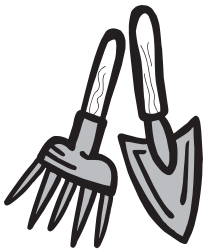
CHAPTER
4

Promoting Children's School-Readiness Growth with Academic, Persistence, Social and Emotion Coaching

In the first chapters we have talked about the importance of teachers nurturing their students' social and emotional growth by promoting positive relationships with their students and their families and by scaffolding a safe classroom learning environment by setting up predictable routines, clear rules, and effective limit setting. These are core teaching strategies that provide the foundation of the teaching pyramid described in Chapter One that supports early school age children's learning growth and eventual academic achievement.



In this chapter we will discuss another foundational teaching tool; that is, scaffolding children's learning interactions with peers and teachers with coaching methods that support their school readiness growth, academic success, and social emotional development. This coaching involves using descriptive comments to highlight specific learning skills such as persistence with learning something new, focused activity, cooperation, emotion regulation, and patience. This approach addresses the social, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and academic elements of children's school readiness. School readiness implies that students have made significant progress toward developmental milestones including a strong bond or attachment with their teachers, peers, and schools; a sense of self, autonomy and desire to explore; and the language and behaviors needed for social and emotional expression and self-regulation. This chapter begins by covering specific ways of teachers interacting with students using different types of coaching and then explores how this type of descriptive language can help to foster specific academic, behavioral, social, and emotional development.

All types of coaching described in this chapter recommend the use of *descriptive commenting*, a form of commentary where the teacher enters a student's internal and imaginary world, narrates his ideas, thoughts, feelings and interests, helps him feel confident by being an "appreciative audience" and providing focused attention on his learning process. This language does not include questions, unnecessary commands, or corrections and often sounds like a sports announcer's play-by-play description of a game. These expanded descriptions of a student's activity promote a student's cognitive awareness of what she is seeing, doing, thinking or feeling, building her self-confidence, and supporting her creativity, independence, and struggle to discover and learn something new. For many teachers, this is a novel way of communicating and, at first, may feel uncomfortable and artificial. The discomfort will diminish as teachers practice in a variety of situations and see their students' emotional and behavioral responses. Teachers who use these descriptive coaching methods consistently find that their students come to love this kind of attention, feel more strongly attached to their teachers, persist at the activity despite feeling frustrated and

show gains in academic, social, and emotional competency (Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Stoolmiller, 2008). Teachers can tailor this type of descriptive coaching to focus on many different aspects of children's development and their specific social, emotional or academic needs. This chapter will focus first on teacher coaching of academic skills and concepts (colors, numbers, letters, vocabulary, patterns) and academic behaviors (sustained attention, focus, thinking, listening), both of which promote children's language development, persistence with learning and a positive teacher-student relationship. Next the chapter will cover teacher social and emotion coaching, which promotes cooperative and shared learning in the classroom, friendships, emotional literacy, and self-regulation. As noted in Chapter One the quality of teacher attention and coaching and the prosocial foundation emerges as one of the most important factors in helping students become school ready, motivated and successful learners (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000; Duncan, et al., 2007; Reinke & Lewis-Palmer, 2008).

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ACADEMIC COACHING ~ ENHANCING VOCABULARY

Studies have shown that teachers can help young children expand their language vocabulary and development by modeling words for them and naming objects and actions in their world (Whitehurst, et al., 1999). The beauty of this kind of commenting is that it can be tailored to each child's interests and developmental level. Students with delayed language and few words will benefit from repeated pairing of language and vocabulary with the objects they are exploring and the actions they are using. Children with typically developing vocabularies will be especially tuned in to new words that help to explain their actions in more detail, or that provide them with more information about their activities. Teachers of preschool children can start this

language coaching by simply naming objects, actions, or positions (on, under, inside, beside, next to) of things children are doing in the classroom such playing with blocks, working on a drawing, math, or science project, eating lunch, or playing on the playground. Teachers describe the things that students are interested in at the time that the student is exploring the object. For example the teacher of a three-year-old with delayed language might watch his play and say, "Marcus has the yellow giraffe. It's walking along. It bumped into a big hippo. Oh, it jumped over that hippo's stomach. Now it's eating the cow." This repeated pairing of the animal names with actions and positions will gradually help the child learn the vocabulary and concepts. A teacher of a four-year-old with more advanced language skills might say, "I see you have the tall giraffe who is reaching high to eat the Acacia leaves. I think I see his long tongue! In real life his tongue is 18 inches. That's about as long as your arm, and his tail is longer than I am!" As the boy picks up another animal the teacher says, "And here comes a strong leopard with a spotted coat, slinking through the grass." This commenting indicates how interested a teacher is in what the child is doing and is an invaluable teaching tool because it bathes children in rich language while providing important information about the size and movements of the objects they are touching.

So far our examples have been one-sided, with the teacher talking while the child plays. Many times children will be absorbed in their play and may let the teacher's language wash over their heads. This is just fine. Children don't need to respond to teacher's language to benefit from hearing these descriptive comments. Other times students will actively engage the teacher with comments of their own, questions, or responses to something a teacher said. In this case, the most important thing is to follow the student's lead. A primary grade teacher might say, "I see you are interested in reading that story about trains. That picture looks like the locomotive is powered by a steam engine. I wonder what is boiling the water?" The teacher waits for a response from the child who says, "Coal is doing that" and she builds on the child's knowledge by saying, "You are right. Steam engines were powered by coal or wood. You know a lot about trains. It looks like this page also has diesel engines." Remember it is important for teachers to be child-directed in

communication; that is, describe what the student is already doing or showing interest in. Don't be too directive or "teachy" with this commenting as this may interfere with the child's curiosity, exploration and sense of self-discovery and independence. Pause after a description and wait to see what the student will share about his knowledge of the subject and then respond by listening attentively and building on that knowledge with enthusiasm.

Coaching Specific Academic Skills and Concepts

In addition to basic vocabulary, teachers can use coaching to tailor their interactions to many different academic skills. At the preschool level this might include numbers, colors, patterns, prepositions, letters, shapes, textures, categories, and sizes. Think about this next example where a teacher describes her preschool student's work on an alphabet puzzle.

> *Jolie brings over an alphabet puzzle to work on with the teacher. Jolie holds up the letter T–and the teacher says T several times and then says, "You are holding the green letter T." Jolie repeats the name "T." Then Jolie looks for where it goes on the puzzle and puts it into the space for the T. The teacher says, "You are smart for remembering that Teddy Bear starts with a T." Jolie replies, "T is for Teddy bear." The teacher replies enthusiastically, "Yes you are right. You are listening to beginning sounds!" Next Jolie finds the place for the letter "N" and the teacher praises her by saying, "Good for finding the right place for that yellow letter N. It comes earlier in the alphabet than T." Jolie finds the spot for L and says, "L–lemon." The teacher repeats enthusiastically, "Good job, L is for lemon! La, La, Lemon."*

This preschooler is able to match most of her letters to their places in the puzzle and she is beginning to recognize and be able to label some beginning letters and sounds. Children learn these skills at widely different rates and some preschoolers won't have the persistence to sit still to do a complex letter puzzle for very long. The important thing is that the teacher is making this learning process fun and following the child's interests and readiness for learning. This teacher pays attention

to the things that the student is interested in and uses her descriptive language to encourage her play. This approach is likely to lead to more learning than if the teacher had handed the student the pieces one-by-one and asked her "Where does this go?" "What is this letter?" "What starts with the letter L?"

As children enter elementary school, academic concepts become more complicated, but the idea of descriptive coaching still applies. At this level teachers may coach students on skills such as more complicated math concepts of addition and subtraction, pattern recognition, reading and sounding out words, writing words, writing sentences or even paragraphs. See the example below of a teacher coaching a table group of students who are doing math problems using manipulatives.

> *"I see that John is using a grouping strategy. He's putting his blocks into groups of 10 so that it will be easier to count them. That is a smart addition trick. Oh, I see that Layla is using different colored blocks to represent different parts of the word problem. Your yellow blocks are the oranges and your blue blocks are the apples. You've both figured out different ways to help yourself solve this problem. Mary, I appreciate how neatly you are writing your numbers—you are really taking the time to get the numbers lined up as you write them—that will help you when you are ready to add them up and it will help me when I look at your work."*

This teacher's commenting is focusing on the academic strategies that the students are using as well as their problem-solving skills. Her comments let each child know that she notices his or her efforts and is also helping the group see that there are different ways of working on the problems.

Avoid Too Much Question-Asking

Many teachers have a tendency to ask a string of questions while interacting with children, "What color is that?" "Where does it go?" "How many cars are there?" What are you making?" "Is that the right way to put it together?" "How does it go on?" "Count all the blue ones." "What are you going to do with that?" Through such questions, teachers are intending to help the student learn, but all too often it has the reverse effect.

Asking too many questions or giving too many directives when interacting with a student can be intimidating to him and make him feel he has to perform for the teacher, particularly if the teacher knows the answers to her questions! Too many questions from teachers can cause children to feel tested, to refuse to speak and retreat into silence, particularly if they fear they might make a mistake and aren't sure of the answer. So it is important to balance question asking with about ten times more descriptive comments and coaching statements than questions.

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Think about a teacher of a three and a half-year-old girl who still doesn't know all her colors and shapes. This teacher is concerned and has a goal to help this child learn these important school readiness concepts.

Teacher asks, "Lily, what color is this?" Child shrugs and Teacher says, "It's red. Can you say red?" Child repeats, "red." Teacher says, "Now what about this one? What color is it?" Child says, "red" and Teacher says, "Yes! What shape is it?" Child says, "square." Teacher says, "No it's a triangle. Can you say triangle?" Lily refuses to answer.

While it is easy to identify with this teacher's wish to teach this child, think about the impact of this interaction on the child's comfort level with her teacher, her creativity, and her feelings about herself. This kind of rapid-fire question-asking has made the play activity into a test, one in which the child often isn't successful, and which may seem never-ending. In contrast, think about applying the descriptive commenting principles from above to the same girl with the same goals of teaching colors and shapes.

"Lily, you've got a yellow block in each hand. Those two blocks are rectangles. The rectangle blocks are going on top of each other. You're stacking them. Two yellow blocks. They're getting high! Now you're adding a red triangle to a make a pointy top. One red triangle on top.

There are lots of colors and shapes. I wonder what color you'll choose next." Lily replies, "I've got orange." The teacher replies, "Oh, yes I see! You know your colors. That is an orange circle!"

In this scenario, the teacher has repeatedly labeled the word yellow, as well as two other colors. She has also given the shape names and has talked about position. In contrast to the first example, think about how Lily might feel in this scene. Perhaps she feels supported by her teacher, interested in the tower she is building, and proud of her efforts. This is likely to make her open to receiving new information about the colors and shapes that her teacher labels. It is very likely that she might turn to her teacher and hold up another yellow block saying, "I have a yellow one?" Or, she may start to ask her teacher for information, "What color is this one?" This second example is much more likely to actually result in Lily learning and retaining the important information that her teacher wants her to learn.

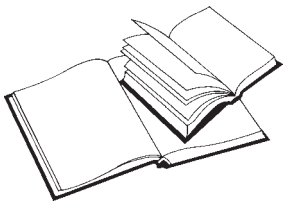
Two types of questions are worth thinking about. The first type is asking children to produce a correct response to factual information. For example, "What color is that?" "How do you spell…?" This type of question is really a type of command or a test since it requires children to perform. Usually these are questions that the adult knows the answer to, and the child knows that a correct answer is important. Another kind of question asks children to define what they are doing or why they are doing it a particular way. For example, "What are you going to build?" "What is that picture?" "What are you writing about?" Often, these questions are asked out of a genuine desire to understand what a child is thinking or making, and usually the adult is trying to connect with the child. The issue here is that even these open-ended questions often occur before the child has even thought about the final product or had a chance to explore his ideas. Perhaps the child doesn't know what he wants to build, or draw, or write about. Or perhaps he doesn't want to build at all. Maybe he'd rather feel the texture of the blocks or run them around like cars. Through the question, the teacher puts the emphasis on the product rather than the process of play. Question-asking may break children's concentration and distract their focus from the creative exploration

process. Instead, teachers can use descriptive commenting and academic coaching as a nonthreatening way of bonding and communicating with students and teaching an academic concept without demanding performance. Although this chapter encourages teachers not to ask many questions, the occasional question is not a problem, and it can show that a teacher is genuinely interested in her student's thoughts, feelings or ideas. For example, questions such as, "How can I help?" or statements such as "I am curious to see what you will do next" are non-testing questions because the teacher doesn't know the answer in advance, they don't focus on the product, and they allow the child to take the lead on the response. When teachers ask this type of question, it is important they pause to listen for an answer and then respond with interest. If teachers do not receive an answer, it is best to go back to descriptive commenting.

Academic coaching is a nonthreatening way of bonding and communicating with students and teaching an academic concept without demanding performance.

Promoting Reading Readiness—Modeling, Repetition, and Praise

Reading with children is an important way of building their language and reading readiness or reading skill. The descriptive commenting ideas discussed above can also be adapted and applied to reading. Teachers can let students pick out books on topics they are interested in and designate a quiet reading section in the classroom where there are no distractions. Preschoolers will benefit from information about the pragmatics of reading a book (looking at the cover, noticing the author and illustrator, seeing which side of the book opens). For example, "This book is called *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown. She wrote this story. Clement Hurd is the illustrator. He drew the pictures." As the teacher reads, she keeps her pace slow and notices the children's reactions as they look at and talk about the pictures. Teachers can have fun labeling or asking students to find objects in the pictures as well as reading the real story words.

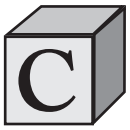


Teachers can extend the ideas in the pictures to the students' own experiences. For example, if there is a picture of a dog or cat, ask the students about a particular dog or cat that they know, "The cat in this story is an orange striped cat. I know Jimmy has a cat at home. I wonder what color your cat is, Jimmy?" Or talk about a time one of your students did something that is pictured in the book, "That swing looks like the one you all play with on our playground. Do you remember how high you were swinging and how well you shared the swing with each other by taking turns?" Don't put pressure on students to name the pictures, but if they copy your words, praise their efforts and repeat the word. Teachers can also extend students' vocabulary by adding to their words. For example if a child points and says fire engine, the teacher can repeat, "Yes, a big, red fire engine. They look like they are in a hurry." If there are sentences, teachers can run their finger under the words as they read them. If there are large letters on the page, teachers can name them and make the letter sound. Teachers and students can take turns sharing what they are seeing on the page.

Teachers of older students who are already reading may let students take a turn reading or read to each other. Older students will also have fun predicting what is going to happen next in the story, thinking about the feelings of the characters in the story, making up an alternative ending, and talking about what character they most identify with. At any age students love to be read to! One of the precursors to creating good readers is to create a love for books. So one primary goal is to make reading fun. Children's natural reading ability and attention span will vary. Some children may be able to sit and read or listen for long periods of time; others will lose interest after a few minutes. Some children are beginning to read at four years old, while others don't master reading until they are seven or eight years old. While it is important to be aware of children who have significant learning problems, much of the variation in reading attention and aptitude is developmentally normal and pushing too hard may make a child dislike the process of reading because they feel inept.

Building Blocks for Reading With CARE

The following are some key points to remember about reading with students:



Comment, use descriptive commenting to describe pictures, actions and stories.

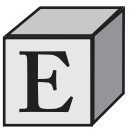
- Take turns interacting and reading.
- Pause teacher reading to let students respond.
- Describe the pictures or read the words putting your finger under the words (modeling).
- Let children who are readers take turns reading with you or with each other.
- Make a game of reading with expression—thinking about how characters would say different lines.
- Let the children be the storyteller by encouraging them to talk about the pictures and stories and praising their ideas (practice).

Ask open-ended questions.

- "What is your favorite picture on this page?" (observing and reporting)
- "Do you remember a time you did that?" (connecting story to something in child's life)
- "I wonder what's happening here?" (storytelling, encouraging being curious and exploration)
- "What is that a picture of?" (promoting academic skills)
- "How might she be feeling now?" (exploring feelings)
- "What is going to happen next?" (predicting)
- "I wonder if you can think of a different ending to the story? (creative thinking)
- "Why do you think the author made that choice?" (analyzing the author's intentions)
- "What do you think is the main idea of this part of the story?" (recognizing key points)
- "Can you retell what happened so far?" (summarizing)

Respond with praise and encouragement to children's thinking and responses.

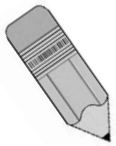
- "That's right! That train has a lot of cars."
- "You are really thinking about that."
- "Wow, you know a lot about animals."
- "I love hearing you talk about these pictures. You are really learning to read."
- "I think your story is really creative. You are a good story teller."
- "You are getting so good at expressing the feelings of the characters when you read."
- "You are paying attention to the punctuation when you read."



Expand on what children talk about.

- "Yes, I think he's feeling excited, too, and he might be a little scared as well."
- "Yes, it is a horse; it's also called a mare."
- "Yes, that boy is going to the park. Do you remember going to a park?"
- "Wow I really like your ending to the story. Can we act that out with puppets?"
- "Your prediction of what would happen was a great idea. Can we write your story down in your journal to read another time?"

Pre-writing and Writing Readiness



Coloring and writing with children is a lot of fun and is another opportunity for teachers to use descriptive and academic commenting. This is also a strategic way to model and encourage students' writing skills? Give the preschool child some crayons on a large piece of paper. Let the child draw on the page and use academic coaching to talk about the colors, designs and images he is drawing. Teachers can record with a crayon or marker the student's stories or descriptions next to his drawings. Teachers can experiment with many different ways to encourage preschooler's writing: try drawing or writing together in the sand with a stick, make designs with a finger in shaving cream or whip cream on a tray, use bath crayons in the water table or write words with paint brushes or finger paints. As each student creates his own art,

use academic coaching to give words to their actions and ideas. For example, "Your blue line is going across the bottom of the page. Now your red line is on top of the page." Describe the kinds of lines the child is making, "That's a straight line going up the side of the wall. It looks like the letter I. Now there's a curvy line going across. That part is going around in circles like the letter O." If the student talks about what he is drawing or tells a story about it, write it down on the bottom of the page and show delight in his story and the book he is making. These are all beginning reading and pre-writing skills.

This kind of descriptive commenting can also be used with school-age children who are capable of writing words and sentences. As the child is writing a teacher can comment, "You have written four sentences now with some great, complex words. Can we read your story together?" Or, "I see that your first paragraph is finished! It has a main idea sentence and then three sentences that add information and details to your idea." Or, "You have written about the feelings of your character in that story, I am really getting to know about him and am thinking about what he will do next." Or, "You are really carefully paying attention to where your letters are on the line. That makes it easy to read your writing." "You have a capital letter at the beginning of each sentence and a punctuation mark at the end! You remember all of the writing rules that we have been learning." "Looks like you are writing nonfiction. You have many true details in your essay!"

PERSISTENCE COACHING

Persistence coaching is a method of talking to children that will help them begin to learn to persist with difficult tasks and continue to try hard despite frustrations, obstacles and difficulties. With this type of coaching, the teacher helps the child to recognize when he is concentrating, working hard, staying focused, paying attention and being calm or patient. The child will begin to learn that it is normal to struggle to learn something new, but with patience, persistence, practice and teacher support, he can eventually accomplish the task and feel proud of it. This is an important life message.

Persistence coaching is when the teacher names the child's internal cognitive state when she is being patient, trying again, staying calm, concentrating, focusing or persisting and working hard with a difficult task.

Children vary in their temperament and learning styles. Some are calm, quiet, slow to warm up, patient, focused, or attentive whereas others may be active, energetic, impulsive, inattentive, angry, or easily frustrated. Many children display more than one of these different traits at different times of day or in different situations. Despite these temperament variations, most young children will need teacher support to be able to persist and stay patient with a difficult task without getting overly frustrated or giving up. Some children will need more support to stick with it than others. *Persistence coaching* is when the teacher names the child's internal cognitive state when she is being patient, trying again, staying calm, concentrating, focusing or persisting and working hard with a difficult task. This type of coaching is beneficial for all children but is particularly important for inattentive, impulsive, and hyperactive children as well as children who are anxious and depressed. It helps them recognize times when they are focused, on-task and attentive, and working hard or confidently and what it feels like to be in that state. This coaching provides the brain scaffolding that a child needs to be able to stay calm and persistent for longer at learning something new than he would be able to do on his own.

In the next example a teacher is walking around in a large 2nd grade classroom while the students are working on a project to write sentences. Notice what coaching strategies this teacher uses.

> *"Diana is really working hard on her fine and detailed printing, and she is being very meticulous," and "Holly is printing slowly and carefully. She is really focusing." "Michael is really concentrating on his work and trying again to redo some of this letters." "Sidney is sticking with this project." "I am seeing some nice printing in this classroom. Our classroom will be an incredible classroom of great writers and authors ~ I can tell that! " Her tone of voice is sincere, warm and enthusiastic. The warm affect in her tone of voice and positive prediction is very encouraging, reinforcing and keeps the students working hard.*

Here we see the teacher is focusing on the process of writing and working on this activity, rather than waiting to see the outcome. This approach has the positive side effect of reminding the whole classroom what they should be doing and providing an image of their eventual success. The next example, Soleil, an early school-age child is doing an art drawing activity that involves cutting some big sticky packing tape. Soleil is frustrated with her ability to cut and the teacher uses persistence coaching (and emotion coaching) to give her enough support so that she continues to persist with the activity.

Soleil asks the teacher for help cutting the sticky tape. The teacher says, "I will hold the tape while you cut. It is hard to cut, but I think you can do it." Soleil cuts the tape and the teacher enthusiastically says, "You cut the tape yourself!" Soleil responds, "I cut it" and the teacher asks, "Are you proud of yourself for cutting?" Soleil nods "Yes." The teacher replies, "You seem very proud of your work, and you are working really hard. You keep trying." When Soleil cuts again, the teacher says enthusiastically, "You did it" and then comments, "You seem happy that you were able to do that by yourself." As Soleil continues to work at cutting the teacher comments, "You are working hard and being very patient with the cutting process. It seems to be getting easier and easier for you."

This teacher's persistence coaching helps Soleil to stay involved and persist with a difficult task. She readily acknowledges that Soleil is attempting to do something that is very difficult, which adds to the sense of accomplishment for Soleil. This is a new kind of language for many teachers. Statements such as, "You are working hard," "You are really focused," "That is frustrating and hard to do but you are staying patient with it," "You are really thinking, waiting and planning what to do next," "You figured it out yourself," or "You really concentrated and you solved the problem" are all examples of persistence coaching. This type of coaching can help your students modulate their feelings of frustration and desire to give up and stick with a difficult task without getting too dysregulated. The essence of learning is becoming able to continue to keep trying, to struggle with some discomfort or anxiety and at times failure in order to become more independent and resilient.

Scripts for Academic and Persistence Coaching

As we have seen academic and persistence coaching is a powerful way to strengthen students' language skills and academic concepts and to help them continue to try hard to learn something even when it is difficult and frustrating. Use this coaching checklist to reflect on your use of particular coaching skills.

TEACHER ACADEMIC COACHING CHECKLIST

Check which kinds of cognitive and academic behaviors you typically coach. Identify any you want to strengthen.

Academic Coaching: Objects, Actions, Shapes, Positions	Examples
❒ Colors, letters	"You have the red car and the yellow truck."
❒ Number counting	"There are one, two, three dinosaurs in a row."
❒ Shapes	"Now the square Lego is stuck to the round Lego."
❒ Names of objects	"That train is longer than the track."
❒ Sizes (long, short, tall, smaller than, bigger than, etc.)	"You are putting the tiny bolt in the right circle."
❒ Positions (up, down, beside, next to, on top, behind, etc.)	"The blue block is next to the yellow square, and the purple triangle is on top of the long red rectangle."
❒ Patterns, categories	"You are putting all six four-legged animals in one category, the four birds in another category and three insects in a third category. That is good sorting."
	"You're circling all the pictures that start with the 'tr' blend sound!"

Persistence Coaching: Cognitions & State of Mind	**Examples**
❒ Working hard	"You are working so hard on writing those words and thinking about where the next letter will go."
❒ Concentrating, focusing	"You are so patient and keep trying different ways to make that piece fit together."
❒ Staying calm, patient	"You are staying calm and trying again."
❒ Trying again	"You are thinking hard about how to solve the problem and coming up with another great solution to make a ship."
❒ Problem solving	"That math problem is difficult and you are working out how to add all those numbers together by thinking hard."
❒ Thinking skills	"You are thinking about your friend and helping him read that book."
❒ Reading	"You are really focused on your reading and taking your time."
❒ Going to do it	
❒ Being aware of another child's work activity	"Your friend is really concentrating too. You are both good learners."
Coaching School Readiness Behaviors	**Examples**
❒ Following teacher's directions ❒ Listening to teachers	"You followed directions exactly like I asked you. You really listened."
❒ Independence while working	"You have figured that out all by yourself."
❒ Exploring and trying out ideas ❒ Being curious about how things work	"You are really curious and exploring what makes that work in many different ways."
❒ Cooperating with other students on projects	"You are working as a team to figure out the plot of that story."

Children's brain neurological self-control, self-regulation, and persistence ability can be strengthened by teachers' coaching responses.

Keeping Developmental Expectations Appropriate—Laying the Brain Foundation for the Future

Developing concentration, persistence, and patience depends a lot on the student's particular temperament style and neurological, language, or stage of brain development. These cognitive skills develop at different times and there is a wide range of normal developmental variation across children. Remember children have immature brain development and acquire skills in stages. In the three- to eight-year-old age range the ability to pay attention and follow directions, persist at something even though frustrated, and control aggressive responses are developing skills. A few remarkable three-year-olds will already show some degree of self control while some eight-year-olds may still struggle with waiting, sitting still and staying regulated. During this stage of development children's brain neurological self-control, self-regulation, and persistence ability can be strengthened by teachers' coaching responses. In other words, a teacher might say to a student, "You are really waiting for a turn on the computer. I see you want it, but you are really being patient and waiting for your turn." This persistence coaching may help the child to wait and prevent him from pushing the child away in order to use the computer. With repeated persistence coaching, exposure to the concepts of being patient, calm, and persistent with a new learning activity, children will begin to internalize these words. By the early school age years children will be able to control more of their behavioral responses and attention span, but there will still be many children who don't develop control of their self-regulation skills, impulsivity, aggression, and ability to sustain their attention with a difficult task until six or seven years. So it is important for teachers to have realistic developmental expectations for each student and to vary the scaffolding given so that each child is supported according to their individual needs. Teachers' academic and persistence coaching will help to lay a firm brain foundation to support all students' learning in later years.

SOCIAL COACHING

Now that we have talked about how academic and persistence coaching helps strengthen children's language acquisition and school readiness concepts, we will discuss how to use *social coaching* to help students develop important friendship skills. Strengthening children's social skills is important because classrooms where there is cooperative learning have been shown to predict improved academic achievement (Brown & Palincsar, 1989; Cawelti, 1995; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1994). Social coaching and descriptive commenting can support children's friendship and communication skills, and their sense of self and independence. Children learn social skills through modeling, prompting, coaching, practicing, and receiving positive feedback. Social interactions involve complicated steps that must be repeated many times, and supported, encouraged and coached by teachers.

Children's social development progresses in much the same way that physical development does. Just as babies progress from holding up their heads, to sitting up, to pushing up, to crawling, to creeping, to walking, a parallel step-by-step process also occurs for children as they learn to become socially and emotionally mature. Toddlers under the age of three are egocentric, engage in parallel play, make very few initiations to peers and have very few prosocial skills. As children enter preschool and begin to interact with others, their first attempts are usually selfish! Preschoolers rarely share, wait, or take-turns! This is the age of "mine–mine–mine," and "I want what I want when I want it!" and curious exploration. Moreover, preschoolers are moving from the age of parallel play to increasing interactions with peers, but many do not have the prosocial skills to initiate or sustain positive, cooperative play for very long. One of the major developmental tasks for children of this age is to learn to interact in socially appropriate ways. These skills are invaluable to almost every interaction that a child will

Social skills, a prerequisite for academic learning, involve self-regulation, how to give and get help from others, work together, listen to others, communicate with others, and problem-solve.

have in the school environment for years to come. Social skills are also a prerequisite for academic learning since they involve self-regulation, how to give and get help from others, how to work together, how to listen to others, how to communicate with others, and how to problem-solve (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Children who lack these skills suffer socially, but also are likely to exhibit behavioral difficulties in the classroom that impair their academic learning (Brown & Palincsar, 1989; Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010).

Modeling Social Skills and Empathy During Teacher-Student Interactions

The first aspect of social coaching involves teachers modeling appropriate social skills themselves during teacher-student interactions. Remember that children learn by imitating or modeling what teachers do and say and even mirror the feelings shown on the teacher's face! When teachers interact with their students in ways that are respectful of their ideas or share their positive feelings, smile, offer friendly suggestions, compliment them, help them with a difficult activity, comply with their requests, or cooperate with them, they are modeling all these important social and relationship skills. Students will learn just by watching teachers demonstrate each skill. These are all behaviors that are harder for a preschooler or early school age student to learn in a play interaction with a same age peer because many times the other child doesn't have the developmental ability to engage in or model these positive interactive behaviors himself. When, a teacher or another adult plays with or responds to a child in this prosocial way, this modeling can take place. In the next example, think about what social skills the teacher is modeling as she plays with a group of four-year-old children using play dough, cookie cutters, a rolling pin, and some other wooden kitchen utensils.

> *The teacher says to Kyla, who has cut out a play dough butterfly with her cookie cutter, "You made a pretty butterfly,"* (models giving a compliment) *and Kyla replies, "Now I am making a monster." The teacher responds with eagerness, "That's a creative idea. I would like to see your monster."* (shows interest in her idea) *Next the teacher*

notices that Sam needs more play dough and she offers, "I can see you need more play dough, I will be your friend and share my play dough with you. Would you like my green play dough?" (models understanding of his perspective and sharing and being helpful) *Sam takes the play dough from the teacher's outreached hand and says, "Thank you." The teacher replies, "You are very welcome. That was polite of you to say 'thank you.'"* (models and praises his social skill) *Riley says, "I need some blue play dough." The teacher says, "Riley, what a great way to ask for what you need. I think Annie was listening to you. I wonder if she will share some blue with you?"* (praises appropriate social skill and gently prompts positive response). *Annie says, "Here is some of mine." The teacher responds, "Annie you are a good friend to Riley. I'm having so much fun watching you friends sharing this play dough. You look like you're having fun being together. You are a real team."* (models emotion sharing)

In this example the teacher is modeling and labeling the social skills of praise, agreement to another's idea, understanding of another's needs, sharing, offering to help, and polite behavior. Notice that the teacher described her own social behavior when she said, "I will be your friend and share my play dough with you" so that the children can learn what it looks like when one shares and that this behavior is something friends do with each other. The teacher also shares that she understands Sam's needs when she said, "I can see you need more play dough." Thus she is modeling thinking about someone else's point of view or desires, a concept that is called by some developing *"theory of mind."* First, the teacher models an awareness of another's needs (empathy) and then labels this friendly behavior as sharing. Later the teacher extends this concept to the children's awareness of their peer's needs. As the teacher plays with this group, actively reinforcing and modeling these social skills, as she sees them use the skills with each other, she extends her descriptive comments to help them see how this is making each other feel.

Teachers modeling empathy helps children learn how to think about someone else's feelings and point of veiw.

Prompting Social Skills and Empathy During Teacher-Student Interactions

As we have seen in the prior example, modeling is when teachers model or demonstrate the social behaviors that they would like to encourage in their student's behavior, such as when the teacher modeled saying, "You are welcome" which showed the appropriate language response to someone saying "thank you." *Prompting*, on the other hand, is when teachers subtly prompt the student to use a particular social behavior. For example, a teacher can "prompt" a child's social behavior during play by asking for help with something, offering an idea, or asking for a turn with something her student is using. If the student responds to the teacher's prompt by accepting the teacher's request for help using her idea, or giving the teacher a turn, then the teacher can coach the student's friendly response by clearly and positively describing their social skill. For example, first the teacher prompts, "Could I have a turn with play dough?" The child says yes and gives her some play dough. The teacher replies, "That was so friendly. I wanted to play with the play dough and you shared it with me." This teacher prompt and her response is encouraging the child to understand someone else's perspective – a beginning step towards empathy or a theory of mind. However, if the child does not agree to share or help when a teacher uses a prompt, the teacher should model waiting and respect by saying, "I can see you are not ready to share yet, and I can wait for a turn. I'll play with the paint while I wait." Again, this teacher response indicates the teacher is modeling her understanding of the child's perspective as well as how to wait for a turn.

It is best not to force a child to share, for this will defeat the teacher's purpose. However, teachers can begin to teach a young child how to share or help others by modeling these behaviors herself, occasionally prompting, and coaching and praising the behavior whenever it does occur. It will often be easier for a student to share with a teacher or another adult than it will be to share with a peer, so teacher-child sharing is a good place to start. See if you can identify the "modeling" and "prompts" by this teacher as the group continues to play.

Kyla asks her teacher to make a worm for her out of play dough and the teacher agrees and starts making it. Kyla says, "Thank you"

spontaneously and the teacher responds with a smile, "You are welcome." Then she asks Kyla, "Can I have some more of your blue play dough? I don't have enough to make a big worm." Kyla responds by handing her some more blue play dough and the teacher replies, "Thank you for sharing with me. That was friendly." A few minutes later, the teacher says, "It is getting so long and big I think I need some help. Sam you are a good roller, could you help?" Sam starts working with her on the worm and the teacher replies, "Wow, thank you Sam. You are such a helper, we are a team and are making this together, this is fun."

It is important to model and prompt social behaviors and enthusiastically describe them through coaching language whenever they occur. Remember that excessive prompting can be overwhelming for a child and can lead to resistance. Try to use 10 times more descriptive comments or coaching statements than prompts.

ADJUST COACHING FOR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENTAL LEVEL

The various coaching methods can be delivered strategically and tailored to meet a number of academic, social, and other behavioral goals according to children's needs and developmental levels. See below for examples of modeling and coaching statements for teacher-student interactions. Level 1 represents children who are developmentally still engaged in parallel play.

Teacher-Student Social Coaching: Child Developmental Play Level 1

The following table provides some examples of the script for Level 1 teacher social coaching. You can think of this as learning a new language to speak with your students. You might want to write some of these statements down to have handy to practice while you are interacting with your students. It may feel awkward at first but like learning any new language with practice it gets easier.

TEACHER SOCIAL COACHING SCRIPTS CHECKLIST (LEVEL 1)

Check which kinds of social behaviors you typically model, prompt, coach or praise. Identify any you want to strengthen.

Social/Friendship Skills	Examples
Teacher Models	
❒ Sharing	"I'm going to be your friend and share my marker with you."
❒ Offering to Help	"If you want, I can help you by holding the bottom while you put another on top."
❒ Waiting	"I can use my waiting muscles and wait until you're finished using that."
❒ Suggesting	"Could we build something together?"
❒ Complimenting	"You are so smart in figuring out how to put that together."
❒ Behavior-to-Feelings	"You shared with me. You knew I wanted to play with that too. That is so friendly and makes me feel happy."
	"You helped me figure out how to do that. I feel proud that you could show me that."
Teacher Prompts	
❒ Self-Talk	"Hmm, I really wish I could find another piece to fit here."
	"Hmm, I'm not sure I know how to put this together."
❒ Asking for help	"Can you help me find another round piece?"
	"Can you share one of your cars with me?"
	"This is hard, I might need some help."

Teacher Response	
❒ Praise child when s/he shares or helps you	"That was so helpful and friendly to share with me."
❒ Ignore or model acceptance when child does NOT share or help	Continue to use descriptive commenting. "I can keep trying to find that round piece." (model persistence) "I can wait until you're finished playing with the cars." (model waiting) "I know it is hard to give up that car, so I will wait to have a turn later."
Puppet or Action-Figure Models	
❒ Entering Play	"Can I play with you?" "That looks like fun. Can I do that with you?"
❒ Being Socially Friendly	"I'm being friendly. I'd like to play with you."
❒ Ignoring Aggression	"I want to play with a friendly person. I think I will find somebody else to play with."

Teacher Peer Group Social Coaching

Teacher social coaching while students are playing with peers is immensely valuable for modeling and promoting social skills and strengthening friendships among classmates. Peer social coaching is somewhat different than individual teacher-child coaching because now teachers are facilitating the social interactions and relationships between students, rather than with the teacher. For example, a teacher can comment on times when she notices children are initiating friendly verbal interactions with each other, helping a friend, sharing with others, waiting and taking turns, or using words to ask for what they want. This social coaching will strengthen children's ability to learn social skills and to develop friendships. Teachers will adjust this type of coaching to the developmental level of their students. In preschool many children are just beginning to learn these friendship skills and some children are

developmentally more impulsive, inattentive, distracted and energetic than others while others are more fearful and withdrawn so learning particular social skills can be more difficult for them. Young children are still in the age of curiosity, individual exploration and discovering their sense of self and autonomy. As children enter grade school, most children will begin to be able to apply more and more of the friendship skills with others that they have learned in preschool. This is when social coaching efforts will truly start to show some payoff. However it is important to remember that children still show great developmental variability in their ability to consistently apply their knowledge about social skills. In every 2nd and 3rd grade classroom there are likely to be several children who still struggle to regulate their emotions during social situations, and these children will need more intensive social and emotion coaching.

The following example shows a primary grade teacher using this social coaching language while he is teaching a group reading lesson using the blackboard. The students are participating from their desks. Think about what social skills these children are learning.

The teacher asks Lisa to read a word and when she has difficulty he says, "Can you ask Susie to help you with that word?" Susie helps Lisa by whispering the word in her ear, and Lisa says the word. The teacher responds, "Lisa, I love the way you accepted help and how you worked well with Susie." As the teacher continues to point to words, he asks the whole classroom to say the next word together. When they do so, he looks at the class and says, "I appreciate all those who have been listening, thinking and working together. This classroom is like a team. You are friends helping each other to learn. Thank you. You are all learning to read."

Here we see that the teacher is helping his students learn how to help each other, how to ask for help, and what the benefits are for everyone. He is creating a feeling that the classroom is a family helping each other to succeed.

The following is another example of how teacher social coaching might occur in a 1st or 2nd grade classroom when students are working on a cooperative project.

The teacher walks over to a table where four boys are making a papier maché volcano. They are arguing over what shape it should be. The teacher says, "Sounds like you are trying to figure out what your volcano is going to look like. I can hear that you are all describing different ideas. It's good that you are talking together." Marcus replies, "They're not listening to my idea. I want it to be a really tall and skinny volcano with a deep pit on top." The teacher responds, "You described your idea really well, and I noticed just then that the others were listening. Now that they heard your idea, could you ask John what his idea is?" Marcus says, "John, what do you want to do?" John replies, "I want a really wide volcano like Mount St. Helen's." The teacher responds, "Marcus, it was really friendly of you to ask John, and all of you listened to him." (Teacher repeats this process until all ideas are heard.*) The teacher says, "Wow, you all have really good ideas and you were respecting each other as you shared your ideas. This is what good friends do. I wonder what should happen next? Can anyone think of a way to compromise and be a team together so that you can build this volcano?"* (If children are able to continue problem solving on their own, teacher might reinforce this process and move on. If children need more structure, she might introduce a possible solution and ask the children how they could make that solution work.)

In the next example in a preschool classroom, Kyla is seated on the floor next to her friend Jolie. They are each working on building a rather complex Lego structure and are having some trouble sharing and working together. See if you can pick out the prompts and peer coaching skills the teacher uses to try to facilitate some interactions and use of social skills.

Kyla begins to grab a Lego from Jolie's pile of blocks. The teacher notices this and says to her, " I can see you want that block, you can ask Jolie for that green rectangle Lego by saying, 'Can I have one of your green Legos please?'" Kyla repeats the words, but in a quiet voice, looking away from Jolie. The teacher says, "Kyla, I don't think Jolie heard you. Can you use a louder voice and say her name,

'Jolie, can I please have the green Lego.'" Kyla repeats the request in a louder voice. Teacher praises saying, "Wow! What a polite way to ask." Jolie continues playing, seemingly unaware of the request so the teacher says, "Jolie, I heard Kyla ask you for a green Lego. Can you let her know if she can use it?" Jolie says, "No, I'm not done with it." Teacher says, "Jolie, thank you for answering your friend. Kyla, I think that Jolie will let you have a turn when she is done. I see you waiting for a turn. I wonder what you can build while you wait?" As Kyla works with the blue Legos the teacher says, "You are very patient and doing some good waiting, and I think you have strong waiting muscles." Kyla responds by giving the teacher a blue Lego and the teacher thanks her and praises her for nice sharing, "You are good at sharing and that makes me feel happy." Then the teacher describes Jolie's structure by saying, "Jolie, you are working hard building that big fort. You are really concentrating." Jolie responds by handing some of her green Legos to Kyla who seems not to notice. The teacher responds, "Thank you Jolie. That is very friendly sharing" and she points out to Kyla, "Your friend Jolie is sharing her green Legos with you now. You can say, 'Thank you.'" Kyla says, "Thank you" and the teacher replies, "You're welcome" and Jolie repeats this. The teacher prompts Kyla, "Can you share some of your blue Legos with your friend, Jolie? That would be called trading ~ a green one for a blue one."

Without this teacher's social coaching, these two children would likely have had few positive interactions with each other. It's probable that they would have worked on independent parts of their Lego project until one of them grabbed what she wanted from the other and created some crying or unhappiness. This coaching was necessary for them to have this opportunity to learn what words to use to ask for what they want, to be able to wait, and even to be aware of each other's requests, needs or helping behaviors. These children are moving from Level 1 where they are completely in parallel play to Level 2 where they are beginning to interact with peers, but need much support to do so. At this stage, the teacher serves to provide the script for the interaction, giving the children the words to say to help navigate the social

interactions. Try to avoid vague phrases like, "Use your words" because very often young children don't know what words to use to get what they want. Instead model or gently suggest to them the words they can use. If they copy your words, praise them and if they ignore you, let it go.

Teacher Peer Group Social Coaching: Child Developmental Play Level 2

The following table provides some examples of the script for teacher social coaching with multiple children. Remember that without teacher coaching, young children are unlikely to initiate much sharing or helping behaviors and will likely have conflicts over things that each other wants. With this type of peer group social coaching, teachers can prompt the children to notice each other's moods, needs and activities and help support their social interactions. Teachers can still use themselves as a prosocial model remembering all the teacher-student coaching tips from the Level 1 table shown earlier.

Social Skills Training with Children of Different Ages and Developmental Stages

The practicalities of classroom activities means that most of the time the teacher will be facilitating interactions between students who are at very different developmental levels or different temperament styles. All of the ideas for coaching level 2 peer play will be useful when coaching students of differing developmental abilities. However, primary grade teachers in particular will also need to take into account that there are additional challenges to accommodate the differing developmental levels of children (ages 5-8 years). Even children who are at the same chronological age can be at very different stages socially, emotionally and developmentally. Some children in this age range are still in Piaget's "preoperational level" of cognitive development and are intermixing fantasy and reality and unable to understand the rules of games, or temperamentally cannot wait and take turns, whereas others are in the "concrete operational level" and are obsessed by the rules (Piaget & Inhelder, 1962). Without teacher support and social coaching, interactions between early school age children can lead to anger and bullying on the one hand, or withdrawal

TEACHER SOCIAL COACHING SCRIPTS CHECKLIST (LEVEL 2)

Check which kinds of social behaviors you typically model, prompt, coach or praise. Identify any you want to strengthen.

Social/Friendship Skills	Examples
Teacher Coaches	
❒ Asking for What They Want	"You can ask your friend for what you want by saying, 'Please can I have a turn on the computer?'"
❒ Asking for Help	"You can ask your friend for help by saying 'Can you help me?'"
❒ Asking a Friend to Wait	"You can tell your friend you are not ready to share yet."
	If your student responds to your prompt by using his or her words to repeat what you said, praise this polite asking or friendly helping.
Teacher Prompting	
❒ A Child to Notice Another Child	"Wow, look what a big tower your friend is building."
	"You are both using green markers."
	"I think Tim wants to tell you something."
❒ Initiate Interaction With or Helping Noticing Another Child	"Your friend is looking for small green pieces. Can you find some for him?"
	"Your friend has no cars and you have 8 cars. He looks unhappy. Can you share one of your cars with your friend?"

❒ To Give Child a Compliment	"Wow! Do you see the huge tower that Nancy is building?" "Wow! You can tell your friend his tower is cool." *If child does repeat this, you can praise him or her for a friendly compliment.* *If child does not respond, continue descriptive commenting.*
Teacher Praising	
❒ Behavior-to-Feelings	"You shared with your friend, that is so friendly and makes her feel happy." "You helped your friend figure out how to solve that problem, she looks very pleased with your help."
❒ Playing Together & Teamwork	"Your friend is enjoying working with you on that math problem. You look like you are a real team. You are both very friendly."
Puppet or Action-Figure Models	
❒ Puppet or Action Figure Offers to Share or Help	Puppet figure asks child, "Can either of you help me find a red block to make this truck?" Or, "Could I help you build that house?" Or, "Do you think we could ask Freddy if he'll share his train?"

and anxiety on the other hand. It is important that children not be criticized by teachers for their inability to understand the rules of a game because it is part of normal developmental variation in the 3-8 year age range and something they can't help. It is also important to help protect more advanced children's games and possessions from the destructiveness of hyperactive, disruptive students who can easily ruin

a complicated Lego model or art project that a child has spent hours building. Thus, when coaching children, teachers need to be sensitive to protecting developmentally delayed children from being bullied or isolated, while at the same time protecting the more developmentally advanced child from the impatience and tantrums of a more impulsive child. With patience, teachers can coach children in such a way that children learn the skills of being empathic and forgiving of each other. If teachers enlist their more empathic and developmentally advanced or articulate children in the process, they can actually be great models of positive social skills for children who are less skilled at this. See if you can identify the strategies the primary grade teacher is using in the next example to promote social skills between two children who are at two different developmental levels.

The teacher suggests that Liz, an anxious, fearful girl, use her words to ask her friend, Matias, to use the computer. The teacher models the words for her to use by saying, "Tell Matias, 'please can I have a turn on the computer?'" When Matias shares the computer, the teacher prompts the girl to say, 'Thank you' and shows appreciation to Matias for sharing with her by saying, "Thank you for thinking of your friend's feelings. That was very kind. Can you help her learn how to do that matching game on the computer? I saw you were good at that." The teacher thanks Matias for his help, "Wow you have taught your friend how to match those pictures. You are a team, I'm proud of how you helped Liz, you both are like a team and had a good time." Matias responds, "She did a good job." The teacher responds, "Wow you are really good at giving compliments, see how happy Liz is now."

In this interaction the two children are learning social skills as a result of this teacher's social coaching. Other children in the classroom listening to this exchange will also learn about what behavior gets the teacher's attention and approval. Liz is learning to be brave enough to use her words to ask for what she wants and to be polite when she gets what she wants. She is learning from the modeling and prompting by the teacher as well as from Matias' helping behaviors. In turn, Matias

is learning to be patient and caring for a friend. He receives praise from the teacher and then passes this praise on to his friend. Without this teacher's coaching, none of this learning would have likely happened. Instead Matias would have continued on the computer and the girl would have stood by helplessly watching.

Here is another example of a preschool teacher coaching four children playing in the kitchen area of the classroom.

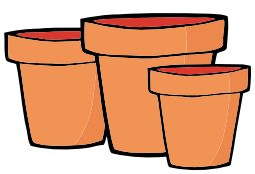
> *Daniel asks his friend Lia to put the crackers in the bowl and not in the cupcake tin. The teacher repeats Daniel's request to Lia and models what to do by putting her own crackers in the bowl. Lia copies her by putting her crackers in the bowl as well. The teacher praises and hugs Lia for listening and following her friend's suggestions. She says, "Lia that was very friendly." Another child, Seth, watches this and decides to put his crackers in the bowl too. The teacher then prompts Daniel, "Daniel did you see that Lia and Seth both did what you asked them to do? They are good friends. You can say, thank you." Daniel ignores this response and stirs the crackers in the bowl with a spoon and then suggests, "We need some liquid." The teacher hands him a pan of pretend warm milk saying, "I will share my milk with you."* (modeling cooperation) *Lia and Seth ask for milk too and the teacher lets Daniel know that his friends want more milk. A fourth child, Julie, joins in the group and wants to cook as well. Daniel says, "I need more crackers." Lia says, "These are mine" and points to her crackers. Seth says, "These are mine" as well. The teacher confirms that Seth and Lia have crackers but Julie doesn't have any crackers. The teacher suggests, "I wonder if anyone could be a good friend and share crackers with Julie. She doesn't have any." The teacher asks Daniel for some ideas for what they will do to help Julie. Daniel then notices that Lia has given Julie some of her crackers. He says to the teacher, "Look Lia gave Julie some of her crackers."* (He is now noticing Lia's social skill) *The teacher replies, "Lia you are really friendly and generous, you have made Julie feel happy because you shared your crackers with her."* (The teacher reinforces Lia's social behavior and ignores the fact that Daniel is not sharing.) *Daniel notices the teacher's praise to Lia and says,*

"Julie you can have some of mine too" and Seth watching this also gives her some of his crackers. The teacher responds, "Wow you are building a real team helping each other, that is what friends do for each other."

This teacher does a combination of prompting behaviors and descriptive commenting of social behaviors to get the children to notice what each other needs and how they are helping each other. She models social skills, and praises their sharing efforts. She does not give attention at times when the children ignore her suggestions or when they are selfish, so that these interactions will not turn into power struggles. This back and forth prompting and coaching is teaching the children appropriate social interactions and helping them develop positive relationships.

Coaching of children's social interactions is probably one of the most exhausting and important tasks for teachers. It often involves a juggling act, with the teachers trying to alternate their attention, coaching, prompting and encouragement between many students who are each wanting their teacher's undivided attention. It involves meeting the developmental needs of children at different stages of language, social and emotional development and being able to see the interaction from the different points of view of each child. In the long run, this social coaching will pay off and will result in a happier classroom with children who will learn to help each other, cooperate and are able to appreciate each other's differences and strengths. In turn, this will lead to greater academic learning as well.

EMOTION COACHING TO ENCOURAGE BEHAVIORAL SELF-REGULATION



The fourth kind of foundational building block for the teaching pyramid that is helpful for nurturing students' learning is called *"emotion coaching."* This communication approach helps children begin to develop feelings literacy; that is, a vocabulary for expressing their emotions

to teachers and others. Teachers start this coaching by naming the students' emotions whenever they see a child is experiencing an emotion such as being happy, confident, calm, surprised, excited, curious, proud, brave, frustrated, sad, lonely, worried, disappointed, tense, or angry. Labeling the feeling at the time that the child is experiencing it allows the child to associate the feeling word with an internal emotional state. Once children have developed an emotion vocabulary, then they can recognize their own feelings and verbally share their feelings with others. This results in their ability to more easily regulate their emotional and behavioral responses. Did you know that most preschoolers only know 2.5 words for feelings —mad and sad and sometimes happy? Even then, they often cannot correctly distinguish between mad and sad. The goal is to help children to have a richer vocabulary to express their feelings, hopefully to recognize more happy feelings than negative or distressful ones, and to learn how they can cope with their negative feelings. Using emotion coaching when children are feeling unpleasant or uncomfortable emotions will help to build their self-confidence and scaffold their ability to self-regulate when upset. Commenting on their happy, joyful, proud, calm, curious, brave and excited emotions will increase their self-awareness of these pleasant moods. Children who can understand, verbalize, and regulate their own feelings will ultimately be able to recognize feelings in others and sensitively respond to them. Thus, emotion coaching eventually leads to children's development of empathy for others' feelings and viewpoints.

Emotion coaching eventually leads to children's development of empathy for others' feelings and viewpoints.

Scripts for Emotion Coaching

The following is a list of emotions and scripts that can be commented upon when interacting with your students during the day. Use this checklist to reflect on the type of emotion words you focus on with your students and practice using some different emotional vocabulary than you normally use. Think about the needs for individual students' behavior plans for target emotion vocabulary you will try to coach them.

TEACHER EMOTION COACHING CHECKLIST

Check which kinds of emotions you typically model, prompt or coach. Identify any you want to strengthen for specific children.

Emotions	Examples
❒ Happy	"You look like you are having fun playing with your friend, and he looks like he is happy and excited doing this with you."
❒ Frustrated	"That is frustrating and hard to do but you are staying calm and patient and keep trying again to figure out how to it. I think you are going to get it."
❒ Proud/Pleased	"You look proud of that drawing, I know that you worked for a long time to get the details just the way you wanted them!"
❒ Confident	"You seem confident and calm when reading that story. You seem like you feel very sure about your reading!"
❒ Patient	"You are so patient. Even though it fell down twice, you just keep trying to see how you can make it taller. You must feel pleased with yourself for being so patient."
❒ Disappointed	"I can see you are disappointed that he wouldn't share with you. But you stayed so calm and were just so brave by going to ask someone else to play. That is a very strong thing to do."
❒ Worried/Fearful	"You look afraid to do that. Sometimes that can be scary. I think you have the courage to try that out."
❒ Jealous	"I can see you are a bit jealous and wish you had one of those. I wish I had one too. Maybe we can ask him to show us how it works. You are getting braver every day."

❒ Forgiving	"You are forgiving of your friend because you know he made a mistake. Everyone makes mistakes sometimes. I am proud of you for still being his friend."
❒ Curious	"You are so curious. You are trying out and discovering every way that can work."
❒ Embarrassed	"It is embarrassing to spill that everywhere. Sometimes I drop things too and get paint all over my clothes, and then I am a bit embarrassed too."
❒ Caring	"You are so caring and thoughtful. You are thinking about your friend's feelings and are really helpful and kind. Your friend looks like she feels calmer now because you helped her."
❒ Mad	"I can see you are really mad that he grabbed that away from you. I am really proud that you kept your body calm and used your words."
❒ Nervous	"I can see you are nervous the whole thing will fall down. You are being careful and patient and staying calm."

Coaching Positive Emotions

Coaching positive or pleasant emotions is straightforward. Practice noticing and labeling each emotion that you see, along with the reason a child may be feeling that way. For example, "You look like you are really excited about finishing that project! Your whole body is bouncing!" or, "Your face looks so proud right now. It was hard to finish that problem together but you did it!" or, "You've got the biggest smile on your face. Your wrote that word neatly and carefully," or, "You read that book to your friend and that made her feel happy." "It looks like your hard work paid off. You seem really satisfied with the way that

Teachers should notice five times more positive than negative feelings in children.

this project turned out. I know it took careful and patient planning." If teachers provide the name for the emotion and some information about what behavior led to the emotion, they are helping the student link the feeling with the cause. Teachers can also include information about the clues they used to guess the emotion (smile, bouncing body). This will help the teacher tune the child into physical cues about feelings. Try to coach as many positive feeling states as you can. If teachers pay attention to a range of positive feelings, children will actually start to be in a positive feeling state more often. In other words, teacher attention to these feelings can make children feel happier, more joyful, and more proud of themselves. A good rule of thumb is to try to notice five times more positive than negative feelings in children.

Pair Negative Emotion Coaching with Coping Responses

Coaching children's negative or unpleasant emotions is a little trickier because excessive teacher attention to negative emotions can make children feel more frustrated, angry, or sad. However, if done skillfully, coaching of unpleasant emotions can help children feel validated and understood, as well as help them regulate their mood and calm down and learn that these unpleasant feelings are normal reactions and change with time. To do this it is important to pair teacher comments about children's negative feelings with positive coping statements. For example, a child is having trouble learning to add two-digit numbers together and the teacher says, "That is frustrating, but you are staying so patient. I see you working hard. You keep trying and I think you are going to get it right!"

Teachers validate the unpleasant feeling, avoid giving it too much attention, and focus on a coping response.

Or, a child is disappointed because he wanted to finish a project, but it is time to move on to another activity. The teacher says, "That must be very disappointing for you. I'm really sorry. Even though you are unhappy about having to stop, you are staying calm and starting to put things away. Let's make a plan to give you some time to work on this project later. " Note that the goal is not for children to immediately change unpleasant feelings into happy ones, but rather to suggest that the child has the ability to cope with the unhappy

feelings. In this way, teachers validate the unpleasant feeling, avoid giving it too much attention, focus on a coping response to the negative feelings, and predict an eventual positive change in the negative feeling. This may even pre-empt a negative response, such as a temper tantrum.

However, it is also possible that a child may be too dysregulated to listen to a teacher's emotion coaching. If a teacher has labeled the unpleasant emotion once and provided the coping strategy, and the child continues to cry hard or to tantrum, then it is a good idea for the teacher to back off, ignore it, and give the child some space to calm down himself before talking again. Additional attention or talking during the tantrum will likely prolong the fussing. When the child has finally calmed down, then the teacher can label that emotion. "Your body is looking much calmer now. You really tried hard to calm yourself down. You are getting strong at learning to do that. Come and join us at the reading table." When one student is out of control, unhappy, tantruming, or whining excessively, teachers can help the other students by labeling his feeling and then coaching them to give the student privacy. For example, "John is frustrated right now. The best way to help him is to give him some privacy to calm down and then we'll be able to help him feel better. You can help him by ignoring."

When one student is out of control, teachers can help the other students by labeling his feeling and then coaching them to give the student privacy.

Sensitive teachers will be tuned in to the difference between tantrums or crying because things are not going a student's way and true unhappiness, hurt, or grief. A typical tantrum is best ignored, while a student who is truly heart-broken will need more teacher support and understanding. In these situations, a teacher can still label emotions and provide coping thoughts, but may also provide more support through the emotional reactions. For example the teacher may say, "Billy, I am so, so sorry to hear that your dog died. I know how much you loved him, and I see that you are so sad and maybe a little mad. Sometimes it's hard to keep our bodies safe when we're feeling so awful, and it can take a long while to feel better. Let's find a place where we can sit together, where your body can be safe."

Tailoring Emotion Coaching to Your Student's Temperament

Once teachers have learned how to generally coach children's emotions, the next task will be to tailor emotion coaching to the particular temperament or emotional needs of each individual student. Remember we talked about how every child is different temperamentally and developmentally. For example, a withdrawn, anxious, isolated, or fearful child will benefit from focused coaching when he takes risks and tries something new. The teacher can say, "You are so brave, you put up your hand and shared something interesting" or, "That was really courageous to invite him to help you" or, "I could see it was scary to talk to that girl, but you did it and now you are enjoying playing together!" On the other hand, children who are angry and defiant should receive extra emotion coaching at times when they are calm, relaxed, patient, joyful and agreeable. For example, the teacher can say, "You seem happy and peaceful now. You went along with your friend's suggestion and it worked out well for you both." Children who are impulsive and inattentive need to be coached especially when they are staying calm, patient, and are able to wait and are thoughtful in their responses. The next example shows a teacher working with a preschool child who is often impulsive, inattentive, and quick to throw a tantrum when he doesn't get what he wants.

> *The child is sitting at the lunch table waiting for the other children to come. The teacher says, "Gregory, you are waiting so patiently. Your body is calm and still! I can see from your face that you are excited that it is lunch time, but I appreciate that your hands are to your own body! Would you help me pass out these cups. As Gregory passes out cups, the teacher comments, "You are passing carefully and slowly, and each cup that you put down is staying right side up. I bet you are proud of being able to help your friends. I'm grateful to have such a calm, patient helper!"*

This teacher recognizes that it takes a great deal of self-control for Gregory to sit still, control his body, and pass out cups. She wants to highlight his calm body so that he associates the regulated feeling with the word, and with her approval for his self-control. She also gives him a special job to further reinforce her pride in his ability to stay regulated.

In the next example, think about the emotion coaching used by a 2nd grade teacher who is working with a girl who has a reading delay.

Anna is trying to read the book out loud to her teacher. She is struggling with the words. The rest of the class are reading silently on their own. She tries to read a word and can't say the word, and her teacher responds, "This is frustrating and hard work but you are staying calm and keep trying. I think you are going get it, it starts with the letter bb.. bee" and Anna repeats the letter, "b..eev..er." The teacher repeats the word and says, "Wow, that's not easy but you were patient and you did it, you look proud. Each day you learn more words. Let's try the next word."

As demonstrated in this example, the teacher supports Anna's insecure and frustrated feelings by pointing out her persistence and predicting her eventual success. She gives Anna a bit of scaffolding to help her be successful and to build her self-confidence and ability to stay focused on this difficult learning process.

Combine Emotion and Persistence Coaching

Remember the persistence coaching we discussed earlier? Emotion coaching can often be combined with persistence coaching because tasks that require persistence can often be frustrating and difficult at first. However if a child persists, then proud feelings of accomplishment and self-confidence may result. Notice how the teacher in this next example combines persistence and emotion coaching to help Soleil with the frustrating task of cutting and using large, sticky packing tape. The task is beyond the girl's developmental ability and could be quite frustrating. Most children would give up. Let's see how this teacher encourages the girl's need for independence as she continues to try to do this difficult task herself.

Soleil is working hard on cutting some big sticky tape and the teacher comments, "You are being very patient with the tape and now you have cut three pieces of tape." Soleil starts to cut again and asks the teacher to hold the tape. The teacher holds the tape for her and

Soleil successfully cuts another piece of tape. The teacher smiles at her and appreciates her accomplishment by saying, "You look proud of your cutting." As Soleil puts the tape on her picture, the teacher comments, "You have been so focused on this work. Do you like this picture?" And when Soleil says yes, the teacher says, "I am glad you like your picture, you have worked hard on it." Soleil cuts another piece of tape but seems to be getting upset. The teacher asks, "Are you getting frustrated with the tape?" Soleil says "No" but looks more frustrated and asks her teacher for help. The teacher acknowledges her feelings by saying, "It is frustrating when the tape gets stuck together. You're doing a great job of keeping your body calm even though you are frustrated. You keep working at it and are patient." The teacher continues by saying, " You are working so diligently with the tape and you are feeling so…" The teacher leaves a pause here so that Soleil has a chance to identify her own feeling.

Here is an example of how a teacher is combining the persistence coaching discussed earlier with the emotion coaching strategies. The teacher effectively helps her student keep working on this frustrating task by acknowledging the frustrated feelings but then moving on to her persistence at working hard, staying focused, and staying calm. The teacher gives her just enough support to keep her student going without taking over the activity and doing it for her. Soleil ends up feeling very proud of her accomplishment.

Using Pretend Play to Promote Social and Emotional Skills

Pretend or imaginary play is a good way for teachers to help their students practice social and emotional skills by using all the coaching skills mentioned above: prompting, modeling, descriptive comments, and encouragement. Using a puppet, doll, or action figure can be a fun way to enter into children's imaginary worlds. For example, through the use of a puppet teachers can ask a child, "Will you play with me?" These are

Imaginary play with teachers helps students learn empathy skills.

the friendly words a young child needs to learn to initiate an interaction with a peer. If the student ignores the puppet's overture, the puppet can ask again, modeling how one can keep trying. Or, if this still doesn't work, the puppet can say, "I'm disappointed but I'll be patient and wait until you have finished with that and then maybe you will play with me." On the other hand, if the student agrees to let the puppet play with him the puppet can reply, "Thank you. That makes me happy. You are a friend. What shall we do?" Teachers can also engage in imaginary play by pretending to be a hungry horse or happy cow or grumpy pig, or by making the noise of a tired airplane or train. For example, if some students are making play dough cookies, the teacher can pretend they are real and say, "I'm hungry, can I have a taste of your green cookie?" If one of the students offers the teacher a bite, the teacher pretends to eat some and then comments on how good they taste. "I'm so happy to enjoy your delicious cookies! Thank you for being such a kind cook." With pretend phones teachers can make up imaginary calls. Using doll houses or Legos with figures (e.g., doctor, policeman) a teacher can have a character pretend to be sick or model coming to the rescue when a house is burning down. By taking on the role of a character or action figure in pretend play, the teacher is helping her students practice social skills, express feelings with emotion language, and understand the emotions of another. It can be a powerful way to promote children's imaginary worlds as well as to help them experience the perspective and feelings of another character. This is the beginning of empathy development.

After kindergarten, there seems to be less time in school schedules for imaginary play. Teachers in these classrooms can try to foster students' fantasy world by asking them to write or tell stories about certain situations. For example, the teacher can present some typical classroom scenarios such as, a child wants to read a book someone else is reading and that person won't share the book with her, or a child who is accused by other children of cheating at a game.

Then the teacher can ask the children to write or transcribe stories about the children's feelings or what things they can do to be friendly or feel better. Afterwards groups of children could work together to act out their plays taking on the various parts. Many children's books are written around social problems (sharing, bullying, friendship problems). These can be used as jumping off points for children to brainstorm, role play, or write about solutions.

Extending Coaching Skills to Other Times than Play

Social, emotion, academic, and persistence coaching is a way of communicating and interacting that teachers can use most any time during the day – such as during lunch times, during work time, in the school hallway, or on the play ground. By using this coaching throughout the day teachers will be contributing to their students' optimal language, social and emotional development as well as strengthening their relationship with them. In the next example two teachers are using child-centered social coaching during breakfast with the children at their table. Think about what these children are learning.

> *The teacher praises Rebecca for good eating. She is eating yogurt, and the teacher says, "That is very healthy food." Can you pass the bowl of yogurt to your friends to see if they want any more?"* (Prompting a share.) *She says, "Okay" and the teacher thanks her, "You are a good yogurt sharer."* (Praise for sharing.) *Another child observes this sharing and imitates it by passing the cookie plate and the teacher responds, "Malcolm, thank you for passing those, you are really helping your friends and they look pleased."* (Modeling a polite response.) *Another child says, "Anyone want some carrots?" The teacher responds, "Wow sharing points all around. You can dip your carrots in the yogurt."* (Descriptive praise.) *The teacher says, "Food tastes better when you share it, don't you think?"*

Coaching can be used during work time in older students' classrooms, perhaps as the teacher circulates around the room to monitor students' progress. See how this next teacher combines all the different types of coaching.

"John, thank you for taking your time to check your work." (persistence) *"Maya, I'm so proud of you for figuring that out. I can see it was hard, but you stuck with it. You must be feeling really good about your accomplishment."* (persistence and emotion coaching) *"Let's see Andrew. It looks like you're stuck on that part. You've got the first part of the word right. I'm going to let you work with your buddy to get that next part." When he gets some help, the teacher says: "Thank you two for working together on that—it's important to be able to get help from a friend."* (social coaching) *"Simon, I see you are using alliteration in that sentence—so many words that start with 'l'. That sentence is fun to say!"* (academic coaching) *"Sally, I appreciate the way you are sitting quietly and calmly in your seat while you work."*

We can see that this teacher is tailoring her comments to the needs of each student. She is also able to fit in this coaching as part of her regular teaching routine.

Teach and Encourage Parents to Use Descriptive Commenting and Coaching Strategies at Home with their Children

Encourage your students' parents to do this child-directed descriptive commenting and coaching during their play and reading times at home with their children. Teachers can offer workshops to parents to train them in these coaching skills at monthly parent night meetings or by sending home regular newsletters. Incredible Years has a specific 4- to 6-session School Readiness Parent Program that teachers can use for showing preschool and kindergarten parents video examples of coaching methods. If English is not the parents' first language, encourage them to speak in the language that they know best because when they do so their rhythm, cadence and tone of voice will be more natural and fluent. This commenting has the same effect regardless of what language it is done in. Encourage parents to find books in their own language or tell them stories about their culture and help them feel proud of their language. For children in a

Teachers can offer workshops to parents to train them in these coaching skills or send home regular newsletters.

bilingual environment, the number of words the child can speak will be split between the two languages s/he is learning. Also help parents understand that sometimes children who are exposed to more than one language are initially a little slower to use either language because they are sorting out the different sounds and meanings. Tell them not to worry because these initial delays will go away eventually and their child will be able to distinguish between different syllables and use the two languages with ease after a while.

CONCLUSION

When teachers interact with their students using a child-directed approach coupled with academic and persistence coaching they are showing students they are interested in what they are thinking and doing and that they appreciate their curiosity, discoveries and exploration of ideas. This approach strengthens the teacher-student learning relationship as well as supporting students' cognitive and language development and process for learning academic skills. By doing this teachers are scaffolding children's attention and beginning to help them learn how to stay focused, calm and to persist with their work despite many classroom distractions and feelings of frustration as they try to learn something new or explore an idea. As teachers support this learning and cognitive brain development, they are still allowing for children's developmental need for autonomy and independent exploration, which further enhances their motivation to learn.

When teachers use social and emotion coaching with students, they are modeling empathy and understanding and helping their students develop specific social skills and emotional literacy. This approach enhances teachers' emotional connections with their students as well as setting the stage for promoting supportive friendships with their classmates. In so doing, teachers are strengthening their students' social and emotional brain development because understanding and expressing feelings is the first step toward self-regulation and eventual development of empathy for others' point of view. Understanding and using specific social skills such as asking, waiting, cooperating, sharing, complimenting

and forgiving are core to successful friendships, increased sense of security and self-confidence and better cooperative learning processes among children. By scaffolding students' negative feelings with emphasis on their coping responses (waiting patiently and trying again in contrast to whining or giving up) teachers are giving more focused attention to students' positive feelings and coping strategies, and are helping them learn how to stay calm despite feelings of frustration as they try to learn something new. Academic, persistence, social and emotion coaching are tools at the bottom of the teaching pyramid that help to build a stable classroom foundation that optimizes children's ability to learn.

To continue the gardening metaphor, by carefully selecting coaching tools according to students' individual developmental needs, teachers are training and gently supporting weaker branches of the plant until they have the strength to flourish amidst a variety of other types of plants.

TO SUM UP...

Teacher Academic and Persistence Coaching Skills

Academic and Language Coaching

- Use many more descriptive comments than questions.
- Describe children's actions, objects, positions (inside, beside, next to), colors, numbers, shapes.
- Notice and talk about what students are interested in.
- Prompt children with language difficulties to communicate by modeling words and suggesting sentences to repeat.
- Praise and give positive feedback to students for expressing their ideas (that is a great suggestion you gave!).
- Use new and more complex words to expand children's vocabulary.
- Listen to, imitate, or mirror student's words and sentences.
- Describe your own actions to your students (e.g., "I'm putting my folder in my desk now).
- Share your feelings of joy with your students.
- Avoid correcting or criticizing a child's exploration process; praise self-discovery and creativity.

Persistence Coaching

- Describe when students are working hard, concentrating, being calm, staying patient when doing an activity, being curious or engaged in the discovery process.
- Describe students' persistence with a frustrating activity by trying again, sticking with it, thinking of a new way to do it, and staying focused.

- Listen carefully to your students and try to understand what they are telling you about their thoughts, ideas and discoveries.
- Comment and praise your students for listening to their peers or to you.
- Use puppets to make up stories and model persistence coaching using the puppets words.
- Use make-believe games such as toy telephones or hand puppets or dramas to encourage communication.
- Encourage students to discover, explore, experiment and provide support when mistakes are made.
- Curb your desire to give too much help—give just enough support to avoid frustration but not so much you take over the exploration —encourage students' problem solving thinking process.
- Inform parents about academic and persistence coaching methods which they can use at home in their play interactions; tailor coaching to students' particular learning needs.

TO SUM UP...

Teacher Social Coaching

Teacher-Child Interactions

- During play interactions, model social skills for children such as offering to share, waiting, giving a compliment, taking turns, asking for help.
- Prompt children to ask for help, take a turn, share something, or give a compliment and then praise them if it occurs; let it go if the child does not respond to your prompt.
- Praise children any time they offer to share with friends or help them.
- Participate in pretend and make-believe play with children by using a doll, action figure, or puppet to model skills such as asking to play, offering to help, taking a turn, giving a compliment, calming down with a deep breath and waiting, and apologizing.

- Model and prompt children with a suggestion of the appropriate friendly words to ask for what they want or to make a suggestion.
- Try to give enough help so children are successful, but not so much help that you take over.

Peer Group Teacher Social Coaching

- Occasionally prompt students to notice what their peers are doing or to help another student in some way.
- Help children understand that when they have shared, that the other person felt happy; this helps them see the connection between their behavior and another's feelings.
- Praise and encourage children's teamwork and cooperation.
- Use descriptive comments instead of asking questions.
- Prompt, coach, and praise children's friendly behaviors whenever you see them (e.g., sharing, helping, taking turns, being polite).
- Laugh and have fun with your students.
- Help parents know about specific social skills you are working on in the classroom throughout the year.
- Help parents know about good friendship matches in the classroom so they can set up play dates.

TO SUM UP...

Teacher Emotion Coaching Skills

- Try to understand what the students are feeling and wanting.
- Describe children's feelings when teachers see them ~ avoid asking a child what they are feeling or why they are feeling that way because they may not have the words to tell you.
- Label children's positive feelings more often than their negative feelings.
- When naming negative feelings such as frustration or anger, point out the coping strategy the child is using: "You look frustrated, but you are staying calm and trying again."

- Praise children's self-regulation skills such as staying calm, being patient, trying again when frustrated, waiting a turn, and using words.
- Support children when they are frustrated, but recognize when a child is too upset to listen and just needs space and privacy to calm down.
- Model the words and encourage children to use words to use to express their feelings and needs.
- Help students learn ways to self-regulate such as taking deep breaths, saying "I can calm down" or, "I can wait" or, "I can solve the problem" when getting frustrated.
- Praise and encourage children when they stay calm in a frustrating situation.
- Cuddle and soothe younger children when they are hurt or frightened.
- Model as a teacher staying calm and patient when responding in frustrating situations.
- Help parents know about emotion words teachers are promoting in the classroom and specific ones targeted for their children (e.g., being brave for anxious student; or being patient for impulsive student; or being happy for sad student).

The Incredible Years®
Teacher Classroom Management Self-Reflection Inventory
Teacher Coaching Strategies

Date: _____Teacher Name: _____

Teachers learn extensively from self-reflection regarding their classroom management and the teaching strategies they are using that are working or not working. From these reflections teachers determine personal goals for making changes in their approaches to bring about the most positive learning climate they can. Use this Inventory to think about your strengths and limitations and determine your goals for teaching your students.

Academic, Persistence, Social and Emotion Coaching	1 = NEVER 3 = OCCASIONALLY 5 = CONSISTENTLY
1. I give more attention to positive social behaviors and emotions than to inappropriate behaviors and negative emotions. (5:1)	1 2 3 4 5
2. I have identified positive social behaviors, emotions, and academic behaviors I want to coach in particular students on their behavior plans.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I model positive self-talk, positive emotions and social behaviors in my interactions with my students and with other teachers or adults in the classroom.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I make positive calls to parents to compliment them about their children's successes or positive behavior.	1 2 3 4 5
5. I communicate my belief to students that they can succeed and promote their positive self-talk.	1 2 3 4 5

6. I help children learn how to compliment each other and have compliment circle times.	1 2 3 4 5
7. I prompt children in the classroom to notice another child's friendly behaviors or persistence with a difficult task.	1 2 3 4 5
8. When students are frustrated, I focus on their persistence and patience working hard to solve a difficult problem.	1 2 3 4 5
9. I share my positive feelings (proud, happiness, joy, courage) when interacting with children.	1 2 3 4 5
10. I use descriptive and academic commenting during my interactions with my students (e.g., describing objects, positions, colors). I target language delayed students for additional descriptive coaching.	1 2 3 4 5
11. I use persistence coaching with all my students – and I especially target students with attention difficulties for this coaching.	1 2 3 4 5
12. I use social coaching with all my students when they are playing with peers and I target socially inappropriate or withdrawn children especially for this coaching.	1 2 3 4 5
13. I use emotion coaching with all my students – and I use more positive emotion words than negative. I target positive emotion coaching for aggressive children.	1 2 3 4 5
14. When I use negative emotion coaching I qualify the negative emotion with recognition of positive coping or calming behavior the student is using to continue to problem solve.	1 2 3 4 5

15. I avoid use of questions, corrections, criticisms and demands when coaching children.	1 2 3 4 5
16. I focus on children's efforts and learning– not just end result.	1 2 3 4 5
17. I make efforts to teach and encourage parents to use coaching strategies with their children and communicate with them about targeted social, emotional or academic skills.	1 2 3 4 5
Future Goals Regarding Attention, Praise and Coaching Strategies:	**Total**

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