

Classroom Insights From Educational Psychology

A Developmental Approach to Educating Young Children



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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *A Developmental Approach to Educating Young Children*.

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Table 2.2 Promoting Self-Regulation in Preschool and Primary-Grade Classrooms

<i>Emotional Regulation (ER)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a role model for how to express and regulate emotions, such as calming down before reacting or seeking help when frustrated. • Encourage children to label emotions and identify causes and consequences of emotions in everyday activities. • Discuss emotions with children. Label and identify causes and consequences of emotions during class meetings (circle times) and story discussions. (Many lessons, books, and props are available.) • Intentionally instruct children in how to handle emotions. These strategies might include using self-talk to calm down, reframing the problem, identifying alternative actions, seeking help from others, and avoiding problem situations. • Use validated methods designed to help children control negative emotions. Encourage children to relax, reflect on feelings, and then decide how to react to the cause of their feelings (see Resources for sources). • Get involved in dramatic and role-playing activities with children.
<i>Cognitive and Behavioral Regulation (Executive Function EF and Effortful Control EC)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a variety of learning activities that are challenging, meaningful, and require active participation. • Involve children in establishing clear guidelines for classroom behavior and consistently apply these guidelines. • Encourage children's self-talk to guide behavior (i.e., compliment themselves) and solve academic problems. • Implement discovery-based learning. • Allow children to derive and share multiple ways of solving academic problems (e.g., addition, manipulating objects and estimating).

Self-Directed Learning (Planning, Goal Setting, Strategy Use)

- Give children increasing responsibility for conducting challenging work on their own or with classmates.
- Let children design or choose how to complete some learning tasks.
- Ask children to talk about their plans in advance, using prompts like “what else . . .” and “remember when . . .” to connect to previous scripts for completing tasks.
- Support children’s independent learning efforts.
- Help children set realistic, short-term goals and provide feedback about their progress.
- Provide specific information about strategies to remember, plan, and improve their work.
- Encourage autonomous help-seeking behavior. Provide hints, cues, or questions to assist after children have tried on their own (expert scaffolding).
- Help children figure out when they do and do not have the skills and resources to accomplish tasks.
- Create opportunities for children to engage in “reciprocal teaching,” taking turns with the teacher and classmates to model the task process.

Responsible Decision Making (Social Behavior)

- Help children solve problems and make decisions by identifying issues (e.g., fair play on the playground), generating goals to guide decisions, thinking of alternative solutions and consequences, selecting the best solution, and making final plans (Kress & Elias, 2006).
- Refer to validated methods for social problem solving; check the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) organization.

Sample Exemplary Programs: Second Step, Responsive Classroom Programs, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, Tools for Thinking (see Resources).