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The Backpack Connection Series

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Are you familiar with the Backpack Connection Series? This series features handouts with tips for both parents and early childhood educators. These tip sheets are designed to help build a bridge to connect families and teachers on topics such as addressing behavior, handling emotions, establishing routines and schedules, and teaching social skills. Each handout has young children in mind and offers tools and strategies that can be used at home and at school.

Keeping with its name, teachers may choose to send a handout home in each child's backpack when a new strategy or skill is introduced to the class. Each Backpack Connection handout provides information that helps parents stay informed about what their child is learning at school and specific ideas on how to use the strategy or skill at home. By working together in this way, children receive consistent support on both levels.

There is a total of 25 tip sheets available in the Backpack Connection Series which are offered in four different languages. Impressively, you can find the series in English, Spanish, Arabic, and Portuguese.

The Backpack Connection Series was originally created by the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI) which had a recognizable logo of a yellow taxi. Although TACSEI's funding ended, the resources and products related to the Pyramid Model remain available through the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI). Click <u>here</u> to go specifically to the list of Backpack tip sheets!

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Moving forward, a goal of this newsletter is to provide a reference to a Backpack Connection Series tip sheet in every issue as it relates to the topics discussed. We hope you will find this to be informative to your classroom needs as well as a great resource to share with families.



Ask The Healthy Social Behaviors Coaches!

Question: I am a teacher in a three year old classroom. I am new to the field and I am very anxious to learn all I can. I am struggling with effective ways to communicate with families. The most challenging part for me involves the discussions around unwanted classroom behavior. Do you have any suggestions?

Answer: Talking with parents about behavior problems can be difficult. We know relationships are key to our interactions with children. It is an important part of talking with families as well. In order to accept information about their child's behavior in the classroom, the parents need to believe that the teacher wants what is best for their child.

Here are a few suggestions to help develop relationships:

- Greet the parents by name
- Share successes the child is having
- Share pictures and newsletters about events and activities happening in the classroom
- Invite parents to come and have lunch with their child
- Have conversations with the families at drop off and pick up times
- Talk about skills that the child has mastered or is working on
- Make time for a parent-teacher conference to share information about the child
- Encourage the parents to share ideas and information
- Assure the parent that you both have the same goal: the child's success

When talking about unwanted behaviors in the classroom, be sure to share the positive behavior that you notice in the child as well as the behavior that is challenging. Also, include developmental skills that you are working on. Remember, parents are the expert on their child. When the parents and the teacher can work together, it increases the likelihood for success for the child, the family, and the classroom.



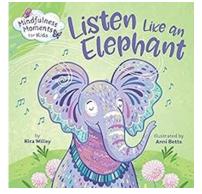
Mental Health Exercise Challenge for the Month

Make a list of things you like about yourself. The beliefs you have about yourself greatly impact your resilience and mental health. Think about it...when you're feeling good and excited about yourself and about your life, would you say it would be easy or difficult for someone to bring you down? Acknowledging what you like about yourself and about your life, and celebrating those things, can help build up your resilience to negative influences. Excerpt from https://centerformsilientchildren.org/mental-health-muscle/

Do you have a question you would like to see answered in our column? Feel free to email it to <u>AskTheBehavior-</u> <u>Coach@gmail.com</u>. We will keep your identity private. Your question is probably one someone else needs answering, so ask away! Your time is appreciated!

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Social/Emotional Book Nool



With *Listen Like an Elephant*, children learn to slow down, listen to the world around them and focus their minds – no matter how messy life becomes. Written by Kira Willey, this book is the perfect tool to help children develop a fun and consistent mindfulness practice designed to help manage their bodies, breath and emotions. This is one of seven books in the "Mindfulness for Kids" series and is designed for ages infants to three years old. To listen: <u>https://www.youtube.com/</u> watch?v=WNgf8BM2N0I

