



# The Process and Supports for Students in Preschool Environments with Diverse Needs (Creating YOUR own Toolbox)

Presenter: Kendra Brown, Director of Early Childhood

Wednesday, November 16th  
6:30-7:30 p.m.

# Purpose of the Session

Stamford Public Schools has a process for identifying whether a child qualifies for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). We also have many supports in place for students who have diverse needs. During this session, we want you to learn about how to reach out to us and what supports you can put in place, with our assistance, in order to help the children in your Early Childhood Program.

# Quotes and Reminders

EVERY  
*child*  
CAN  
*learn*

Just not in the same way,  
at the same time or in the  
same place.

Pink Tulip  
Creations

“

It's Time We Take Our  
Focus Off Disabilities,  
And Place It On  
Capabilities, So We Can  
See The Person First.

”

ROBERT M. HENSEL

@SynapseSitters

*"We have no special needs children.  
Just children.. with special needs."*

*- Uwe Maurer*

- Culture
- Second Language
- Social Emotional Needs
- Behavioral Expectations Differ from Home and School
- Delays in Communication
- Delays in regulation

# Environment

- Good use of space
- Clean, orderly, inviting
- Lighting and noise levels
- Furnishings and decorations
- Feeling of safe and cared for
- Peers
- Visuals

# Effective Learning Environments for Young Children

Creating a supportive learning environment requires time, reflection and planning whether they spend 3 hours or 12 hours a day in your program. The environment plays a major role in helping children develop and learn.

## **A supportive environment is:**

- Well-organized- orderly, planned and safe
- Dependable- a stable “home base” for children who need it
- Flexible- able to adjust to the needs of different children

Such supportive environments send children a variety of positive messages about their learning. (Dodge , et al 2010).

## **Positive messages that you send:**

- this is a good place to be
- you belong here
- you can trust this place
- there are places where you can be by yourself when you want to be
- you can do many things on your own here
- this is a safe place to explore and try out your ideas

# Setting up Classroom for Success

What do children need in the classroom  
for it to be successful?

- What do they need in their:
  - Environment
  - Program/Schedule/Transition
  - Curriculum

## OBSERVATION NOTES:

### Classroom set up

- ☐ **Yes** A schedule is posted for the day and/or class activity (with use of visuals).
- ☐ **Yes** Expectations are clear and posted in the classroom (at least 3 and with use of v
- ☐ **Yes** The physical arrangement of the room was appropriate for the activity.
- ☐ **Yes** The teacher has established routines for the day and/or class activity.
- ☐ **Yes** The teacher/para taught and promoted the behavioral expectations

# How to use best instructional practices and strategies to help address the needs in all our developing preschoolers.

## [CTELDS Resources](#)

## [CT DOTS Resources](#)

[\*Building Meaningful Curriculum\*](#) addresses using the CT ELDS as a basis for curriculum that is intentional, responsive and reflective. This document includes information about the core components of high quality early childhood curriculum and includes a tool to support the development or review of curriculum documents.

[\*Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners\*](#) considers the processes that ensure full access, meaningful participation and benefit from learning experiences related to the CT ELDS for ALL children.

[\*Meeting the Needs of Dual Language Learners\*](#) includes information about the unique learning needs of young children learning more than one language. Strategies to support children and planning processes are discussed.

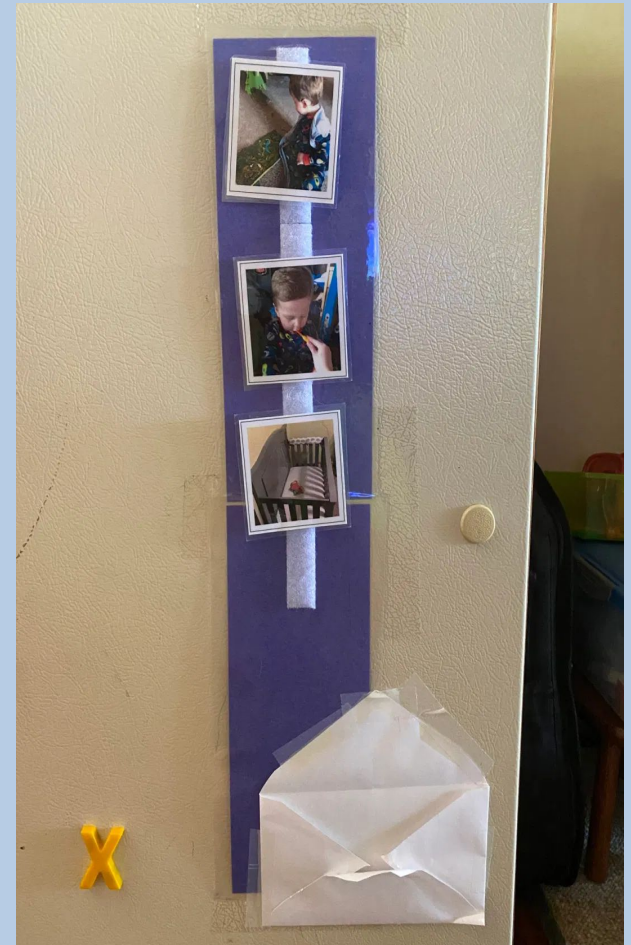


# Strategies to have in your tool belt as you work in each domain and meet the needs of all your students:

- Know your student
- Any motivators?
- Use of timer
- Breaks in between task
- Shared control
- Reduce expectation
- Peer modeling
- Wait time
- Prompting
- Visuals of steps broken down
- Positive praise/language
  - Build on the small things
- Reward system
- [Token boards](#)
- First/Then
- Choice board
- Visual Schedule-all done
- Use your team/Communicate



# Visual Schedules and modeling



## Playdough

Make a pizza



Make a house



Make a snake



# Using Strategies when students are learning

- Ask yourself:
  - Is the task an appropriate skill for the student? How do I need to differentiate - modify or challenge?
    - One student counting to 10, another only to 5
  - How will the student best learn this skill?
    - Visuals, sample, manipulatives, motivating objects, prompting
  - What do I know about this child?
    - Do they respond to breaks, timers, first/then with a reinforcer
  - Always reinforce positive behaviors so you see them more.
    - Think about what your reinforcer is for coming to work?



# 4 Functions of Behavior

- Sensory, Escape, Attention, Tangible
  - [SEAT](#)
- Once you figure out the function of the behavior, you can then determine the best approach to decreasing the behavior with your strategies.

Children don't say, "I  
had a hard day. Can we  
talk?" They say, "Will  
you play with me?"

-Lawrence Cohen

PRESCHOOL  
♥inspirations

# Parent Communication

1. CT DOTS GRID
2. CT DOTS Family Pages
3. Parent Communication Chart
4. ASQ (Sparkler) video

# Behavior Resource

<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/family.html>

# Know the Signs of Trauma



## Know the Signs

### Young Children

- Signs of jumpiness, fear, anxiety, worry
- Changes in sleep and eating patterns
- Separation difficulties
- Difficulties concentrating
- Regressed behaviors
- Angry outbursts
- Physical ailments



# Common behavioral responses to trauma triggers

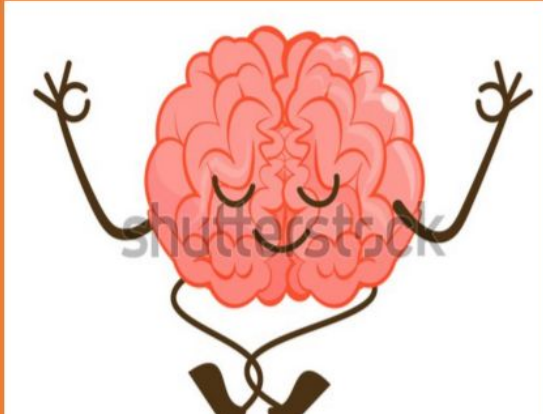
Fight:  
yelling, swearing, posturing,  
aggressive behavior

Flight:  
running away, refusing to talk,  
avoidance, substance use

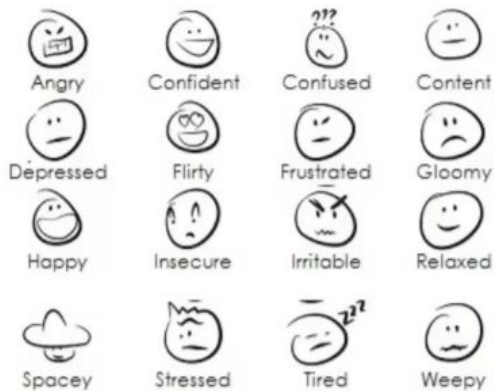
Freeze:  
spacing out; appearing numb,  
disconnected, confused, or  
unresponsive.



- Don't try to “fix it”.
- Join them where they are at
- Be present
- Empathy



- Wait for them to get back into their “thinking brain” before attempting to reason



- Encourage them to name their emotions
- “Name it to tame it”

# Self-Regulation Strategies

## Self-Regulation

### **Movement /Proprioception/Vestibular**

- Sensory breaks
- Foot shaking
- Rocking/Pacing
- Exercising
- Running
- Wall pushups
- Sitting on therapy ball
- Isometrics
- Stretching
- Stretch bands
- Yoga
- Walking
- Lifting weights
- Dancing
- Back packs
- Cocoon pillow
- Bosu Ball
- Weight – lap pad
- Squishes/Hugs
- Body Sox
- Weighted vest

# General Approaches to Facilitating Improved Coping

- Help children process their feelings
  - Help child by labeling their feelings (providing validation)
  - Listen
  - Use play, storytelling, or drawing to express their fears and wishes
  - Identify activities to self-soothe
  - Provide concrete explanations to any questions and use child-friendly language
- Child may ask you the same question or bring up the same concern repeatedly
  - Create opportunities to check in with the child
  - Provide concrete reassurance about what you are doing in the present and immediate future to keep them safe and secure
  - For those who appear to not want to talk, give them space, but also keep a close eye on how they are coping, and create opportunities for discussion during activity participation



# Classroom Strategies

## Classroom

While a traumatized child might not meet the eligibility criteria for special education, consider making some accommodations and modification to academic expectations for a short time...

- Easier/shorter assignments
- Allow additional time
- Give permission for breaks
- Identify a trusting adult if the child should express feelings of being overwhelmed
- Provide additional support for organizing and remembering assignment

# Coping Strategies

- Managing the Environment – time, establish routines, preparation for change/transitions, simplify language, calm and positive tone
- Sensory Supports – self-regulation, arousal, sensory diet, sensory strategies (see self-regulation supports)
- Thinking Strategies – affective education, recognition of emotions, measure of intensity (thermometer; incredible 5-point scale), CBT/ cognitive restructuring
- Calming Strategies – relaxation, breathe, mindfulness, tense-stretch-relax, day-dreaming

# Community Resources

211: <https://cdi.211ct.org/>

Child First <https://www.childfirst.org/>

ECCP <http://www.eccpct.com/>

Child Guidance: <https://childguidancect.org/>

Child's Pediatrician

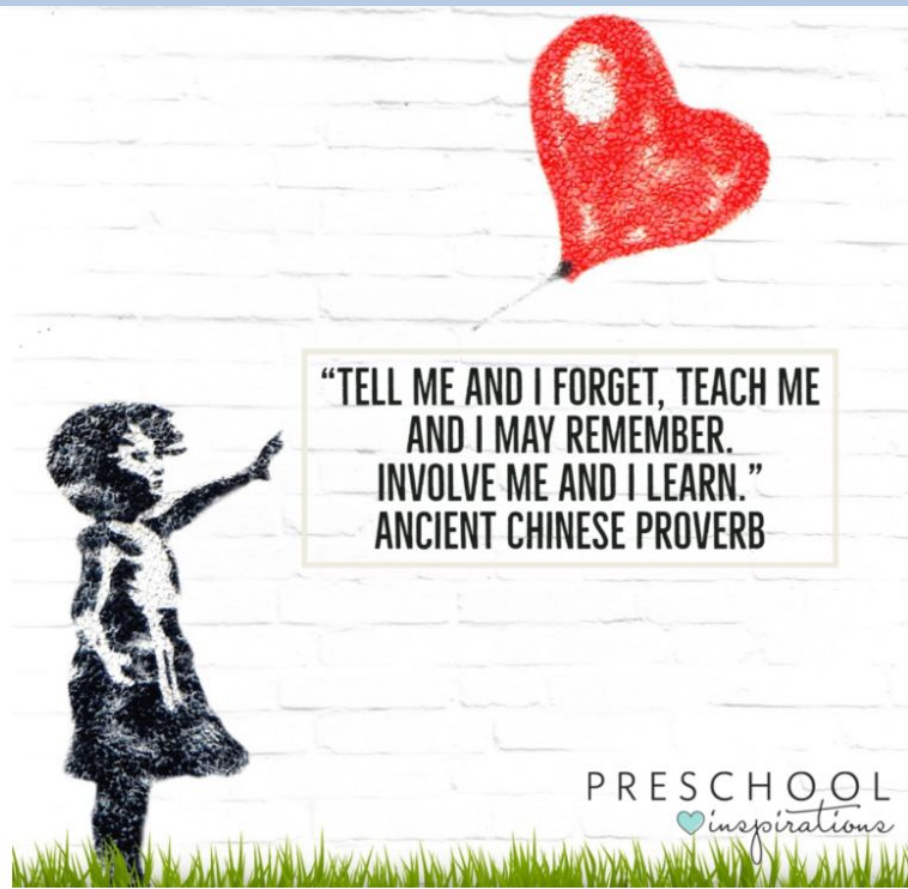
YOUR Program



“If a child  
can't learn  
the way we teach,  
maybe we  
should  
teach the  
way they learn.”

~ Ignacio Estrada

An Everyday Story





I AM A PRESCHOOLER.  
I AM NOT  
MADE TO SIT STILL.

PRESCHOOL  
♥ inspirations



**EVERY  
CHILD  
IS GIFTED**



THEY JUST UNWRAP  
**THEIR PACKAGES**  
AT DIFFERENT TIMES

PRESCHOOL  
♥ inspirations

# SRBI - Scientific Researched Based Intervention

This is strategies to implement for a period of time  
\*usually 6-8 weeks\* with data to prove it's working  
or not working BEFORE referring to special  
education.

If your program is interested in receiving support,  
please complete this form:

<https://forms.gle/w6uuCNnSMNCRapgW8>

# When you have tried all the tools in your toolbox...

Refer the child to APPLES for a Special Education Evaluation.

The evaluation determines if a child requires specialized instruction in order to participate in the general education environment. The evaluation team is looking to determine if an “educationally handicapping condition is present”

Early Intervention is important but it does not always have to mean special education.

# Referral to Special Education

## **If child is receiving Birth to Three Services; less than 3 years old**

- When the child is 2 and a half years old, Birth to Three will ask the parent if they can share the child's IFSP with SPS. This starts our referral process.

## **If child is in a community program, is over 3 and needs a referral**

- Ensure SRBI was in place and has not been successful. Have data prepared to share with family and SPS
- Speak to the parent about why the need for a referral to Special Education.

A referral to Special Education means the child needs an multidisciplinary assessment to determine if the child has an educationally handicapping disability.

- Have the parent contact Gabrielle Massa at 203 977 6666 or [gmassa@stamfordct.gov](mailto:gmassa@stamfordct.gov)



# Process of Special Education Evaluation

## Special Education Process/Steps

- Parent completes this [referral form](#)
- Members of school team complete this [referral form](#)
- Parents Register for Stamford Public Schools
- Parents are given a playgroup to attend
- Parents attend PPT1
- Parents bring child for evaluation (If signed for at PPT1)
- Assessors explain child's results on evaluations through phone calls/emails
- PPT2- Determine if child is eligible for Special Education Meeting  
(This all takes 45 school days from the date the parent registers/completes referral)

## Steps to Registering for APPLES

[https://www.stamfordpublicschools.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf3841/f/pages/steps\\_to\\_registering\\_for\\_apples\\_process.pdf](https://www.stamfordpublicschools.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf3841/f/pages/steps_to_registering_for_apples_process.pdf)

**100 YEARS  
FROM NOW  
IT WON'T MATTER  
WHAT KIND OF CAR I DROVE  
WHAT KIND OF HOUSE I LIVED IN  
HOW MUCH MONEY I HAD IN THE  
BANK  
NOR WHAT MY CLOTHES LOOKED LIKE  
BUT THE WORLD MAY BE  
A LITTLE BETTER  
BECAUSE I WAS IMPORTANT  
IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD**



# Questions/Comments



# Contacts

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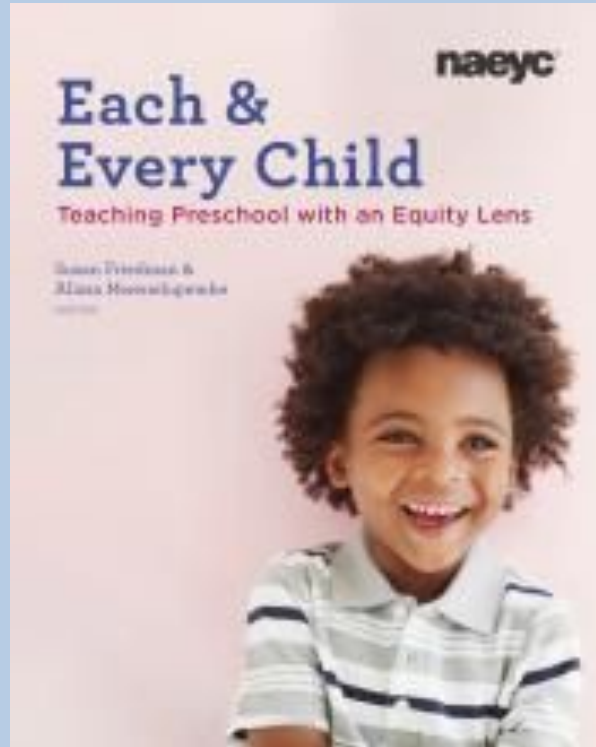
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# Raffle Text



<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/books/each-and-every-child>

# References

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