



Caring Through Crisis



**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL
SAFETY DISASTER TOOLKIT
FOR INFANTS & TODDLERS**

Caring Through Crisis

TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION	PAGE 3
TBE BENEFITS OF THE NAFCC'S SEL SAFETY DISASTER TOOLKIT.....	PAGE 4
RESOURCES: SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING.....	PAGE 8
ACTIVITIES FOR INFANTS & TODDLERS.....	PAGE 12
SONGS FOR INFANTS & TODDLERS.....	PAGE 30
MINDFUL SNACKS.....	PAGE 33
CARING THROUGH CRISIS RESOURCES.....	PAGE 36

Caring Through Crisis

INTRODUCTION

Creating a safe social-emotional learning (SEL) environment is foundational for fostering resilience, emotional intelligence, and effective learning in young children, especially within family childcare settings. In moments of stress, such as natural disasters or other emergencies, a safe SEL environment becomes even more critical. The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) has developed a toolkit aimed at equipping family childcare providers with the tools and resources needed to support SEL development and emergency preparedness. This toolkit empowers providers to establish a safe, nurturing environment where children and families feel protected and emotionally supported.



The Benefits of the NAFCC's SEL Safety Disaster Toolkit

Benefits of the NAFCC's SEL Safety Disaster Toolkit

NAFCC's toolkit is designed to support providers in embedding SEL practices into their daily routines, equipping them with strategies to foster both a sense of safety and emotional well-being. The toolkit offers guidance on implementing SEL frameworks, tools to enhance emergency preparedness, and resources to help children and families feel secure in the face of adversity. Here's how the toolkit benefits children and families:

- *Strengthened Resilience: By learning SEL strategies, providers can teach children how to manage stress and adapt to challenges, building resilience and emotional stability.*
- *Enhanced Communication: The toolkit encourages open communication between providers, children, and families, helping everyone to navigate stressful situations together.*
- *Support for Diverse Needs: The toolkit is designed with flexibility in mind, enabling providers to tailor SEL practices to meet the unique needs of each child, including those with diverse backgrounds or special needs.*



Why SEL is Essential in Family Childcare Settings?

Social-emotional learning forms the basis of all interactions, relationships, and learning experiences. SEL helps children develop the skills they need to understand and manage their emotions, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. In family childcare, where environments are more intimate and personalized, providers are uniquely positioned to model and support SEL practices. Creating a safe SEL environment allows children to feel valued, helping them to build resilience and cope with challenging circumstances.

Implementing SEL Frameworks in Family Childcare Classrooms

To create a safe SEL environment, family childcare providers can incorporate elements of these frameworks into their daily routines and classroom interactions. Here are some practical strategies:

- **Establish Consistent Routines:** Children feel secure when they know what to expect. Consistent routines not only build trust but also give children opportunities to practice SEL skills, like turn-taking and cooperation.
- **Teach and Model Emotion Regulation:** Incorporate activities that help children identify and express their feelings, such as “feeling check-ins” where children share how they’re feeling using visuals or words. This helps children build self-awareness and recognize emotions in others.

Why SEL is Essential in Family Childcare Settings?

- **Create a Safe, Calming Space:** Designate a small area in the classroom as a “calm corner” where children can go to self-regulate. Stock it with sensory tools, books about emotions, and comfort items. This space can serve as a retreat during stressful moments.
- **Practice Mindfulness Daily:** Engage children in short, daily mindfulness activities. Breathing exercises, guided imagery, or “mindful listening” sessions can help children build focus and reduce anxiety.
- **Encourage Family Engagement:** Involve families in SEL practices by sharing simple activities and language they can use at home. Hosting family workshops on SEL topics can reinforce a sense of community and continuity between home and childcare.

Key SEL Frameworks for Early Education

- Several established SEL frameworks can guide family childcare providers in creating a supportive environment. These frameworks offer structured approaches for fostering emotional and social skills in young children:
- **The CASEL Framework:** The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework is widely recognized in early childhood education for its five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Family providers can implement these competencies by creating routines that encourage children to identify their emotions, practice self-regulation, and collaborate with peers.

Why SEL is Essential in Family Childcare Settings?

- **Responsive Classroom:** This approach focuses on integrating SEL into everyday learning through routines, language, and interactions. Family childcare providers can use strategies from Responsive Classroom, such as morning meetings, positive reinforcement, and interactive modeling, to help children feel respected and connected.
- **Mindfulness-Based Approaches:** Mindfulness practices encourage children to focus on the present moment, which can help them manage stress and build emotional awareness. Simple mindfulness exercises like breathing activities, sensory explorations, and grounding techniques can be easily integrated into family childcare settings to create a calming atmosphere.

Conclusion

Creating a safe SEL environment within family childcare settings can profoundly impact children's emotional and social well-being. The NAFCC's SEL Safety Toolkit provides family childcare providers with the resources they need to support these critical skills, even in challenging circumstances. By using SEL frameworks like CASEL, the Pyramid Model, and Responsive Classroom, providers can implement strategies that help children feel safe, supported, and ready to learn. This approach doesn't only benefit the children; it strengthens the entire family community, fostering a resilient, connected, and prepared environment for everyone involved.

Resources:

Social Emotional Learning

Check out these Social Emotional Frameworks you can easily apply in your family childcare learning space. Provided is a short description of each framework, websites, and YouTube link.

The CASEL Framework

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework outlines five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These competencies can be integrated into daily routines to help children identify their emotions, practice self-regulation, and collaborate with peers.

- Website: [What Is the CASEL Framework?](#)
- YouTube Video: [CASEL's SEL Framework](#)

The Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model offers a tiered approach to support social-emotional development and address challenging behavior. It emphasizes nurturing relationships, supportive environments, targeted instruction, and individualized interventions. Implementing this model can help create calm, structured environments that promote emotional safety.

- Website: [Basics - National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#)
- YouTube Video: [Pyramid Model Overview](#)

Resources:

Social Emotional Learning

Responsive Classroom

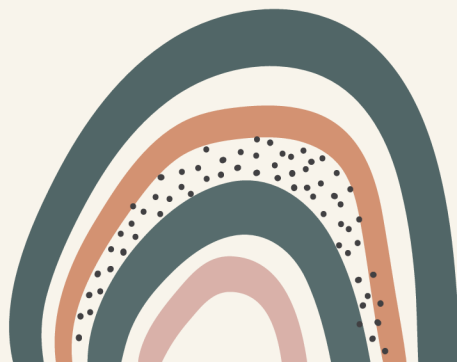
Responsive Classroom is an approach that integrates SEL into everyday learning through routines, language, and interactions. Strategies such as morning meetings, positive reinforcement, and interactive modeling can help children feel respected and connected.

- Website: [Responsive Classroom](#)
- YouTube Video: [Responsive Classroom Overview](#)

Mindfulness-Based Approaches

Mindfulness practices encourage children to focus on the present moment, helping them manage stress and build emotional awareness. Simple exercises like breathing activities, sensory explorations, and grounding techniques can be easily integrated into family childcare settings to create a calming atmosphere.

- Website: [Mindfulness in Early Childhood Education](#)
- YouTube Video: [Mindfulness for Kids](#)



Resources:

Social Emotional Learning

Responsive Classroom

Responsive Classroom is an approach that integrates SEL into everyday learning through routines, language, and interactions. Strategies such as morning meetings, positive reinforcement, and interactive modeling can help children feel respected and connected.

- Website: [Responsive Classroom](#)
- YouTube Video: [Responsive Classroom Overview](#)

Mindfulness-Based Approaches

Mindfulness practices encourage children to focus on the present moment, helping them manage stress and build emotional awareness. Simple exercises like breathing activities, sensory explorations, and grounding techniques can be easily integrated into family childcare settings to create a calming atmosphere.

- Website: [Mindfulness in Early Childhood Education](#)
- YouTube Video: [Mindfulness for Kids](#)



Reference

CASEL Framework

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.). What is the CASEL framework? Retrieved from <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>

CASEL. (2018, October 23). CASEL's SEL framework [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikehX9o1Jbl>

Pyramid Model

National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. (n.d.). Pyramid model overview: Basics.

Retrieved from <https://challengingbehavior.org/pyramid-model/overview/basics/>

National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. (2017, October 20). Pyramid model overview

[Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Qb3DXY_7fU

Responsive Classroom

Responsive Classroom. (n.d.). Responsive classroom approach overview. Retrieved from

<https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/>

Responsive Classroom. (2016, March 8). Responsive classroom overview [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iXTtR7IfWU>

Mindfulness-Based Approaches

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). (2017, March). Mindfulness in early childhood education. Retrieved from

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/mar2017/mindfulness>

Mindful Kids. (2016, June 23). Mindfulness for kids [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wf5K3pP2IUQ>

Caring Through Crisis



**ACTIVITIES FOR
INFANTS & TODDLER**

Caring Through Crisis

THE IMPORTANCE OF FOSTERING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is essential to early childhood development, especially in the first few years of life when infants and toddlers are learning to interpret and respond to the world around them. During this critical period, children begin forming the foundational social and emotional skills that will guide them throughout life. By nurturing SEL in infants and toddlers, caregivers and educators can help young children develop essential skills such as empathy, emotional regulation, and trust-building, setting a positive course for future learning, relationships, and well-being.

Why Social-Emotional Learning Matters in Early Childhood

From the moment they are born, infants begin learning from their interactions with caregivers. Social-emotional skills, such as understanding emotions, forming secure attachments, and responding to others, are vital as they shape the way a child interacts with the world.

Here are some key reasons why SEL is so important during infancy and toddlerhood:

Foundation for Lifelong Learning: SEL provides the foundation for all future learning. Infants and toddlers with secure social-emotional skills are better able to focus, engage, and adapt to new challenges. These abilities are fundamental to developing strong cognitive skills as children grow older.

Caring Through Crisis

THE IMPORTANCE OF FOSTERING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Building Healthy Relationships: Social-emotional learning teaches children to form healthy, positive relationships, beginning with primary caregivers and extending to family members, friends, and teachers. A strong sense of attachment helps young children feel secure, promoting a willingness to explore and engage with others.

Emotional Regulation: The ability to manage one's emotions is a key aspect of SEL. Even infants begin learning emotional regulation by observing the behavior of caregivers and by experiencing a calm, supportive environment. As toddlers begin expressing a wider range of emotions, SEL helps them learn self-regulation skills, which are crucial for navigating social situations and managing stress.

Enhanced Empathy and Compassion: When caregivers model empathy and understanding, even very young children start to develop these qualities themselves. By learning to recognize emotions in others, infants and toddlers can begin to build empathy, which lays the groundwork for compassionate behavior and ethical decision-making.

Caring Through Crisis

INFANTS & TODDLERS ACTIVITIES



Caring Through Crisis

FOR INFANTS & TODDLERS

Peek-a-Boo Scarf Play (Social Interaction)



Materials: Soft scarf or cloth (lightweight and safe for infants)

Instructions:

- Sit with the baby and hold the scarf over your face, then quickly remove it, saying "Peek-a-boo!"
- Repeat a few times, watching for the baby's reactions. Vary the rhythm and timing for added excitement.
- Benefits: Supports social bonding, helps babies recognize facial expressions, and builds anticipation and joy.

NAFCC Standards

- **Developmental Learning Activities:** Promotes social-emotional skills by encouraging face recognition and bonding.
- **Relationships:** Strengthens the caregiver-child bond through direct interaction.
- **The Environment:** Provides a safe and engaging space for interactive play.

Caring Through Crisis

FOR INFANTS & TODDLERS

Sensory Bag Exploration (Tactile and Visual Stimulation)



Materials:

- Clear, resealable sandwich bag
- Water (1/2 cup)
- A few drops of food coloring (optional)
- Small, non-toxic objects like glitter, beads, or small pom-poms

Instructions:

- Fill the bag with water, a drop of food coloring, and the small items.
- Seal the bag tightly (use tape over the seal for extra security) and place it on the floor during tummy time.
- Encourage the baby to touch and push the bag, watching how the contents move.
- Benefits: Encourages sensory exploration, hand-eye coordination, and motor skills.

NAFCC Standards

- Developmental Learning Activities: Supports sensory exploration and fine motor skills.
- Safety and Health: Ensures safe materials are used to minimize risk to infants.
- The Environment: Provides materials that are appropriate for sensory exploration and safely contained.

Caring Through Crisis

FOR INFANTS & TODDLERS

Mirror Play (Self-Awareness and Social-Emotional Development)



Materials: Unbreakable mirror

Instructions:

- Place the mirror in front of the baby during tummy time or hold it so they can see their reflection.
- Talk to the baby about what they see, pointing out their nose, eyes, mouth, etc.
- Benefits: Helps babies recognize themselves, fostering early self-awareness and social-emotional learning.

NAFCC Standards

- Developmental Learning Activities: Supports sensory exploration and fine motor skills.
- Safety and Health: Ensures safe materials are used to minimize risk to infants.
- The Environment: Provides materials that are appropriate for sensory exploration and safely contained.

Caring Through Crisis

FOR INFANTS & TODDLER

Soft Object Grasping Practice (Fine Motor Skills)



Materials:

- Small, soft toys or sensory objects (e.g., fabric blocks, crinkly fabric, soft rings)

Instructions:

- Place a soft object within the baby's reach and encourage them to grasp it.
- Rotate a few different objects, especially those with varying textures.
- Benefits: Builds fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and tactile awareness as babies learn to reach, grab, and release.

NAFCC Standards

- Developmental Learning Activities: Encourages fine motor skills as infants reach and grasp objects.
- Safety and Health: Provides soft, non-toxic materials safe for infants to handle.
- The Environment: Offers a safe, uncluttered space to promote fine motor skill development.

Caring Through Crisis

FOR INFANTS & TODDLER

Tummy Time Texture Exploration (Tactile Development)



Materials:

- Small, soft toys or sensory objects (e.g., fabric blocks, crinkly fabric, soft rings)

Instructions:

- Place a soft object within the baby's reach and encourage them to grasp it.
- Rotate a few different objects, especially those with varying textures.
- Benefits: Builds fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and tactile awareness as babies learn to reach, grab, and release.

NAFCC Standards

- NAFCC Standards Alignment:
- Developmental Learning Activities: Enhances tactile sensory experiences and strengthens neck and shoulder muscles.
- The Environment: Provides a safe and clean space for tummy time.

Caring Through Crisis

FOR INFANTS & TODDLER

Singing and Clapping (Auditory and Social Stimulation)



Materials: None

Instructions:

- Sit facing the baby and sing simple songs (like “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” or “The Itsy Bitsy Spider”) while clapping or gently moving their hands along.
- Encourage eye contact and vary the rhythm to keep them engaged.
- Benefits: Supports auditory development, introduces rhythm and language, and enhances social bonding.

NAFCC Standards

- Developmental Learning Activities: Promotes language development and introduces rhythm.
- Relationships: Encourages bonding as caregivers sing with infants.
- The Environment: Creates a nurturing space for musical interaction.

Caring Through Crisis

FOR INFANTS & TODDLER

Gentle Balloon Kicks (Gross Motor Skills)



Materials: Large, lightweight balloon (latex-free)
Ribbon (12-18 inches long)

Instructions:

- Tie the ribbon to the balloon and place it near the baby's feet while they're lying on their back.
- Gently nudge their legs toward the balloon so they kick it, creating movement.
- Benefits: Encourages kicking, which strengthens leg muscles, and introduces cause-and-effect learning as babies see the balloon move with each kick.

NAFCC Standards

- Developmental Learning Activities: Builds leg strength and coordination as infants kick.
- Safety and Health: Ensures safe materials and supervised activity.
- The Environment: Sets up a clear, safe space for active play.



Caring Through Crisis

OLDER INFANTS & TODDLERS



Caring Through Crisis

OLDER INFANTS & TODDLERS

Water Painting (Fine Motor Skills and Creativity)

●



Materials: Small paintbrushes Small containers of water
Construction paper or an outdoor surface (like a sidewalk or fence)

Instructions:

- Give the toddler a paintbrush and let them dip it in the water, then “paint” on the paper or outdoor surface.
- Talk to them about what they’re “painting” and encourage them to make different strokes and patterns.
- Benefits: Supports fine motor skills, creativity, and coordination without the mess of real paint.

NAFCC Standards

- Developmental Learning Activities: Encourages fine motor development and creativity.
- The Environment: Provides a safe, accessible space for water-based art.

Caring Through Crisis

OLDER INFANTS & TODDLERS

Sorting Sensory Bins (Sorting and Sensory Exploration)



Materials: Two shallow bins or trays Small objects to sort (like soft pom-poms, large buttons, or blocks in different colors or shapes)

Instructions:

- Place the objects in one bin and encourage the child to sort them into categories, such as by color or shape, moving each to the second bin.
- You can model sorting a few items before encouraging them to try.
- Benefits: Enhances sorting and categorizing skills, hand-eye coordination, and color/shape recognition.

NAFCC Standards

- Developmental Learning Activities: Promotes cognitive development through sorting.
- The Environment: Uses sensory bins with age-appropriate, safe materials.

Caring Through Crisis

OLDER INFANTS & TODDLERS

Obstacle Course Crawl (Gross Motor Skills)



Materials: Pillows, soft blankets, or cushions, Small stools or tunnels (if available)

Instructions:

- Set up a simple indoor “obstacle course” using pillows, blankets, and small tunnels if available.
- Guide the toddler through, encouraging them to crawl over, under, and around the items.
- Benefits: Builds gross motor skills, strengthens muscles, and develops spatial awareness.

NAFCC Standards

- Developmental Learning Activities: Supports physical development through crawling and exploring.
- Safety and Health: Ensures a safe and secure setup for physical exploration.

Caring Through Crisis

OLDER INFANTS & TODDLERS

Animal Sounds Game (Language Development)



Materials: Picture cards of animals (you can create these on paper, 3 x 3 inches each) Optional: Small toy animals if available

Instructions:

- Show the child a picture card or toy animal and ask them what sound that animal makes.
- Encourage them to imitate the sound with you, then switch to another animal.
- Benefits: Builds language skills, encourages imitation and recall, and promotes animal recognition.

NAFCC Standards

- Developmental Learning Activities: Enhances language skills and animal recognition.
- Relationships: Encourages interaction between children and caregivers.

Caring Through Crisis

OLDER INFANTS & TODDLERS

Sticky Wall Collage (Fine Motor and Sensory Play)



Materials: Contact paper or clear packing tape (sticky side out) Masking tape for securing, Small pieces of paper, fabric scraps, or lightweight nature items (leaves, small sticks)

Instructions:

- Show the child a picture card or toy animal and ask them what sound that animal makes.
- Encourage them to imitate the sound with you, then switch to another animal.
- Benefits: Builds language skills, encourages imitation and recall, and promotes animal recognition.

NAFCC Standards

- Developmental Learning Activities: Fosters creativity and fine motor skills.
- The Environment: Ensures materials are safe and easy to handle.

Caring Through Crisis

OLDER INFANTS & TODDLERS

Tunnel Time with Balls (Gross Motor and Cause-and-Effect Learning)



Materials: Large cardboard box or pop-up tunnel, Small, soft balls

Instructions:

- Place the balls at one end of the tunnel and encourage the toddler to roll or throw the balls through it.
- Ask them to crawl or walk around to retrieve the balls, repeating as they enjoy.
- Benefits: Builds gross motor skills, enhances coordination, and teaches cause-and-effect as they see the balls move through the tunnel.

NAFCC Standards

- Developmental Learning Activities: Enhances physical skills and introduces cause-and-effect.
- The Environment: Provides a spacious area for active exploration.



Caring Through Crisis

SONGS FOR INFANTS & TODDLER





Caring Through Crisis

SONGS FOR INFANTS & TODDLER

"Hello, Hello!" by Super Simple Songs

Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fN1Cyr0ZK9M>

Focus: Building social awareness and greeting others.

Activity: Use the song to greet children by name, encouraging eye contact and a friendly wave.

"The More We Get Together" (Traditional)

Focus: Promotes kindness, friendship, and a sense of community.

Activity: Encourage toddlers to hold hands in a circle or sway together as they sing.



Caring Through Crisis

SONGS FOR INFANTS & TODDLER

“If You’re Happy and You Know It” (Classic)

Focus: Recognizing and expressing emotions.

Activity: Add verses for other feelings (e.g., “If you’re sad and you know it, say ‘boohoo!’”).

“Feelings Song” by The Singing Walrus

Focus: Teaching different emotions and facial expressions.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UsISd1AMNYU>

Caring Through Crisis

MINDFULNESS SNACKS FOR INFANTS & TODDLERS



Caring Through Crisis

MINDFUL SNACKS FOR INFANTS & TODDLERS

SOFT BERRY BITES



INGREDIENTS: FRESH BLUEBERRIES AND RASPBERRIES.

HOW TO SERVE: WASH THOROUGHLY AND SERVE WHOLE FOR OLDER INFANTS AND TODDLERS, OR GENTLY MASH FOR YOUNGER ONES.

MINDFULNESS TIP: LET CHILDREN EXPLORE THE COLORS AND TEXTURES OF THE BERRIES. ENCOURAGE THEM TO NOTICE THE JUICE AS THEY SQUISH OR BITE INTO THEM.

Caring Through Crisis

MINDFUL SNACKS FOR INFANTS & TODDLERS

AVOCADO MASH WITH WHOLE-GRAIN CRACKERS



INGREDIENTS: RIPE AVOCADO, WHOLE-GRAIN CRACKERS.

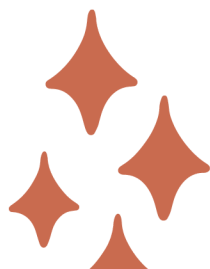
HOW TO SERVE: MASH THE AVOCADO UNTIL SMOOTH AND SERVE IT AS A DIP WITH SOFT WHOLE-GRAIN CRACKERS.

- **MINDFULNESS TIP:** ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO FEEL THE SMOOTHNESS OF THE AVOCADO AND LISTEN TO THE CRUNCH OF THE CRACKERS. TALK ABOUT THE MILD, CREAMY TASTE.



Caring Through Crisis

RESOURCES



Caring Through Crisis

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN EARLY LEARNING FAMILY CHILDCARE SPACES



Creating a safe social-emotional learning (SEL) environment is foundational for fostering resilience, emotional intelligence, and effective learning in young children, especially within family childcare settings. In moments of stress, such as natural disasters or other emergencies, a safe SEL environment becomes even more critical.

The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) has developed a toolkit aimed at equipping family childcare providers with the tools and resources needed to support SEL development and emergency preparedness. This toolkit empowers providers to establish a safe, nurturing environment where children and families feel protected and emotionally supported.

Caring Through Crisis

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN EARLY LEARNING FAMILY CHILDCARE SPACES

The Role of Educators in Supporting SEL Frameworks

Family childcare providers play a pivotal role in implementing SEL frameworks, such as those developed by CASEL, the Pyramid Model, and other evidence-based approaches.

These frameworks provide practical strategies for teaching self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills. Educators are not just facilitators of learning; they are role models, guiding children to understand and express their emotions constructively.

By integrating SEL into daily routines, activities, and interactions, educators help children build a foundation of emotional intelligence that will serve them throughout their lives.

Benefits of Prioritizing SEL in Family Childcare

The benefits of prioritizing SEL in family childcare settings are profound and far-reaching:

1. **For Children:** SEL supports emotional regulation, boosts confidence, and enhances social skills. Children learn to manage stress, build relationships, and make thoughtful decisions—all of which are crucial for their academic and personal success.
2. **For Families:** Family childcare providers who emphasize SEL foster stronger partnerships with parents and caregivers. Families benefit from a supportive environment that values their involvement and equips them with tools to reinforce SEL at home.
3. **For Educators:** SEL frameworks create a positive and structured environment that helps educators manage challenges, build meaningful relationships, and feel a greater sense of fulfillment in their roles.
4. **For Communities:** SEL nurtures empathetic, socially responsible individuals who contribute positively to their communities, fostering a culture of kindness and inclusion.

Caring Through Crisis

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN EARLY LEARNING FAMILY CHILDCARE SPACES

Creating and Sustaining Safe Spaces

To continue fostering SEL in family childcare spaces, educators must remain intentional and proactive in creating environments where children and families feel safe, respected, and valued.

Here are some strategies to sustain and strengthen SEL practices:

- **Model Emotional Awareness:** Children learn by observing the adults around them. Educators who demonstrate emotional regulation, empathy, and positive social interactions provide powerful examples for children to follow.
- **Embed SEL in Everyday Activities:** Incorporate SEL into daily routines, such as morning check-ins, storytime discussions about emotions, and cooperative play that teaches turn-taking and problem-solving.
- **Cultivate Inclusive Practices:** Celebrate diversity and create an environment where all children and families feel represented and respected. Use books, activities, and materials that reflect the varied cultures and experiences of the families in your care.
- **Engage Families in SEL:** Collaborate with families by sharing resources, hosting workshops, and providing updates on their child's social-emotional development. Strong family partnerships reinforce the SEL foundation built in the childcare space.
- **Prioritize Professional Development:** Continuous learning is essential for educators to stay updated on best practices in SEL. Attend workshops, join professional networks, and explore the latest research to deepen your understanding and effectiveness.

Caring Through Crisis

Creating and Sustaining Safe Spaces

To continue fostering SEL in family childcare spaces, educators must remain intentional and proactive in creating environments where children and families feel safe, respected, and valued.

Here are some strategies to sustain and strengthen SEL practices:

- **Model Emotional Awareness:** Children learn by observing the adults around them. Educators who demonstrate emotional regulation, empathy, and positive social interactions provide powerful examples for children to follow.
- **Embed SEL in Everyday Activities:** Incorporate SEL into daily routines, such as morning check-ins, storytime discussions about emotions, and cooperative play that teaches turn-taking and problem-solving.
- **Cultivate Inclusive Practices:** Celebrate diversity and create an environment where all children and families feel represented and respected. Use books, activities, and materials that reflect the varied cultures and experiences of the families in your care.
- **Engage Families in SEL:** Collaborate with families by sharing resources, hosting workshops, and providing updates on their child's social-emotional development. Strong family partnerships reinforce the SEL foundation built in the childcare space.
- **Prioritize Professional Development:** Continuous learning is essential for educators to stay updated on best practices in SEL. Attend workshops, join professional networks, and explore the latest research to deepen your understanding and effectiveness.

Conclusion

Social-emotional learning is a cornerstone of high-quality family childcare, laying the foundation for healthy development, strong relationships, and lifelong success. By embracing SEL frameworks, family childcare providers create environment is where children and families feel empowered, supported, and connected.

The intentional integration of SEL practices ensures that family childcare spaces remain places of safety, growth, and joy. Together, we can cultivate the emotional well-being of children and families, shaping a brighter and more compassionate future for our communities.

Caring Through Crisis

In times of disaster, accessing reliable support is crucial for family childcare providers and the families they serve. Below is a list of seven organizations offering disaster relief resources, including the

National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)

NAFCC provides resources and support to family childcare providers, including guidance on disaster preparedness and recovery.

Website: <https://www.nafcc.org/>

Email: info@nafcc.org

Phone: (202) 796-5700

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

FEMA offers assistance programs and resources for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

Website: <https://www.fema.gov/>

Disaster Assistance: <https://www.disasterassistance.gov/>

Phone: 1-800-621-3362

Email: Use the contact form on their website.

American Red Cross

Provides emergency assistance, disaster relief, and education within the United States.

Website: <https://www.redcross.org/>

Find Local Chapter: <https://www.redcross.org/find-your-local-chapter.html>

Phone: 1-800-733-2767

Email: Use the contact form on their website.



Caring Through Crisis

Salvation Army USA

Offers disaster relief services, including food, shelter, and emotional support.

Website: <https://www.salvationarmyusa.org/>

Disaster Services: <https://www.salvationarmyusa.org/usn/help-disaster-survivors/>

Phone: 1-800-725-2769

Email: *Use the contact form on their website.*

Save the Children

Focuses on children's needs during emergencies, providing relief and support to children and families.

Website: <https://www.savethechildren.org/>

Emergency Response: <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/emergency-response>

Phone: 1-800-728-3843

Email: supportercare@savechildren.org

Child Care Aware® of America

Provides resources and support for childcare providers, including disaster preparedness and recovery information.

Website: <https://www.childcareaware.org/>

Emergency Preparedness: <https://www.childcareaware.org/our-issues/crisis-and-disaster-resources/>

Phone: 1-800-424-2246

Email: info@childcareaware.org

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD)

A coalition of organizations that provide disaster-related services, including support for childcare providers.

Website: <https://www.nvoad.org/>

Phone: 1-703-778-5088