



## In-Class Video Activity



## Building Positive Relationships with Children

A series of higher education activities based on the CSEFEL Preschool Modules. These activities are designed to be embedded in coursework and include ideas for in-class activities and assignments.

### Rationale

“Building positive relationships with young children is an essential task and a foundational component of good teaching. Children grow and thrive in the context of close and dependable relationships that provide love and nurturance, security, and responsive interactions” (Joseph & Strain). A positive adult-child relationship built on trust, understanding, and caring will foster children’s cooperation and motivation and increase their positive outcomes at school (Webster-Stratton, 1999).



### Objective

1. Students will describe the importance of building positive relationships with children.
2. Students will identify strategies that can be used to build positive relationships with children.
3. Students will reflect on their interactions with children and consider strategies to help build positive relationships when working in early childhood settings.

### Type of Activity

Large group discussion

### Time Allotment

Minimum of 30 minutes; more time may be needed for sharing and discussion.

### Materials Needed

CSEFEL Preschool Module Video Clip 1.1: Adult-Child Conversations

Flip Chart paper

### Introduction to Topic and Transition to In-Class Activity

1. Explain the importance of building relationships with children and how this is at the foundation of everything we do with children.
2. Explain the importance of relationships in terms of children’s development and success in school.
3. Highlight the point that having an established relationship with a child helps make working through challenging behavior easier.

### Sequence for In-Class Activity

1. Introduce Video Clip 1.1 and explain that students will see a Head Start teacher engaged in a conversation with a child as she plays at a table.
2. Ask students to list things the teacher does to build a relationship with this child.
3. Read the following quote from Uri Bronfenbrenner: “Every child needs one person who is crazy about him.”) and ask students to generate ideas of ways that teachers can build relationships with children. List these ideas on flip chart paper.
4. Discuss what teachers can do so they have time to engage in one-to-one or small group conversations with children.

### Closing

Make the point that play is an important vehicle for building positive relationships with children. Play provides adults with opportunities to follow the child’s lead, comment on what the child is doing, and build positive interactions.

(continued)

## Adaptations & Considerations



### Potential issues and concerns for the instructor to consider

- Some students might state that the video of the teacher-child interaction is staged, that the teacher was acting, and that they could not possibly have extended periods of time to interact 1:1 with a student. (Some responses that the instructor can share are: 1 on 1 conversations do not have to be 5 minutes long, students should consider times of the day when these conversations might take place, if there are multiple adults in the room each adult can make sure they “connect” with a certain number of children each day, etc.).

### Adaptations

- While some students may not directly work with children but rather work with families or other professionals (e.g., administrators, social workers, technical assistance providers, etc.), they can reflect back to a time when they did conscientiously work to build a positive relationship with a child.

### Online Class Considerations

In a discussion forum:

- Ask students to watch Video Clip 1.1 online
- Have students post their ideas (trying not to repeat each other’s responses) for building relationships with children.
- Ask students to review the list that has been posted by their classmates and comment on specific strategies that can be used with a child whose behavior is extremely challenging.
- Have each student post a videotape of him/herself interacting with a child in a positive, nurturing, supportive manner.
- Ask all students to view at least two video postings of their peers and comment on the strategies used to build and/or maintain teacher:child relationships.

### Practicum Seminar Considerations

- Ask students to reflect on the teacher:child relationships they have established in their current early childhood settings.
- Ask students to select one or two things that they are going to do when they get back to their early childhood settings to improve their relationships with all children or with a particular child.
- Each student will videotape an interaction with a child in his/her early childhood setting. Students will present their videos in class, with feedback provided by peers and the instructor.
- Over time, ask students to reflect on the changes they see in their interactions with children in their early childhood settings. Ask the students to share their reflections.

## Resources and Readings

1. Building positive relationships with young children by Joseph, G. E., & Strain, P. S. <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/modules/module1/handout5.pdf>
2. What Works Briefs #12: Building Positive Teacher-Child Relationships by Ostrosky, & M.M. Jung, E.Y. <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout12.pdf>
3. CLAS Collection #2: Building Healthy Relationships with Families by Corso, R. M., Fowler, S. A., & Santos, R. M. (Editors) [http://store.cambiumlearning.com/cs/Satellite?c=CLG\\_Product\\_C&childpage-name=Store%2FStore\\_Layout&cid=1277940958046&pagename=Store\\_Wrapper&rendermode=pre-viewnoinsite](http://store.cambiumlearning.com/cs/Satellite?c=CLG_Product_C&childpage-name=Store%2FStore_Layout&cid=1277940958046&pagename=Store_Wrapper&rendermode=pre-viewnoinsite)