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young children

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Using *NEXT* for Young Children

NEXT for Young Children suggests ways to build on the content of selected articles from *Young Children*, the award-winning, peer-reviewed professional journal published bimonthly by NAEYC. The training outlines for these articles can be used in a variety of ways: teacher educators can use them in their classes; staff development specialists can use them to design trainings; and center directors and school principals can use them to plan staff meetings or training sessions. Early childhood education students and practitioners may also wish to use them alone or with colleagues or peers.

Each training outline includes the following features:

1. **Key Messages**—important content points.
2. **Glossary**—definitions of key terms.
3. **Self-study**—questions to build on the content of the article and reflect on current practices.
4. **Discuss with one or more colleagues/peers**—discussion prompts related to personal experiences, current practices, and connections between research and practice.
5. **Action steps**—opportunities to apply and document application of new knowledge and skills.
6. **Continue learning**—suggested resources for increasing knowledge and skills.

In addition, each outline indicates the primary audience for the training and the NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs and NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards that are most closely related to the content (see the box on the right at the top of each outline).



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A few notes

- All page numbers refer to *Young Children*, Volume 66, Number 4, unless otherwise noted.
- No permission is needed to make copies of NAEYC-copyrighted *Young Children* articles and *NEXT for Young Children* as long as they bear a credit line and are distributed at no cost.
- In group sessions, facilitators can ask participants to do activities in pairs, small groups, or as classroom teams, depending on the setting. Volunteers can record and disseminate the ideas generated in the sessions.
- Visit NAEYC's website for additional professional development materials at www.naeyc.org.

NEXT for Young Children contents

Developing Young Children's Self-Regulation through Everyday Experiences ([click to view](#))

Article and study guide by Ida Rose Florez

Guidance Matters. Children Who Have Serious Conflicts—Part 2: Instrumental Aggression ([click to view](#))

Article and study guide by Dan Gartrell

This article defines **self-regulation** and describes how it develops from infancy through kindergarten. Through a kindergarten classroom vignette, the author demonstrates how early childhood educators can help young children build self-regulation skills by scaffolding through modeled behavior, hints and cues, and gradual withdrawal of adult support.

Key Messages

- ➔ Regulating one’s thinking, emotions, and behavior is critical for success in school, work, and life. Young children who engage in intentional self-regulation learn more and go further in their education.
- ➔ Children develop foundational skills for self-regulation in the first five years of life, which means early childhood teachers play an important role in helping young children build the skills used to regulate thinking and behavior.
- ➔ Early childhood educators can help children develop self-regulation skills by looking for everyday opportunities to scaffold children’s developing skills and encouraging children to practice new skills with adults and peers.

Self-study

Respond to the following questions in the space provided.

In your view

1. Write down three new things that you learned about self-regulation from reading this article. If possible, compare your choices with those of others who have read it.

2. What research findings cited by the author(s) did you find most interesting? Why were they of particular interest to you?

The content of this article is most closely related to NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs 1 and 4, and NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards 1, 2, and 3.

This training outline is primarily for educators who work with children ages 3 to 5.

Glossary

Self-regulation—several complex processes, across all developmental domains, that allow children to control their attention, thoughts, emotions, and behavior and appropriately respond to their environment (Bronson 2000).

Arousal—the awakening of cognitive and emotional systems that allow children to appropriately engage with and respond to people and objects in their environment.

Co-regulation—when children and adults (or peers) share regulatory functions, such as when an adult draws attention to important features of a picture or pattern by pointing or helps a distraught child to breathe slowly by modeling slow, deep breaths.

Internalization—the process of moving from intentional to automatic regulation whereby children routinely self-regulate without adult assistance (Bronson 2000).

3. How does the content of this article relate to the curriculum, Common Core State Standards, state and local early learning standards, content standards, or other requirements applicable to your setting?

Reflect and revisit your practice

1. Which ideas in this article affirm your work with or on behalf of young children and families?

2. What ideas and research findings in this article raise questions about your practice? What new approaches might you try?

3. What kinds of supports do you and your colleagues need to try out these new ideas (such as assistance from a colleague and/or additional resources for your setting)?

Discuss with one or more colleagues/peers

Discuss the following questions with at least one colleague/peer. Record the key points of your discussion in the space provided.

Consider current practice

1. Think about a time you had trouble regulating your attention, thoughts, emotions, or behavior. For example, you may have noticed that you couldn’t concentrate on conversations with coworkers at the end of a busy day. How did you feel in the moment and afterward? What could a colleague, friend, or family member have done to help you better respond to the situation? What could you have done differently? For example, if you realize that you have trouble focusing on conversations with coworkers while you are preparing the classroom for the next day, you may decide to schedule a time to meet with them later so you can give them your undivided attention.

2. Consider the following excerpt on page 48: “Self-regulation skills develop gradually, so it is important that adults hold developmentally appropriate expectations for children’s behavior.” Describe how your current practices reflect developmentally appropriate expectations regarding young children’s self-regulation skills.

3. How do you currently scaffold children’s self-regulation? How do you think the children in your setting would respond to the strategies the author presents?

4. Which children in your setting may need extra support with developing self-regulation? What type of self-regulation is most challenging for them? What are some ways you can help them strengthen their self-regulation skills?

Connect research and practice

1. What does research say about the roles different domains play in self-regulation? What is the relationship between emotions and cognitive skills? Why is regulating anxiety important for cognitive development?

2. What is Vygotsky’s *zone of proximal development* (ZPD)? Why should teachers consider ZPD when scaffolding self-regulation skills?

3. What does research indicate about the role that planning plays in children’s development of self-regulation skills? How can teachers use these research findings in the classroom to support children’s self-regulation?

Action steps

Try out these ideas over the next 2 to 4 weeks. Document and discuss your experiences with others.

Share, observe, plan, and implement

1. **Review and share information.** Visit Ellen Galinsky’s Mind in the Making web site at www.mindinthemaking.org and watch “The Marshmallow Test.” What new information does the video reveal about children’s self-regulation and the role it plays in children’s development? Share information with families by summarizing the main points of the article and the video and posting them on your program’s website. Or use the information in the article and video to create an information sheet about self-regulation development to send home with children.

2. **Observe and record.** Create a three-column chart. Label the columns Activity, Self-Regulation Skills Needed, and Observations from left to right. In the first column, list some of the activities you have planned for the upcoming week. In the second, record what types of self-regulation skills children will need to get the most out of the activity. For example, during storytime, children will have to focus their attention on the story and take turns answering your questions about it by raising their hands and waiting to be called. Throughout the week, observe children’s behavior, and record notes at the end of each day in the third column. After a week, review your notes and identify which children may need additional support with particular self-regulation skills.

3. Plan and implement. Record a plan to scaffold self-regulation for each child who needs additional support. Include specific ways you will model behavior, use hints and cues, and gradually withdrawal your support. Implement the plan over a three-week period and record children’s responses. Modify plans as children’s skills progress.

Discuss experiences and outcomes

Summarize your experiences and outcomes in the space provided, and then discuss them with at least one colleague/peer.

1. What did you do that was successful?

2. What challenges did you face? How did you address the challenges?

3. Have you noticed changes in your program as a result of the new strategies? Did anything surprise you?

4. How can you build on your progress?

Continue learning

Consult these resources to further build knowledge and skills related to the content of this article.

Blair, C. 2009. “Self-Regulation and School Readiness.” *CYC-Online* Issue 128. www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cyconline-oct2009-blair.html.

Bodrova, E., & D.J. Leong. 2003. “Chopsticks and Counting Chips: Do Play and Foundational Skills Need to Compete for the Teacher’s Attention in an Early Childhood Classroom?” *Young Children* 58 (3): 10–17. www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200305/Chopsticks_Bodrova.pdf.

Bodrova, E., & D.J. Leong. 2006. *Tools of the Mind: The Vygotskian Approach to Early Childhood Education*. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Bodrova, E., & D.J. Leong. 2008. “Developing Self-Regulation in Kindergarten: Can We Keep All the Crickets in the Basket?” *Of Primary Interest*. *Young Children* 63 (2): 56–58. www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200803/BTJ_Primary_Interest.pdf.

Galinsky, E. 2010. *Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs*. NAEYC Special ed. New York: Harper Collins. www.MindintheMaking.org.

Reference

Bronson, M.B. 2000. *Self-Regulation in Early Childhood: Nature and Nurture*. New York: Guilford.



Look for the first article and study guide of this two-part series in the March 2011 issues of *Young Children* and *NEXT for Young Children*.

Young children who experience chronic stress and trauma are at risk for displaying reactive and instrumental aggression, which are covered in this two-part series. Punitive discipline techniques are not effective and can lead to expulsion, which can have negative long-term impacts on a child's development and learning. Instead, teachers can successfully address instrumental aggression by building relationships with children and their families. Teachers can use guidance techniques such as class meetings, conflict mediation, and Individual Guidance Plans.

Key Messages

- ➔ Children's ability to manage their feelings and behavior grows as their brains develop and they have experiences that allow them to successfully control their impulses and interact effectively with others. Some children need intensive assistance from trusted adults to build the empathy that comes naturally to other children.
- ➔ Children who do not learn to use alternative strategies such as self-soothing practices instead of instrumental aggression may suffer continuing mental health problems.
- ➔ The intentional nature of instrumental aggression makes it particularly challenging for many teachers to address. However, when educators focus on teaching rather than punishing, they can help children learn to manage their feelings and behavior and build positive relationships with others.

The content of this article is most closely related to NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs 1, 2, and 4, and NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards 1, 3, and 7.

This training outline is primarily for educators who work with children ages 3 to 8.

Glossary

Instrumental aggression—a learned response that involves the use of physical and/or psychological force to impose one's will on another. A child who has experienced chronic stress or trauma may use instrumental aggression as a coping strategy.

Brain neuroarchitecture—the biological structure that determines how children's brains form and operate. The brain builds 70 percent of its neural structure after birth, indicating the vital role that experiences play in children's brain development (Cozolino 2006).

Resiliency—the ability to adapt to and recover from adversity, including chronic stress and trauma. Some of the characteristics of resilient preschoolers are autonomy, confidence, and a developing sense of humor.

Chronic stress—a child's ongoing feelings of anxiety and frustration that can be the result of trauma. Without healing relationships with significant others, these experiences can negatively affect children's social responsiveness and cause them to view even normal situations as threatening, which can lead to aggressive acts in perceived self-defense.

Self-study

Respond to the following questions in the space provided.

In your view

1. Write down three new things that you learned about instrumental aggression and guidance techniques from reading this article. If possible, compare your choices with those of others who have read it.

2. What research findings cited by the author(s) did you find most interesting? Why were they of particular interest to you?

3. How does the content of this article relate to the curriculum, Common Core State Standards, state and local early learning standards, content standards, or other requirements applicable to your setting?

Reflect and revisit your practice

1. Which ideas in this article affirm your work with or on behalf of young children and families?

2. What ideas and research findings in this article raise questions about your practice? What new approaches might you try?

3. What kinds of supports do you and your colleagues need to try out these new ideas (such as assistance from a colleague and/or additional resources for your setting)?

Discuss with one or more colleagues/peers

Discuss the following questions with at least one colleague/peer. Record the key points of your discussion in the space provided.

Consider current practice

1. What experiences have you had that caused trauma or prolonged stress? How did these experiences affect your feelings and behavior? How did they affect your relationships with others? Your work with children and families?

2. What are some ways that you manage your feelings of frustration when you experience stress? How do your relationships with friends or family help you cope?

3. Why is it important to build relationships with children who show aggression? Why is building relationships with their families also critical?

4. Why isn't punishment helpful in working with children who show instrumental aggression? Why should teachers use firm but friendly guidance with children showing aggression rather than just letting the behaviors continue?

Connect research and practice

1. What is the difference between instrumental aggression and reactive aggression?

2. What does research indicate about the connection between chronic stress/trauma and aggressive behavior in young children?

3. What does research say about the long-term impacts on children’s development if they fail to learn alternative strategies to instrumental aggression?

Action steps

Try out these ideas over the next 2 to 4 weeks. Document and discuss your experiences with others.

Document and implement

1. **Observe and record.** Create a two-column log labeled Behavior and Reasons for Behavior and then conduct a series of observations over a few weeks. In the first column, write down objective observations of children’s behavior, including acts of aggression. For example, “Jeanie pinched Jezelle while Jezelle sat on my lap at group time.” Write down objective observations of nonaggressive acts as well, such as “Jeanie cried when her father said goodbye at drop-off time.” Assign dates and times to observations. Then review and reflect on your observations. In the second column, write the possible reasons for the behaviors you observed. For example, you may remember that Jeanie’s mom recently had a baby. You may conclude that Jeanie is adjusting to sharing her parents’ attention with the baby and will require additional emotional support until she gets used to the change.

2. **Develop and implement individual plans.** Review “Handout 1: The Individual Guidance Plan” from the February/March 2011 issue of *NEXT for TYC: An NAEYC Professional Development Resource*, available on NAEYC’s website at www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/201107/IndividualGuidancePlan.pdf. Determine whether developing such a plan would be helpful for working with the children in your setting. If the answer is yes, review the handout instructions carefully, follow the outlined steps, hold meetings with families, and complete an Individual Guidance Plan for designated children.

Discuss experiences and outcomes

Summarize your experiences and outcomes in the space provided, and then discuss them with at least one colleague/peer.

1. What did you do that was successful?

2. What challenges did you face? How did you address the challenges?

3. Have you noticed changes in your program as a result of the new strategies? Did anything surprise you?

4. How can you build on your progress?

Continue learning

Consult these resources to further build knowledge and skills related to the content of this article.

Gartrell, D. 2005–2011. Guidance Matters. *Young Children* column. www.naeyc.org/yc/columns/guidance.

Gartrell, D. 2011. “Handout 1: The Individual Guidance Plan.” *NEXT for TYC: An NAEYC Professional Development Resource* 4 (3): 1–6. www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/201107/IndividualGuidancePlan.pdf.

Kaiser, B., & J. Sklar Rasminsky. 2007. *Challenging Behavior in Young Children: Understanding, Preventing, and Responding Effectively*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Lowenthal, B. 1999. “Effects of Maltreatment and Ways to Promote Children’s Resiliency.” *Childhood Education* 75 (4): 204–09.

Pizzolongo, P. J., & A. Hunter. 2011. “I Am Safe and Secure: Promoting Resilience in Young Children.” *Young Children* 66 (2): 67–69.

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Cozolino, L. 2006. *The Neuroscience of Human Relationships: Attachment and the Developing Social Brain*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

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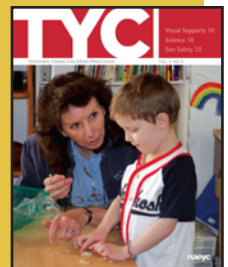
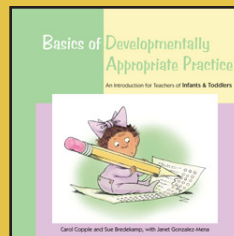
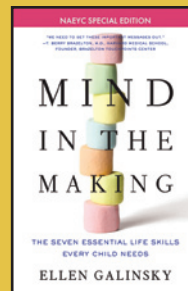
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