

Social Emotional Foundations Reflection

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Social-emotional development is an incredibly important domain of all learning in young children. It is imperative all early childhood educators understand how to promote positive social-emotional development in young children. The articles, “The Teaching Pyramid: The Model for Supporting Social Competence and Preventing Challenging Behavior in Young Children” and “Classroom Processes” outline ways in which early childhood educators can help support healthy social-emotional development in all children. The first three key steps for early childhood educators to help promote positive social-emotional development in all young children include building strong relationships with both the child and the parent, being proactive in preventing possible triggers for negative social-emotional development in the learning environment, and adopting social-emotional curriculum to help enhance social-development in young children.

Building positive relationships with children can have a large effect on the social-emotional development of each individual child. According to “The Teaching Pyramid: The Model for Supporting Social Competence and Preventing Challenging Behavior in Young Children” by Lise Fox (2003), educators who form relationships with each child can have significant impact on the child’s behavior. This impact can change the course of the child’s learning. According to “Classroom Processes” by Pianta and Hamre (2009), one way an educator can build these positive relationships with the child is by being intentional about interacting with each and every child each day. These relationships can further enhance the overall learning environment for the child. Fox (2003) explains that when educators foster these relationships with every child, the child recognizes that the teacher cares for him/her. This is imperative as it affects the overall classroom environment because all children feel they are cared for and belong.

Sense of belonging is an incredibly important element in all classrooms. In fact, another reason teachers must form strong relationships with children is so that children can develop a sense of security, a sense of assurance, and a sense of independence (Fox, 2003). When teachers show how intentional they are about getting to know children, children begin to feel as though they are of great importance in the class. This fosters confidence within the child, which ultimately helps the child see themselves as an active participant in the learning community. This is powerful and something that cannot be taught but with time can be developed. It is also important that teachers not only take into account how they form relationships with students but also how they evaluate the classroom environment to meet the social-emotional needs of the children.

Educators must make certain their classroom environment is a welcoming and comfortable space where all children can learn and develop. Fox (2003) explains that it is important as educators that teachers take into account how the learning environment may be impacting the child's behavior. Multiple elements in the learning environment may be triggering a child's behavior. The organization of the classroom and how much space is provided for different learning activities is important to consider (Fox, 2003). If the learning space is too big or too small this can lend itself to challenging behaviors in children. It is also imperative for the educator to provide direct and indirect instruction to students about classroom expectations throughout the school day (Pianta and Hamre, 2009). This can be done by structuring the school day around various procedures and explicitly teaching children what is expected of them during various points in the school day. As a future educator, I plan to structure my classroom environment in a way that is conducive to the social emotional development of all children.

Another important element teachers must consider when tailoring their instruction to meet the needs of the social-emotional development of each child is to adopt a social-emotional curriculum that can teach children appropriate ways to behave. Fox (2003) notes an important element of social-emotional instruction is to teach children how to identify different emotions, how to identify when a child is feeling a certain emotion, and how to deal with that emotion in an appropriate manner. I believe, when an educator teaches children about different emotions and how children might feel when they are experiencing that emotion, these children have a greater awareness of their own social-emotional development. This can ultimately help these children understand how to deal with these emotions when they experience them.

Social-emotional development in young children is incredibly important and can be fostered by the early childhood educator by first forming strong relationships with the children, secondly evaluating and altering the learning environment to tailor to the social-emotional needs of the children, and lastly teaching social-emotional curriculum that can help all children understand how their emotions are an important part to how they behave. The primary responsibility of the educator is to teach. Therefore, it is expected that the teacher take into account how he/she can teach every young child how to develop a healthy social-emotional mindset.

References

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