Building self-regulation skills among educators and children

POSITIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM

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At a glance

- Introduction to self-regulation
- Need for Positive Early Childhood Education Program?
- Mental health rates – risk factors
- Quality indicators – protective factors
- An example of how to address concerns
- Evidence (testimonials)
A self-regulatory framework

Educator self-regulation

- Self-management
- Self-efficacy
- Personal agency
- Problem solving
- Self-sufficiency

Minimally sufficient intervention

Reduced need for support
Misbehaviour vs. stress behavior (Shanker, 2017)

The key to *misbehaviour* is that the child could have acted differently; was aware that he/she shouldn’t have done something, and was perfectly capable of acting differently.

The key to *stress behaviour* is that the child is not fully aware of what he/she is doing, or why: limited capacity to act differently.

Stress behaviour is caused by too high stress load – the challenge is in determining why the child’s stress is too high.
Behaviour

“speaks” (ie. Communication)
Children may not have the words to express their feelings or thoughts
Developmentally, they are still mastering coping strategies

serves a function
A coping strategy
A means to get unmet needs met
A way to get or avoid something
Sensory stimulation balance

Is connected to brain development
Trauma Informed Models of Care

Relevant key principles of a trauma-informed approach:

• Safety
• Trustworthiness and transparency
• Collaboration and mutuality
• Empowerment, voice and choice fostering recovery and healing
• Cultural, historical and gender issues incorporating processes that are responsive to the cultural needs of clients
Theoretical basis for Trauma Informed Models of Care

Attachment - developing a secure base

- Positive, secure relationships between infants and caregivers forms the template for secure adult interpersonal relationships

- Disruption to the relationship or insecure attachment is a fundamental mechanism by which childhood trauma affects adult self-concept, wellbeing and interpersonal relationships

- Trauma-informed care systems facilitates the development of new models of the self and relationships
Why develop a program for Early Years Educators?

- In a population of 100 children, approximately 20 will have struggles with their MH, but only 4 will receive the support they need.
Long term impacts of mental health challenges

- Poor capacity for self-regulation
- Low academic achievement
- Substance abuse
- Early school leaving
- Conflict with the law
- Inability to live independently or hold a job
- Health problems
- Suicide
Quality educator-child relationships

- Increase child-centered awareness and educator self reflection
- Increase understanding of factors influencing child behaviour
- Use effective, strength based classroom management techniques
- Emotionally positive and supportive environment
Quality educator-child relationships

- Engage children in the teaching and learning process
- Decrease anger and severity
- Reduce authoritarian approaches to educator-child interactions
Educators report feeling…

- Children with emotional challenges are more stressful to teach
- Poorly equipped to consider emotional health
- They adopt authoritarian approaches in an attempt to over-control the children
- Conflict in balancing teaching roles and supporting mental health of children
There is a heavy dependence on outside experts to assist with addressing these challenges…
An example of how to address concerns in Early Childhood Education
Principles of positive early childhood education

- Setting up a safe, engaging environment
- Creating a positive learning environment
- Teaching good social skills and behaviour
- Having realistic expectations
- Taking care of yourself
- Working as a team
## PECE Program strategies

### Building children’s social and emotional skills
- Setting up engaging activities
- Managing transitions
- Talking with children
- Descriptive praise
- Giving attention
- Individual time
- Affection

### Helping children develop a positive approach to learning
- Setting a good example
- Incidental teaching
- Ask-say-do
- Teaching backwards
- Encouraging early learning
- Behaviour charts
- Rewards

### Helping children learn new ways to behave
- Setting rules and limits
- Directed discussion
- Diversion
- Planned ignoring
- Clear, calm instructions
- Consequences
- Sit and watch
- Quiet time
Increased confidence and competence

- Provide responsive care and rich learning opportunities to promote children’s social and emotional skills.
- Help children develop a positive approach to learning.
- Respond to common child developmental, behavioural and emotional issues.
- Communicate more effectively with co-workers and parents.
- Reduce job stress.
Personal PECE Program:
• Educators complete 4 online modules
• Outcomes – increase confidence and competence of meeting individual needs of children in group environments:

Team PECE Program:
• Leadership or consultative staff are trained as PECE Program coaches to support integration of PECE Program skills/strategies by educators in the classroom
• Outcomes – increase communication and relationships with children and families

Community PECE Program:
• Team PECE Program plus the additional support of Triple P for parents.
Research outcomes of the Positive Early Childhood Education Program

- Randomised controlled trial in Alberta, Canada
- 96 Early Childhood Educator (ECE) participants
- Randomly allocated to intervention (n = 43) or waitlist control (n = 53) conditions
- Outcomes assessed via questionnaires, observation and self-reflective interviews
- Outcomes included ECE confidence, competence, job stress and emotional wellbeing, and child behaviour
- Outcomes measured at post-intervention and 2-month follow up
PECE Program - evaluation

- PECE Program trials continue to identify comparable findings in research trials around the world (North America, Australia, Asia)
Questions?

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