


**Using Mindfulness With Children of All Abilities to Keep Connections Strong**



WITH KRISTIE PRETTI-FRONTCAK, PH.D.

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- Get off autopilot
- "Be present"
- Name it...to tame it...to reframe it



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- Watch & Listen
- Walk & Talk
- Connect on Social

Tag us on FaceBook  
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 @EarlyChildhoodInvestigations

Take a picture of mindfulness in action and post to IG  
 @Kristie\_pf  
 #TheKTip  
 #ECErevolution



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Mindset  
before  
Methods

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“Rarely is a “choice” made about which state to be in. The nervous system automatically determines which response seems most adaptive for the situation based upon many factors, including current circumstances, memory of past experiences, and innate temperament.”

Drs. Dan Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson - *The Yes Brain*



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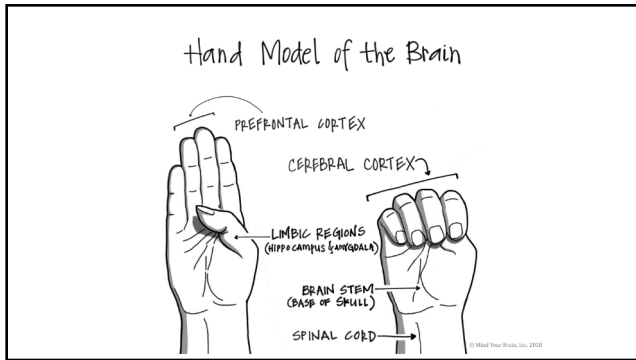
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### THE 4 S'S

based upon the work of Dr. Dan Siegel  
and Tina Payne Bryson -  
The Power of Showing Up

Safe    Seen    Soothed    Secure

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## Safe



Reduce Sensory Input



Be present



Repair and Reconnect

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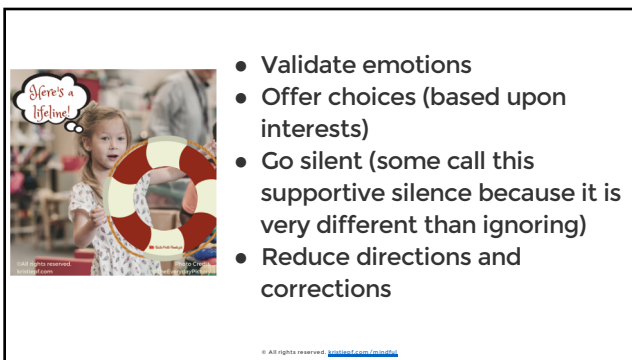
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Here's a lifeline!

- Ask open-ended questions aimed to understand
- Use soothing tone of voice and empathetic non-verbals
- Reduce interruptions - pause - try not to rush
- Simplify language - slow down all movements

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Here's a lifeline!

- Practice sound minimalism (say very little, turn off TVs/radios, talk in low tones)
- Reduce visual clutter
- Read cues - touch - be close - be attuned

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**Seen**

Attuned Communication

Process Big Emotions

P.E.A.C.E

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**RESPONDING TO A BIG EMOTION**  
@SEED AND SEW

<p><b>1. Allow them to feel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Hold space for their emotion</li> <li>+ Move their body if they aren't being safe</li> <li>+ Hold their hands if they're hitting</li> <li>+ Don't rush to make it stop</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Connect with them</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Empathize with their feeling "You worked so hard on that buddy and it got knocked down. Ugh, that's really disappointing."</li> <li>+ Validate their emotion</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Offer Coping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Offer two coping strategies "Would you like a hug or to stomp your feet to feel calm?"</li> <li>+ If they aren't ready for coping go back to step 1.</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Problem Solve</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ DO NOT enter this phase until they're coped and are CALM.</li> <li>+ Invite them in to solve with you. "You want to play with it and Sarah's using it. What could we do?"</li> </ul>

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**P.E.A.C.E**



Presence  
Engagement  
Affection  
Calm  
Empathy

From the Power of Showing Up by Dr. Dan Siegel and Dr. Tina Payne Bryson

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**Soothed**



Recognize and Reduce Stressors



Develop Coping Strategies



Apply the Zig Zag Process

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**Common**  
ECE Stressors

- Confusion and/or overly demanding situations
- Difficulty with sensory-motor skills
- Directions and corrections



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**Common**  
ECE Stressors

- Experiencing intense emotions
- Exposure to violence
- Lack of sleep/rest
- Lack of opportunities for movement and choice



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**Common**  
ECE Stressors

- Large group activities
- Mindreading
- Overuse/reliance on technology and/or a "replacement" for connecting w/caregivers & peers



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**Common**  
ECE Stressors

- Poor nutrition and poor hydration
- Sensory overload
- Unpredictable situations
- Unresponsive adults

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**12**  
Infographic with  
Practical and  
Evidence-based  
Strategies

Pre-K Teach & Play

A "Brain Architects" Guide For  
Reducing ECE Stressors



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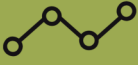
**THEY "USE THEIR WORDS" WISELY**



Go silent  
(watch non-verbals too)



Ask questions  
(avoid directing & correcting)



Give visual support  
(limit auditory processing demands)

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**THEY "SOOTHE THE SYSTEM"**



Offer brain breaks  
(go for a walk, have a drink of water, take a breath)



Play soothing music, move around, dance!



Show compassion  
(give a hug, share a smile, offer a hand)

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**THEY "REDUCE" TO "RESTORE"**



Reduce the size of the group



Reduce inputs and demands



Reduce pace to allow for time to process

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**THEY "READY" THEMSELVES**



Act from "The YES brain" - take a breath, be curious, & offer a lifeline (Siegel & Bryson)



Reframe the situation from "misbehavior to stress behavior" (Shanker)



Attend to basic needs for safety, satisfaction, & connection (Hanson)

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<p><b>Coping mechanisms</b> to numb feelings, push them beneath the surface, and feel temporarily better faster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distraction with a toy</li> <li>Giggling/smiling at socially inappropriate times</li> <li>Trying to solve the problem</li> <li>Lovey/Security Item</li> <li>Hurting someone else to feel powerful or in control</li> <li>Using a pacifier to stop expressing</li> <li>A snack/feeding in response to hard feelings</li> </ul> <p>@seed.and.sew</p>	<p><b>Coping strategies</b> to process emotions, leave the reactive brain, and enter the rational thinking brain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drawing/coloring/painting</li> <li>Movement/exercise</li> <li>Breathing</li> <li>Reading a book</li> <li>Playing music</li> <li>Free writing/Gratitude Practice</li> <li>Hugging</li> <li>Looking at the sky</li> <li>Playing calmly with a toy that involves fine motor</li> </ul>
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<p>Single</p> <p>Simple</p> <p>Concrete</p> <p>Global</p> <p>Familiar</p> <p>Preferred</p> <p>Self</p>	<p>Multiple</p> <p>Complex</p> <p>Abstract</p> <p>Specific</p> <p>Unfamiliar</p> <p>Unpreferred</p> <p>Others</p>
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Repetitive	→	Flexible
Organized	→	Random
Visual	→	Multisensory

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**Secure**



Extend the Green Zone



Use Coping Strategies



Skills to Respond to Stress

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**Teach children to regulate... by reducing strategies that manage their behaviors**

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**We actually have two jobs**



TEACH SELF-REGULATION SKILLS



EXTEND & HELP RETURN TO THE GREEN ZONE

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# Why Regulation?

## Self-Regulation Assessment Rubric

Subcomponents of the self-regulation process: attention/focus, regulation, interaction, recall, and problem-solving

NOTE: Many consider self-regulation as an "umbrella term" that encompasses many constructs that may be used to describe similar skills and processes. This rubric is divided into the subcomponents of attention/focus, regulation, interaction, recall, and problem-solving. Others have noted subcomponents such as self-awareness, emotional functioning, self-control, self-management, etc. For example, see Murray, Christine W., Fouzdar, Kala, Christopoulos, Christina, and Hancock, Anne (2015) at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11464-015-0468-2>

NOTE: When children demonstrate various self-regulation skills (engage in the self-regulation process) it is highly dependent upon a wide variety of factors, including the child's developmental stage, environmental circumstances, and individual differences.

Foundational	Emerging	Functional	Strengthening	Generative
<b>Attention/Focus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being taking many daily activities</li> <li>• Observe (e.g., turns, looks, reaches, moves toward) to sensory stimuli (e.g., auditory, visual, tactile)</li> <li>• Will orient away from stimulus</li> <li>• Notice people and things in the environment</li> </ul>	<b>Attention/Focus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeks and explores a variety of sensory experiences</li> <li>• Begins to ignore distractions</li> <li>• Increasing uses of look/engagement (e.g., looks at caregivers for cues as to how to respond); also noted under interaction</li> </ul>	<b>Attention/Focus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determines what to give/direct attention to</li> <li>• More focused but still for short periods of time</li> <li>• More active role in selecting and shifting attention (e.g., call this attentional control)</li> <li>• More interaction ability from time directly as desired or requested</li> </ul>	<b>Attention/Focus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently gets, keeps, and shifts attention as requested</li> <li>• Pays attention to task or person despite internal and external distractions</li> </ul>	<b>Attention/Focus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeps several things in their mind at the same time</li> <li>• Greater attentional control for longer periods of time</li> </ul>

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## THE 4 S'S

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## Let's Stay Connected



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