Week 1: Family Connection Focus

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF Early Childhood Education

Positive Interactions

What is it?

This includes the happy and positive interactions between you and your child, and how they interact with their sibings. Positive interactions include respectful language; enjoying spending time together; siblings enjoying spending time together; positive communication.

What does this look like in the classroom?

Positive interactions reflect the emotional connection between the teacher and students as well as among students. It includes the warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and nonverbal interactions.

What does it look like at home?

Parents and children laughing together; enjoying activities together; saying respectful words such as please and thank you that are being modeled and used by parents; children and parents are comfortable in each others presence.

Why is this important?

Before a child can learn, they must feel safe and loved. Children should be happy to be at home and feel it is their safe place. Adults and children should share a positive relationship, both should enjoy each other and sharing activities together. You are the most important person in your child's life. Your joy and happiness will reflect in them. You set the mood and tone for your day and theirs.

Week 1: Family Connection Activities

Weekly Quote: Be the parent today that you want your kids to remember tomorrow.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
When you ask your child to help at home, watch them and make sure they can do the task, they may need help and not know how to ask for help	Give your child a simple job that they are responsible for such as watering a plant or feeding a pet (be sure to support them in completing the task successfully each time)	If you are angry, breathe and calm down before you react to what your child has done to anger you. Sometimes the stress in our adult life spills over into our parenting life.	Focus on the positive your child does each day, if you find that you say more negative than positive, try to understand that no one is perfect, especially a child.	Ask lots of questions to keep your child talking when you are having a conversation. Like "Why do you think that happened?" or " What do you think will happen tomorrow at school?"	Rotate your toys! Put some in the closet and rotate them through the month. An old forgotten toy becomes a new treasure when it has been away for awhile.	Ask your child if you can play with them with their toys. Have fun and enjoy the time, it doesn't have to be long. No media and no television.
Feelings Check! Emotional check ins help us know what we need and want (or don't want!). It helps us build better relationships. Being aware of our emotions can help us talk about our feelings better, avoid or resolve conflicts, and move past difficult feelings more easily. Remember, you set the mood and tone for the day.	Each day, practice the Five Step Feelings Check! Step 1: Tune into your body Shoulders tense? Aching neck? Is your body tense or relaxed?	Step 2: Take a deep breath Mindful breathing has multiple benefits to our physical and emotional well-being. The idea is to simply focus on your breathing – to its natural rhythm and flow and the way it feels to inhale and exhale. Check out this video example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEfs5TJZ6Nk	Step 3: Ask the question How am I feeling now? How did I feel when I got out of bed this morning? How would I like to feel?	Step 4: Use descriptive words to capture how you feel such as Achy Sick Drained Worried Confused Judged.	Step 5: Brainstorm By brainstorming some ideas/things that may be contributing to the way you feel, the greater insight you will find. The more you know, the more you can do about it!	Naming feelings is the first step in helping kids identify them. It allows your child to develop an emotional vocabulary. Notice opportunities throughout the day to name your feelings. For example, "I feel tired today because I didn't get enough sleep" or "I am really frustrated that I can't find my favorite jacket". Use these opportunities to further the conversation with your child.

Week 2: Family Connection Focus

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF Early Childhood Education

Limit Negative Experiences

What is it?

Negative experiences occur when parents are stressed. They may yell or use threats, and siblings may model this in their interactions. Parents may call their children names, or in anger use physical force.

What does this look like in the classroom?

Negative experiences reflect the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom; the frequency, quality, and intensity of teacher and peer negativity are key in this area.

What does it look like at home?

Stress can eat away at our personal well-being. Taking care of yourself and your stress levels is one of the most important things you can do for your child. You as a happy, strong, caring adult is what your child needs. Stress, anxiety, depression can all make us say and do things we would never do. Keeping an eye on your mental and physical health is important.

Why is this important?

When parents are stressed they may yell or use threats; siblings may model this in their interactions; parents may call their children names, or in anger use physical force

Week 2: Family Connection Activities

Weekly Quote: In bringing up children, spend on them half as much money and twice as much time. Author Unknown

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
When angry, speak to your child they way you want them to speak when they become angry. They learn more from watching you, than from what you say	Ask questions that you honestly don't know what your child will say as the answer. While driving ask, " why is the sky blue?" We aren't looking for correctness we are asking them to think deeply	Set aside 3 minutes to talk with your child uninterrupted, no media, just talk with your child.	When your child cries or is angry, acknowledge their feelings. Its okay to have those feelings, we teach them how to manage them properly	If you have a simple problem in the home, ask your child how to solve the problem. Maybe there are too many clothes for the washer or maybe the plant is dying, and it needs something?	Rules are in place to keep us safe. Ask your child to help make rules for the home. No more than 3-5. You will be surprised at what your child says should be a rule.	Ask your child what the family could do to have fun together today?
Self-care is any activity that we do **deliberately** in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. Although it's a simple concept in theory, it's something we very often overlook.	Self-care is linked to improved mood and reduced anxiety. Incorporating self-care strategies into your daily routine can help you find and maintain your calm.	Give yourself a mindful minute each day! Set a timer for one minute, close your eyes, and focus on your breathing. Download an app (Calm, My Life – formerly Stop, Breathe, Think, Headspace, etc.) to your phone and utilize the free features available.	Try one of these self-care strategies today: Go for a walk Journal Read Put together a puzzle with your child Play a board game Get outside Yoga Crafts.	Modeling and teaching the use of self-care strategies with your children helps develop their self-regulation skills. Self-regulation is the ability to monitor and manage your energy states, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in ways that are acceptable and produce positive results such as well-being, loving relationships, and learning.	Reading with your child helps you connect, teaches skills, and is a great self care and self-regulation activity. Is your child struggling with a particular behavior or situation? Try selecting a book that focuses on that particular need. For example, "How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight", "Franklin in the Dark", "When Sophie Gets Angry".	Spend 15 minutes playing one of these fun self-regulation games with your child: Red Light, Green Light Simon Says Freeze Dance Ready, Set, Wiggle.

Week 3: Family Connection Focus

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF Early Childhood Education

Sensitivity to Your Child

What is it?

Sensitivity to your child is shown when the adult knows the child and when the child needs comfort, support, or reassurance in daily tasks or activities; the child seeks out the parent when extra support is needed.

What does this look like in the classroom?

Sensitivity to your children encompasses the teachers awareness of and responsiveness to the student's academic and emotional needs; high levels of sensitivity facilitate childrens' ability to actively explore and learn because the teacher consistently provides comfort, reassurance, and encouragement.

What does it look like at home?

If a child is struggling to tie their shoes, a parent may give a child time to try, if the child begins to struggle and wants to give up the parent steps in and reassures the child and offers support

Why is this important?

You know your child. You know how they like their sandwich cut, you know their favorite TV show, you know everything. You are your child's expert. You know how they act when they are tired, you know how they smile when excited or surprised. This piece says you have taken the time to get to know your child. You know their strengths, their challenges, and their personalities. You respect who they are and you will do what you can to support them as they learn who they are.

Week 3: Family Connection Activities

Weekly Quote: Some people care too much. I think it's called love. A.A. Milne

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
When you pick your child up from school, leave all distractions in the car. Greet your child with a smile and hug, no matter how stressful your day has been.	If your child has a problem, help them find a solution. Support them as they learn how to work with others.	Let your child choose the side dish that will go with dinner and let them help you cook.	Teasing, sarcasm, name calling - we don't want to see it in our children, be careful when you are angry or frustrated that you don't use these methods.	Use big words, and your child will too!	Redirection is a great tool. If you see that your child is becoming upset, help them focus on something new or help them make a new choice.	When your child is building, drawing, or creating, ask them about what they are doing. Lengthen the time they spend doing the activity by showing interest.
Meditation Did you know that meditation is a simple, fast way to reduce stress? Spending a few minutes each day in meditation can restore your calm and inner peace.	During meditation, you focus your attention and eliminate the stream of jumbled thoughts that may be crowding your mind and causing stress. This process may result in enhanced physical and emotional well-being.	Guided Meditation Sometimes called guided imagery or visualization, with this method you form mental images of places or situations you find relaxing. Here is a video example of a guided meditation that you can do with your children: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtYIQiXyrsE.	Mindfulness Meditation This type of meditation is based on being mindful, or having an increased awareness and acceptance of living in the present moment. Sit on a straight-backed chair or cross legged on the floor. Focus on an aspect of your breathing, such as your belly rising and falling as you inhale and exhale. If your mind starts to race, bring your attention back to your breathing.	Yoga You perform a series of postures and controlled breathing exercises to promote a more flexible body and calm mind. As you move through poses that require balance and concentration, you're encouraged to focus more on the moment. The internet has lots of free yoga videos for both children and adults!	Walk and Meditate Combining a walk with meditation is an efficient and healthy way to relax. Slow down your walking pace so that you can focus on each movement of your legs and feet. Concentrate on this as you walk, not on the destination.	A less formal approach can also help you to stay in the present and fully participate in your life. You can choose any task or moment to practice informal mindfulness, whether you are eating, showering, walking, or playing with your child. Focus on your breathing. When you notice your attention has wondered, bring your focus back to the task at hand.

Week 4: Family Connection Focus

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF Early Childhood Education

Regard for Your Child's Perspective

What is it?

Allowing the child to express what they would like to do at home (such as giving choices when choosing outfits for the day) allowing the child to have some autonomy (such as letting them choose the vegetable for dinner or the fruit for lunch); being flexible to include your child's ideas in everyday tasks (letting the child choose how to fold their shirts if putting up laundry, etc.); allowing the child to tell a story to the family without interruption to express their ideas.

What does this look like in the classroom?

Captures the degree to which the teacher places an emphasis on students' interests, motivations, and points of view during interactions and classroom activities; Teacher encourages student responsibility and autonomy, which is a child's independence.

What does it look like at home?

The focus here is to allow the child to have autonomy in small ways in everyday tasks and valuing their perspective, so many times the child follows the adult through the motions of the day, slowing down and asking the child how we should get inside the house today gives them a voice. Should we walk, hop, skip? Letting the child make choices, and doing so within safe boundaries helps them to practice being a leader. This lets the child speak and be heard

Why is this important?

Being a leader can be scary, sometimes it is easier to follow along. We want our children to be leaders, we want them to be able to say, "NO" if someone is trying to take them away or to tell someone that a touch is not okay. We want our children to be respectful leaders. One day, they will be leaders either small scale or large scale. Those skills start now. Making good decisions for themselves is not an easy skill. As we begin to build them up in everyday interactions, as they grow and decisions get harder, they will have a foundation to make good choices for themselves.

Week 4: Family Connection Activities

Weekly Quote: We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Be a sports caster and while your child is doing an activity state exactly what they are doing at that time. Such as., " You are climbing the tall ladder, and you are sliding quickly down the slide“.	It is easier to build a child than repair an adult. Every interaction builds a child or tears down a child.	When your child asks you for help, be sure to acknowledge them. This helps them see you as a safe, trusting person.	When your child talks with you, stop and make eye contact so they know you are listening.	When your child talks be sure to listen and answer them based on what they say. You want them to know you are listening.	Lay out three outfits, and let your child choose the one they will wear that day.	Routines provide predictability and safety, weekends make it easy to loose your weekday routines. Remember children need that structure every day.
Time management is an effective skill that can assist us in managing the work-life balance. By managing your time at the onset, you can reduce common signs of stress such as irritability, chronic fatigue, difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, and sleep difficulty.	Write It Down Each day, prepare a to do list. Make it simple- jot items down on a post-it note.	Prioritize & Reprioritize Evaluate your list as you go throughout your day. Be kind to yourself – things don’t always go as planned.	Plan your week Meal Prep (think wraps, burritos, pre-cut vegetables, casseroles). Have a stash of special toys that your child would enjoy playing with but make them only available during the busiest time of your day.	Avoid over commitment Learn to say no. This is so important so you feel empowered while still maintaining your relationships with others. When you are over committed, you are more likely to feel run down and overwhelmed.	Provide choices to your children when you can (do you want to wear your blue shirt or red shirt today?) This provides them with a sense of control and ownership to the activity and will help you move along quicker to the next task at hand.	Keep daily routines as normal as you can. This is so important for stress management. Keep a predictable schedule for meals, sleep, and nap times. Keep routines the same (e.g., if you read a book before bed every night, continue to do this).

Week 5: Family Connection Focus

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF Early Childhood Education

Consistent Behavior Expectations

What is it?

Being proactive, having clear rules that are consistent every day. Children know the rules and know the consequences regardless of the adult involved; children need boundaries that are consistent and adults should be proactive to prepare children for change; Adults use redirection if a mistake is made

What does this look like in the classroom?

Consistent behavior expectations encompasses the teacher's ability to provide clear behavioral expectations and use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior

What does it look like at home?

Clear rules that exist even on busy days; for example, the rule is no running down the sidewalk; the child must hold an adult's hand. If one day, the parent allows the child to run ahead, then the next day, the child drops the parent's hand and runs ahead then is disciplined. This creates inconsistency. This can exist within one parent's routine, based on their mood or between two parents. The focus here is to be consistent and clear. Also, parents should be proactive. If a favorite activity needs to end, warn the child before hand, or if the child needs to leave early from an activity, the parent should tell the child beforehand to prevent frustration

Why is this important?

Part of life is rules, we all have them . With every rule there are consequences. We know a red light means "stop" and when people run that light someone could be hurt. Imagine if one day, the red light meant go and green meant stop. You are driving and the rule you thought you knew changed. Then the red light rule changed back to normal. You want to follow the rules but they change and you don't understand why. You may feel frustrated, even nervous about driving, because you don't know what to expect. This is what it is like for a child when "rules" change. Children are learning to navigate life, and rules need to be consistent, clear, and simple. They need these boundaries, but they also need them to be predictable.

Week 5: Family Connection Activities

Weekly Quote: Children learn to smile from their parents. Shinichi Suzuki

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
When your child talks to you, repeat what they say and then extend it or elaborate on the words.	If you know that a change in the normal schedule will upset your child, tell them beforehand and tell them why. This way they will be prepared.	When reading to your child, ask them if the book is similar to another story you have read.	Give praise that is specific to what they are doing. Not just "good job" but " I like how hard you are working on that tower"	Make sure your child has access to their toys, so when they finish one activity they know where to easily find the next.	Let your child touch and experience safely the world around them, if they see a puddle let them touch it, let them throw a small rock in it to watch the ripples. Many things we take for granted as adults excite children.	When reading to your child, use your voice to make the story come alive.
Anxiety is a typical human reaction to stress. Most people experience anxiety at some point in our lives. Too much anxiety can get in the way of living a healthy, happy life.	Anxiety exercises address your body's stress responses such as increased heart rate, rapid breathing, and tense muscles and help replace them with what your body feels when you are relaxed.	Relax by breathing by visualizing by counting by staying present.	To quickly relieve muscle tension when anxious, try the following: Sit in a quiet place. Take a deep breath in and exhale slowly. Use your hand to make a tight fist. Squeeze your fist tightly. Hold for a few seconds. Notice all the tension you feel in your hand. Slowly open your fingers and be aware of how you feel.	Continue tensing and then releasing various muscle groups in your body, from your hands, legs, shoulders, or feet. Avoid tensing the muscles in any area of your body where you're injured or in pain, as that may further aggravate your injury.	Communicate to your children when things might look different and why. For example, take time to explain new hygiene routines, that you are working from home, or that your might need to help siblings with their schoolwork. Taking these few minutes on the front end can reduce anxiety, eliminate chaos and minimize tantrums.	Read a book to your child about anxious feelings such as "Norma Jean & the Worry Machine" or "Is a Worry Worrying You". Here is a link to a children's book list that provides suggestions for books in various categories: http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/booklist.pdf.

Week 6: Family Connection Focus

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF Early Childhood Education

Importance of Rules

What is it?

Having a set schedule and a consistent pattern to life such as a firm bedtime and a set dinner routine; The child knows where to place his items so he can find them and he knows where to find his clothes; routines help children know what is coming next, and feel safe

What does this look like in the classroom?

The importance of routines considers: how well the teacher manages instructional time, routines and provides activities for students so that they have the opportunity to be involved in learning activities

What does it look like at home?

This looks at how predictable your child's day is; Life happens but usually there is a set routine and a child knows what to expect. In this environment a child will develop confidence and security

Why is this important?

Linking to predictable rules and behavior expectations, is the area of routines. Routines are perfect for a child and the need for predictability. A child may know that everyday grandma picks them up from school. One day an aunt picks them up, the child may love their aunt, but cries when she sees her. Why? The routine is broken. It was an unexpected change in what is a "known" event. Routines provide a sense of security and safety.

Week 6: Family Connection Activities

Weekly Quote: Your Children need your presence more than your presents. Jesse Jackson

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Ask yourself this question: What do I love about my child?	Give your child a simple chore to do so they can be a help to the family! They will love to be helpful and it will build independence.	When heading to the store, tell your child what you expect such as "we are not buying anything that's not on my list today, can you help me find everything on my list?" Stating clear expectations helps children behave according to your plan, be sure you stay on track as well with sticking to the list!	Ask your child what are the rules for bedtime? Is there a routine or a pattern? Do this for other times of the day as well. We all like to know what happens next and when we don't it creates anxiety and misbehavior.	Say the name of an animal and then see who in the family can move like that animal? Run like a cheetah, stomp like an elephant, hop like a bunny, leap like a kangaroo? Add language to movements as a fun activity to do when going to the car or going home to make transitions easier.	Today try to expand on what your child says, when they say, "See the red bird?" You say, "I do see the little red bird sitting high on the tree limb" This adds vocabulary and also will engage your child in conversation.	Make it a point today that every time you see your child, you share a genuine smile with them.
Grounding This technique is about bringing our mind and body back to the present moment, especially in times when things seem as if they are happening around us in a blur or in moments of intense emotions. By grounding, we can allow ourselves the space for our brain to slow down and feel a bit more centered.	For the remainder of the week, try a different grounding technique. Lay on the ground & press your toes into the floor. Squeeze playdough. Run your fingers through the sand or dirt. Gently roll rocks around in your hands.	Use the 5 Senses Wear your favorite sweatshirt, use essential oils, make a cup of tea.	Self-soothe Take a shower or bath, find a grounding object, light a candle.	Observe Describe an object in detail: color, texture, shadow, light, shapes.	Practice different breathing techniques to ground yourself. Practice 4-7-8 breathing: inhale to a count of 4, hold for 7, exhale to 8.	Distract yourself Find all the square or green objects in the room, count by 7s, say the date.

Week 7: Family Connection Focus

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF Early Childhood Education

What is it?

When in the car or reading a book, using different tones of voice or sometimes singing or chanting a favorite rhyme. The focus here is to mix up the activities and how you engage with your child

What does this look like in the classroom?

This area focuses on the ways in which teachers maximize students' interest, engagement, and ability to learn from lessons and activities

Activities with your Child

What does it look like at home?

When reading a book, use a deep voice for a character that may be big and a high voice for a tiny character. Maybe add clapping to a song, or hand motions, any thing you can do to engage your child in the activity. These can be done in simple, ordinary moments such as walking through the store. If in the store counting 3 bananas, hold up your fingers one at a time as you say each number

Why is this important?

Children bring out the fun in us. They can imagine what we are saying and they will play along. This engagement builds their brains. This piece is what you do everyday when you use a deep voice and say, "I am going to get you" and your child squeals and runs away. Imagine if you used a plain voice and looked at your child. It would be hard to read what you were doing, and the engagement would not be strong. The little things you do that you may feel silly, light up your child's world. Let's be honest. in our adult world, it's nice to take a break and be a little silly.

Week 7: Family Connection Activities

Weekly Quote: Kids spell love T-I-M-E. John Crudele

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Today focus on the magic 5:1 rule. What this means is that for every negative thing you say, say 5 positives. Our brains hold on to negatives more than positives so by focusing on the positives you are building stronger positive brains.	Today be a sports broadcaster! Watch your child as they are doing an activity and state their actions, this adds to their vocabulary as they link words to movements. For example: You are drawing with a red crayon and making a big circle on your paper. Now you have a yellow crayon and you are coloring your circle with yellow.	Today be a sports broadcaster again! Today though talk your way through your actions! Example: I am cracking the eggs into the bowl, and now I am finding a fork to stir the eggs fast so they are now scrambled all up.	Today ask your child if they could go anywhere in the world where would they go? Then ask them if they want to find it with you online or draw a picture of what it looks like in the child's mind.	Today focus on eye contact, touch, being happy, and being present with your child. This could be singing a song with them while tapping the beat on their hands. Any activity with these three elements lights up the brain and lowers stress chemicals in children and adults.	Did you have an oops today. Talk it through with your child. They will learn to handle big emotions when they learn from you.	Today ask your child to solve a problem that they have, say to them, "Oh no this is a problem, what can we do to solve it?"
Spending time in nature Research has shown that spending time in nature has been associated with decreased symptoms of depression and anxiety.	When exposed to natural sunlight, the Vitamin D in our skin helps to elevate our mood. Take a morning walk or plan a picnic breakfast to soak up some morning sun before the day begins!	Spending time outdoors stimulates children's creativity. It also encourages children to actively play and helps develop capacity for problem solving. In addition to physical health benefits, outdoor play helps with gross motor skill development and hand-eye coordination.	Exploring nature is a great way for a family to spend time together! Try a game of "I spy" while exploring your neighborhood or a local park. Identify flower colors. Inspect the insects.	Did you know that gardening has mood boosting benefits? Save the seeds from a watermelon, plant, and watch them grow! Plant an herb garden.	A scavenger hunt is a great way to keep kids active and engaged. It also strengthens the connection between the caregiver and child. Write down a list of 5 things for your child to look for when outside. Here is a link with more ideas: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-this-photo-scavenger-hunt-is-helping-keep-kids-active-and-engaged/.	Birdwatching This activity helps us stay grounded in the moment, thus getting us in tune to our physical and emotional state. For children, it also encourages empathy for all living things while providing a platform to discuss the larger scope of nature.

Week 8: Family Connection Focus

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF Early Childhood Education

What is it?

Asking questions to children and not knowing what they will say. If a child says, " look at that puddle?" You may ask, "Where did that puddle come from?" The child may remember it rained or they may say the hose was left on too long. The questions are to get them thinking and making guesses. Linking items to the real world and asking them how things fit together, this may happen in a story or maybe walking to the car. Allowing the child to create a solution and then try it out. If a child wants to jump in the puddle, but you don't want them to get their new shoes dirty. The child may say they will put Ziploc bags on their feet. Discussing this option and allowing them to safely test it out allows them to create solutions with help from an adult.

What does this look like in the classroom?

Measures the teacher's use of instructional discussions and activities to promote students' higher-order thinking skills, cognition and the teacher's focus on understanding rather than by rote instruction

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Questions to get Your Child Thinking

What does it look like at home?

You know, all those questions your child asks you? This is where you ask the same questions to them. Children will learn more in simple tasks with you, because you are the most important person in their world and they are always learning from you even in something as simple as folding laundry. The focus here is to get your child talking when sharing an activity. Examples might be grocery shopping, cooking, or washing dishes. Your interest in their ideas and their thoughts will make this come naturally

Why is this important?

The secret here is asking your child to dig deep into how to solve a problem or figure out a new way to do something. Be ready, the answer you get may be out of this world. Remember, they are children. Their imaginations and thinking have few limits- that is an adult issue. They may give you a solution that you know will never work, but what do you do? You try it anyways! Because that is what builds risk taking. Yes, we want our children to be risk takers in learning, to throw out ideas that are imaginative, to try solutions and learn from why they did or didn't work. We want innovative thoughts without the fear of being wrong, that is risk taking. We want them to constantly ask why and then try to figure it out for themselves with you as the guide. This does not have to be huge world problems. This can be that the lid on the peanut butter is stuck and what are solutions we can implement. Their small world is big enough for them to explore and learn. You are their guide, let them take the lead and learn

Week 8: Family Connection Activities

Weekly Quote: Don't try to be perfect. Life isn't; no one is. Use mistakes and mishaps as opportunities to grow tolerance and to teach. There is such a thing as happy accidents. And love, love, love and listen, listen, listen. Teri Hatcher

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Add bigger words to label emotions, Instead of mad use words like angry, frustrated, irritated. Instead of happy use elated, joyous, excited. This helps separate big emotions from small emotions.	When your child has a big emotion, give them tools to use. When your child has a small emotion and handles it well, point that out! This will transfer in bigger emotions when it feels overwhelming.	Ask your child today who they would want to draw a picture for to make them feel loved. Draw the picture and if possible Facetime to share that picture. Point out how happy the person was and that they felt happy because they felt loved.	If your child is sad today, tell them what you do when you feel sad or angry. Ask your child if that would help them when they feel yucky feelings.	Play freeze; play a favorite song loud and have a crazy dance party, then pause the song and say FREEZE. Then start it up again. This teachers self-regulation and helps with listening skills. This is a hard thing for many children so be patient.	Today challenge yourself to respond not react to situations and behaviors. That means you must practice the pause, breathe deep, and then respond.	Aim for a feedback loop of three. This means that you ask your child a question, they respond, you take that response and expand on it, they then respond and then you expand on that response again. You are teaching conversational skills
Self-compassion as a self-care tool. The ability to turn understanding, acceptance, and love inward. Be kind to yourself by carving out some time for you today. Use this time to draw, journal, listen to music or do something that you enjoy.	Self-kindness – the ability to be gently and understanding to ourselves. Do you speak to yourself like you would a friend? If not, reframe your way of speaking to yourself as if you were speaking to a friend.	Common humanity – recognizing our failings and sufferings as part of the human experience. Take a moment today to reflect on that statement.	Mindfulness – the ability to have an awareness of the feelings you are experiencing without judgment or applying meaning. Set aside three minutes today and focus on your breathing. Here is an example of a mindful breathing exercise from the My Life app: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEfs5TJZ6Nk.	Recognize that life happens to everyone. Things don't and won't always go as planned. People that set a standard of perfection are setting themselves up for failure. After all, perfection is unachievable.	Tell yourself "I am enough". We've all had times that we have told ourselves that we are not good enough or strong enough. Replace that self-talk with "I'm enough, just as I am" "I am worthy" "I deserve to be happy" .	Taking care of the caregiver In order to give our best selves to our children, it is important to recharge our batteries! Give yourself permission to meet your own needs, recognizing that this will not only enhance your quality of life, it will also enhance your ability to be there for those that rely on you.

Week 9: Family Connection Focus

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF Early Childhood Education

Responding to Your Child

What is it?

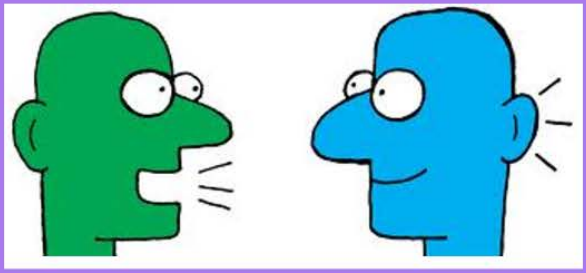
This area looks at how you respond to a child, engaging in conversations with your child, providing encouragement when the child is attempting a task, or asking a child to explain what they are doing or what they are thinking.

What does this look like in the classroom?

Responding to children assesses the degree to which the teacher provides feedback that expands learning and understanding, and encourages continued participation

What does it look like at home?

When responding to your child, ask for more information, or provide words of encouragement to help them stay focused on an activity. Ask them to tell you how they came to an answer



Why is this important?

You know that great feeling you get when talking to a friend and their reply makes you feel they really listened. This is what we want for your children. How are you responding to them that lets them know they are being heard, they are valued, and what they say is important? Yes, even in your busy day, you want them to tell you more.

Week 9: Family Connection Activities

Weekly Quote: Your children will become what you are; so be what you want them to be.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Have your child help you sort laundry. Encourage them to sort by color, size, and type of clothing.	Play Simon Says. Take turns being Simon! This teachers self-regulation and helps with listening skills. This is a hard thing for many children so be patient.	Play catch together. Use a ball or any object that can be safely tossed to one another.	Sing head, shoulder, knees, and toes and do the movement with your child. Try making a new song with other body parts (for example; chin, fingers, wrist and hip)	Give your child a ball to bounce. Count to see how many times your child can bounce the ball in one minute.	Make a tunnel with chairs, blankets and pillows. Join your child to crawl through it and run around it.	Create sound patterns by clapping, snapping and stomping. Have your child repeat the patterns. Have your child create sound patterns and you repeat theirs.
Managing Stress & Sleep Sleep is one of the most important health behaviors affecting immune function, mental and physical health, and quality of life.	Biologically, stress and sleep don't play well together! When we are stressed, our sleep often becomes out of order. Incorporate one stress prevention/management technique into your daily routine. Encourage your children to do the same.	Create and maintain regular daytime and nighttime routines. For example, get up at about the same time each morning and go to bed about the same time each night.	Prioritize getting outside for at least 30 minutes each day. Consider a walk around the block in the morning or afternoon. This task, particularly during those times of day, can impact your sleep quality. It raises your body temperature a few degrees. Later in the day, your internal thermostat drops back to its normal range, which can trigger feelings of drowsiness and help you fall asleep.	Avoid working, answering emails, watching movies, or hanging out in bed – and help your kids do the same. A strong association between the bed and sleep can help you fall asleep faster and get back to sleep during the night.	Adapt calming and soothing bedtime routines for yourself and your children. Reserve the hour before bed for activities that are positive, relaxing, and create a sense of safety and ease.	Dim the lights and avoid screens one to two hours before bed. Bright lights and screens send a signal to the brain that it's daytime, which can lead to more difficulty falling or staying asleep and more fatigue the next day.

Bonus-- Family Connection Focus

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF Early Childhood Education

Giving Your Child More Words

What is it?

This area looks at your words and how you model bigger words. It also looks at how through conversation you build on what the child is saying and you ask open ended questions to keep the child talking. The goal here is to use more words and build a bigger vocabulary.

What does this look like in the classroom?

Captures the effectiveness and amount of teacher's use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques

What does it look like at home?

If a child wants you to hand them a truck, and says, "Truck please?" You might say, " Do you want the blue dump truck?" This simple extension builds on what the child says.

Why is this important?

Words are tough, we don't teach vocabulary to 4 year olds, we show them by talking to them. The best way to teach a lot of words to a child is to read to them and to model for them a great vocabulary. Remember at this point in your child's life you are the most important person, you are who they want to be like. What better way to teach them more words, than for YOU to use more words. Now this doesn't mean you do all the talking, but it does mean that when in a conversation with your child, you listen, you build on what they are saying, and you model a good vocabulary.