily activities.



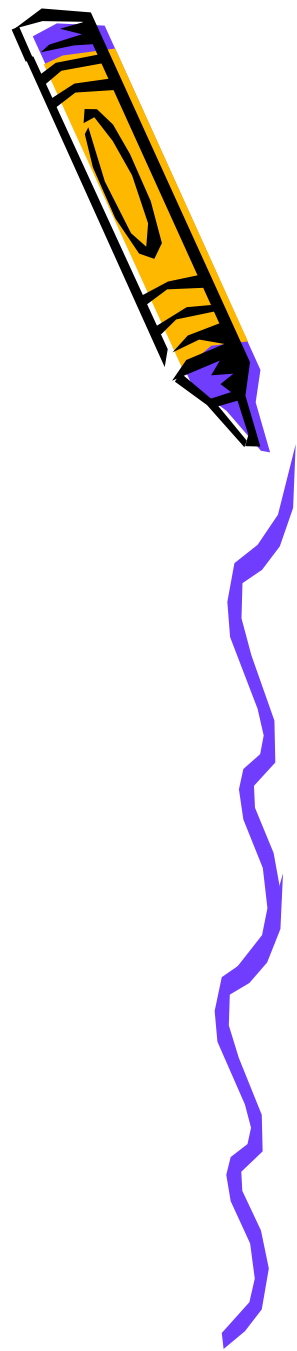


Positive Discipline and Social Emotional Development

Keys to promoting self control for
parents and teachers

4 R's of parenting

- Relationships
- Routines
- Reliable caregiving
- Regulation
 - Discipline tool kit





- **Recognize** the child- observe the child's temperament as well as triggers for bad behavior. Understand the function of the behavior (A, B, C's of behavior).
- **Regard** the child for who he is- acceptance. Avoid negative labels. Tell him his behavior is bad he is good.
- **Respond rather than react**- Deliberate parenting with a focus on teaching rather than punishing is best practice.
- **Reorganize** the environment to prevent bad behavior and promote better behavior.
- **Redirect**- Children need to learn how to manage their own behavior.
- **Rephrase**- Be positive but firm. Reduce the use of words such as "no, don't and stop". Tell the child what he or she can do- not just what he cannot do. Give commands that are clear and simple.
- **Remediate**- Teach skills to help the child build social skills and self control.
- **Rewards** over punishments are the key to changing behavior- ignore some bad behaviors.
- **Reveal** what you know about the child to the child. Talk to the child about his triggers and what he needs to calm down.
- **Repeat** until it works-consistency counts.
- **Relax**- Be good to yourself; know when you are stressed. Remember to bring calm you must possess calm.
- **Reflect**- What kind of parent do you want to be; how has your own experience of being parented impacted your own parenting behavior?



The goals of positive discipline:



- Promote self control
- Encourage deliberate action or *committed compliance* (child behaves because it is right not just to avoid punishment)
- Build self awareness and self esteem
- Teaching Skills



REMEMBER DISCIPLINE IS TEACHING NOT PUNISHMENT



• Praise more than punish



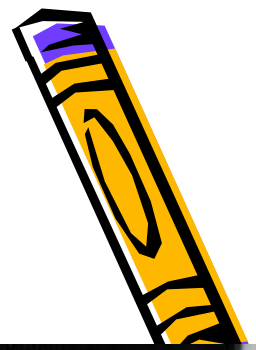
Determining Need: What skills to teach?



- Remember 7 'C's
- ASQ-SE
- Parent / teacher report
- Observation



Keys to promoting self control

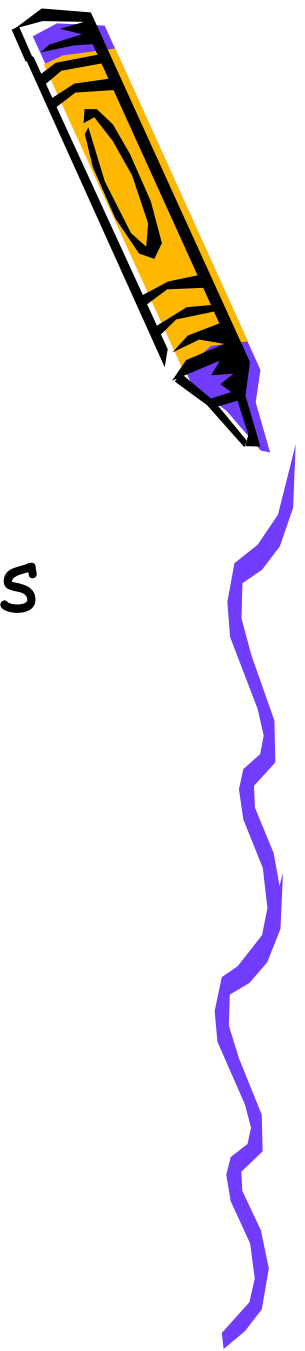


- **Observation**

- Developmental stage and appropriate expectations
- The child's temperament
- Triggers
- Soothers



Keys to promoting self control

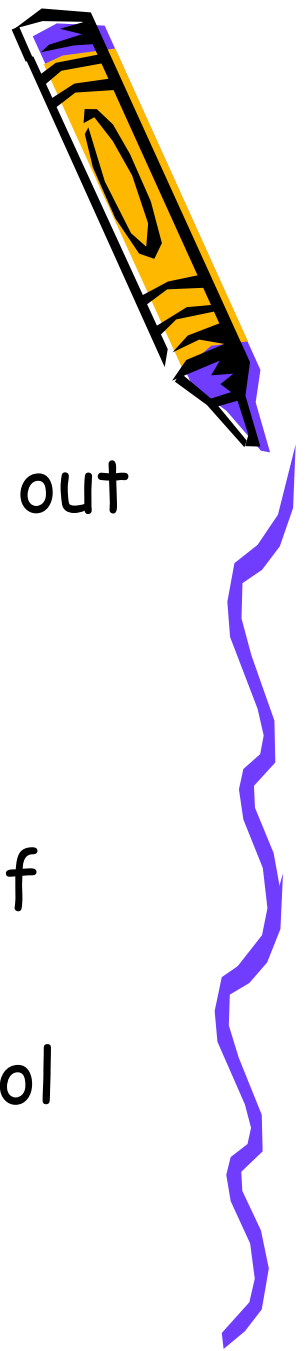


- **Modeling**

- How does the adult handle stress and conflicts?
- Problem solving "out loud"
- Using feeling words



Keys to promoting self control

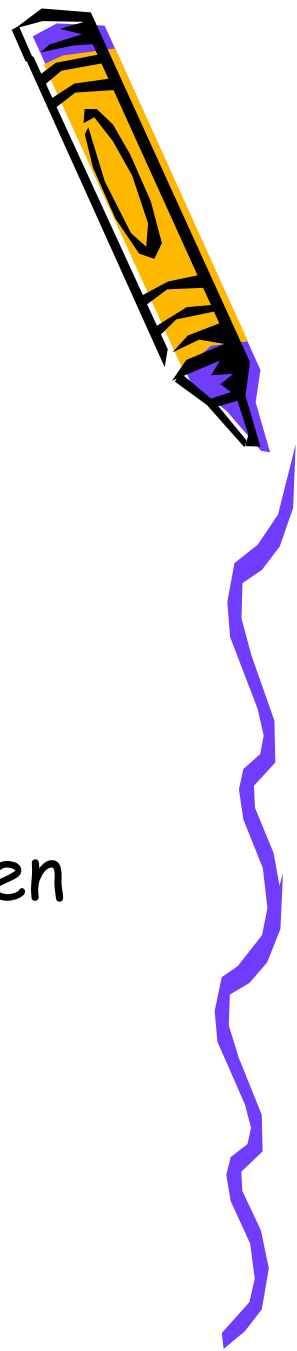


- **Positive Discipline**

- Active teaching of skills to manage strong emotions, problem solve, work out conflicts and cope.
- Adult will intervene early, and offer assistance rather than punishment
- Prevention is valuable for building self control
- Redirection is valuable for self control



Keys to promoting self control



- **Emotion Coaching**

- Help children learn about emotions- build emotional vocabulary
- Help children learn about emotions through play, songs and art
- Do not belittle a child's feelings- listen and reflect
- Discipline behavior not emotions.



Keys to promoting self control



- **Language and self control**
 - Encourage children to use language to guide action
 - Support developing inner controls- talk about it. Tell children the *why behind the rule*



Keys to promoting self control



- **Social skills**

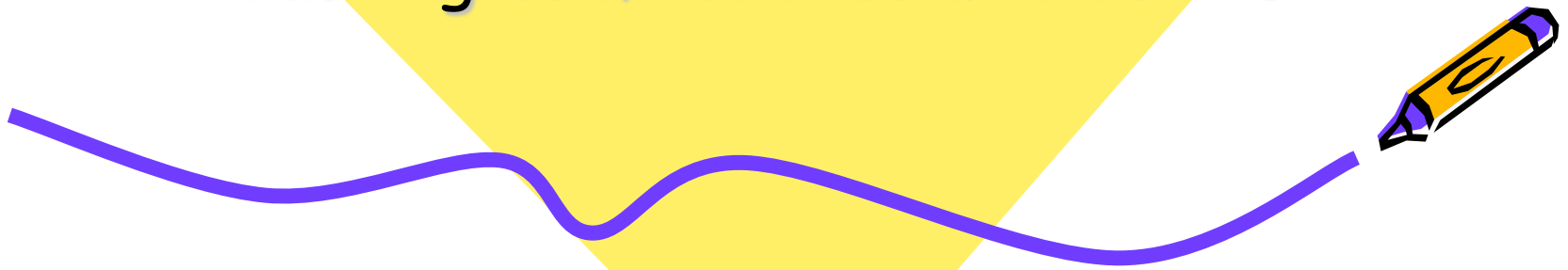
- Teach children to take an active part in solving disputes with peers





Understanding the Child at Play

Teaching conflict resolution skills



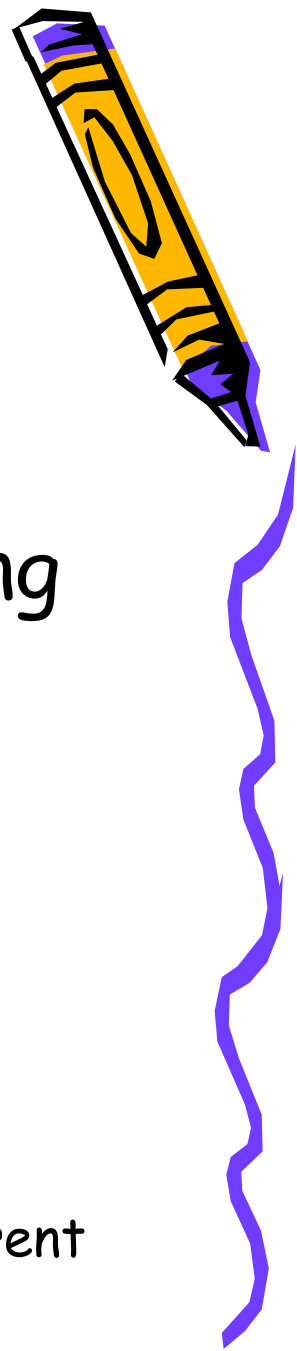
Determine need



- What does the child lack? Skill deficit, Performance deficit, or Self control deficit?
- Determine whether the child lacks certain specific skills, has a language disorder or if impulse control prevents them from using skill (Or all of the above)



Basic Assumptions for Conflict Resolution

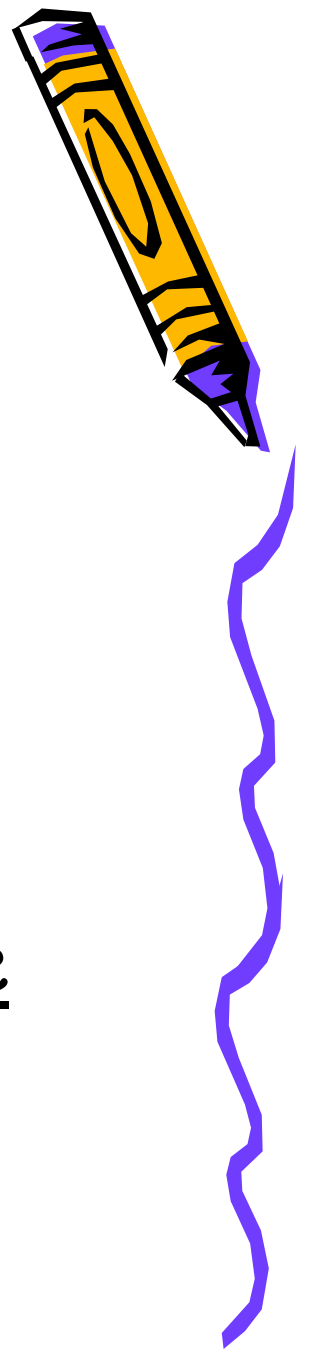


- Impulse to communicate
- Children hurt when they are hurting
- Validation of feelings is soothing
- Conflict is a learning opportunity
- Conflict resolution skills can be taught- punishment alone does not teach skills!



- Reference: Kaiser & Davis "Becoming the parent you want to be"

Observation and Intervention

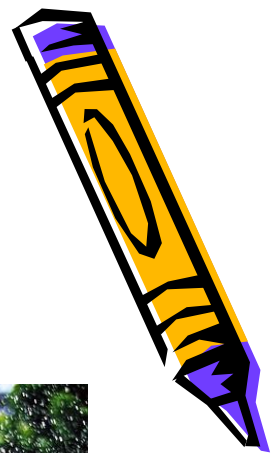


- If: children are not disturbed or upset
- Then: Do not intervene
- If: A child is hurt or if there is a raging conflict
- Then: Regard it as a learning opportunity- not a problem for the adult to solve



The adult's role

- Adult should ask herself: "How can I use this experience to help each child learn about problem solving or relationships?"



Motivation to help children learn to solve conflicts



Teaching children the social skill of communication and problem solving is an important part of education.

Through this children learn: Cause and effect, Listening skills, Empathy, and the rights of others



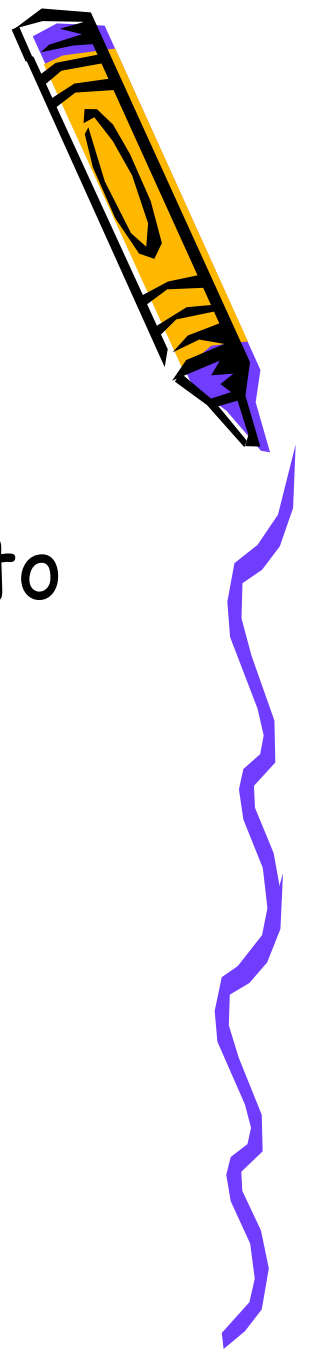
Basics of Conflict Resolution



- Think about what you want to teach
- Remember your role is to teach not to solve the problem
- Assess the situation and your energy level
- Make sure each party is "heard"
- Keep both parties safe- set clear limits



Basics of Conflict Resolution



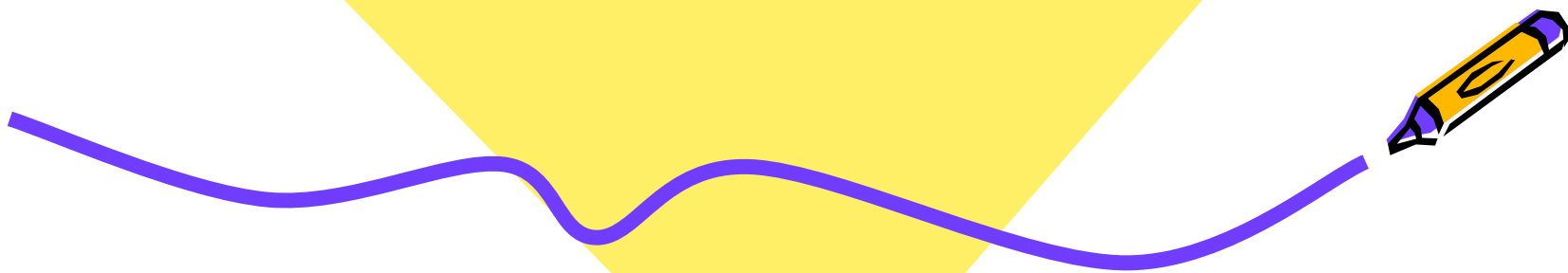
- Teach about feelings
- Encourage both children to listen to each other
- Clarify communication
- Model self control by staying calm
- Forcing children to say "I'm sorry" doesn't work

• Davis & Kaiser (1997).

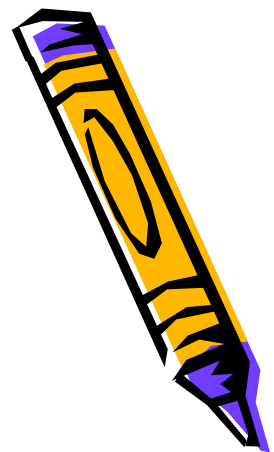




CONCLUSIONS:



Conclusions:



- Social-emotional development is impacted by nature and nurture
- Environments that nurture emotional development are sensitive to child's age and stage as well as temperament



Conclusions:

- Behavioral challenges are an opportunity to understand the child, teach skills and support emotional development



Conclusions:



- Social skills are the foundation for success in school and relationships
- Early self control is related to later emotional control and attention

