

Social Competence & Young Learners

The Early Childhood -
Childhood Connection



Presenters

- Cecile Gleason, Ph.D.
The College of Saint Rose, Albany
- Yoon-Joo Lee, Ed.D.
Brooklyn College, CUNY

Topics for this session

- Social competence & its connection to learning
- Teaching teachers about social competence
 - Use of Anecdotes
 - Pyramid Model

Social competence & learning





"For the preschooler, being socially competent is synonymous with being ready to start school."

(Schrag, Styfco, & Zigler, 2004, p. 23)

What is social competence ?

For the young child, it is the capacity to:

- form close and secure adult and peer relationships;
- experience, regulate, and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways;
- explore the environment and learn—all in the context of family, community, and culture.

(Yates, et al., 2008)

Social competence & learning

- Emphasizes the child's growing ability to follow rules, cooperate, problem solve and get along with others
- Includes skills in social referencing, caring about social standards, establishing a theory of mind, and showing empathy

(Landy, 2002)

Social competence & learning

- National Institute of Mental Health has highlighted social competence in terms of successfully functioning in the school setting, including getting along with peers and communicating with teachers.
- These are skills and dispositions “rooted in the relationships that infants and toddlers experience in the early years of their lives.”

Peth-Pierce, R. (2002). *A good beginning: Sending America's children to school with the social and emotional competence they need to succeed*

Challenging Behaviors

In contrast, challenging behaviors – those patterns of behavior that interfere with learning and/or positive interactions - are associated with negative outcomes such as school failure, substance abuse, and difficulties with peers.

(Campbell & Ewing, 1990; Egeland, Kalkoske, Gottesman, & Erikson, 1990; Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000; Kazdin, 1985)



"The process of dropping out
begins prior to the child
entering school."

(Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000, p. 542)

Social competence & learning standards

New York State's new Pre-K Standards

- http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards/pdfiles/prekindergarten_learning_standards_jan_10_2011.pdf

5 Pre-K Domains

Approaches to Learning*

Physical Development and Health

Social Emotional Development*

Communication, Language, and Literacy

Cognition and Knowledge of the World

Approaches to learning: benchmarks

- Children actively and confidently engage in play as a means of exploration and learning.
- Children approach tasks, activities and problems with creativity, imagination and/or willingness to try new experiences or activities.*

Approaches to learning: benchmarks

- Children exhibit curiosity, interest, and willingness in learning new things and having new experiences.
- Children actively engage in problem solving.
- Children demonstrate persistence.*

Social emotional development: benchmarks

- Children recognize themselves as unique individuals having their own abilities, characteristics, feelings and interests.
- Children regulate their responses to needs, feelings and events.
- Children demonstrate and continue to develop positive relationships with significant adults...
- Children develop positive relationships with their peers.*

Social emotional development: benchmarks

- Children demonstrate pro-social problem solving skills in social interactions.
- Children understand and follow routines and rules.
- Children adapt to change.*

Teaching teachers about social competence



Teaching tools

- Use of Anecdotes
- Pyramid Model of Positive Behavioral Support

Thought provoking questions

- To what extent are issues of social emotional competence in young children, discussed during this presentation, applied to social/emotional development of older children?
- To what extent are teacher candidates prepared to facilitate children's social competencies in their classrooms?
- What are the skills, knowledge and dispositions that teacher candidates need to be effective teachers?
- How do we, as teacher educators, address social competence of young children in our courses?

Critical skills for teachers: Observation & reflection

Through the use of different teaching tools, teacher educators need to support teacher candidates' development/ refinement in:

- Observation of children in order to enable them to take the children's perspective and attend to that perspective when making decisions that impact daily experiences.
- Reflective practice that allows space for examining one's own biases, values, and actions in the classroom.

Bringing the reality into the discussion: Use of anecdotes

Mark is playing with Jane, a girl of his age at the sandbox. The caregiver is also sitting next to them. The caregiver teaches Jane a game that compares the quantity of sand presented in two hands.

When the caregiver puts out two hands, Mark just touches the sand in the caregiver's hand, while Jane looks at the caregiver's two hands. She holds sand in her hands and repeats several times "Show me, show me which hand has the most." Then, she turns to Mark and asks him several times, "Show me which hand has more." Mark just looks at her with a smile and explores the sand in the sandbox.

The caregiver intervenes and asks Jane, "Can I choose?"

The use of anecdote: A tool for reflection

“Calvin. Calvin. Calvin.”, Ira calls.

“I’m talking to you Calvin!” Calvin does not respond to Ira. Instead, Calvin reaches over and takes a Spiderman cup from Harry, who quickly turns to look at him. Calvin smiles and puts it back. Harry smiles.

“Calvin. Calvin,” Ira looks directly at Calvin, waving a large plastic bottle of orange juice in front of him while calling his name. Calvin does not look up.

Calvin leans towards Harry, who is sitting on his right and says something. Harry smiles as Calvin speaks.

Ira calls out again, "Calvin! Talk to me!"

Calvin replies quietly without looking up, "No."

Ira asks Calvin, "Do you use the bathroom?"

"Stop it!" Calvin replies. "I don't want to talk to you."

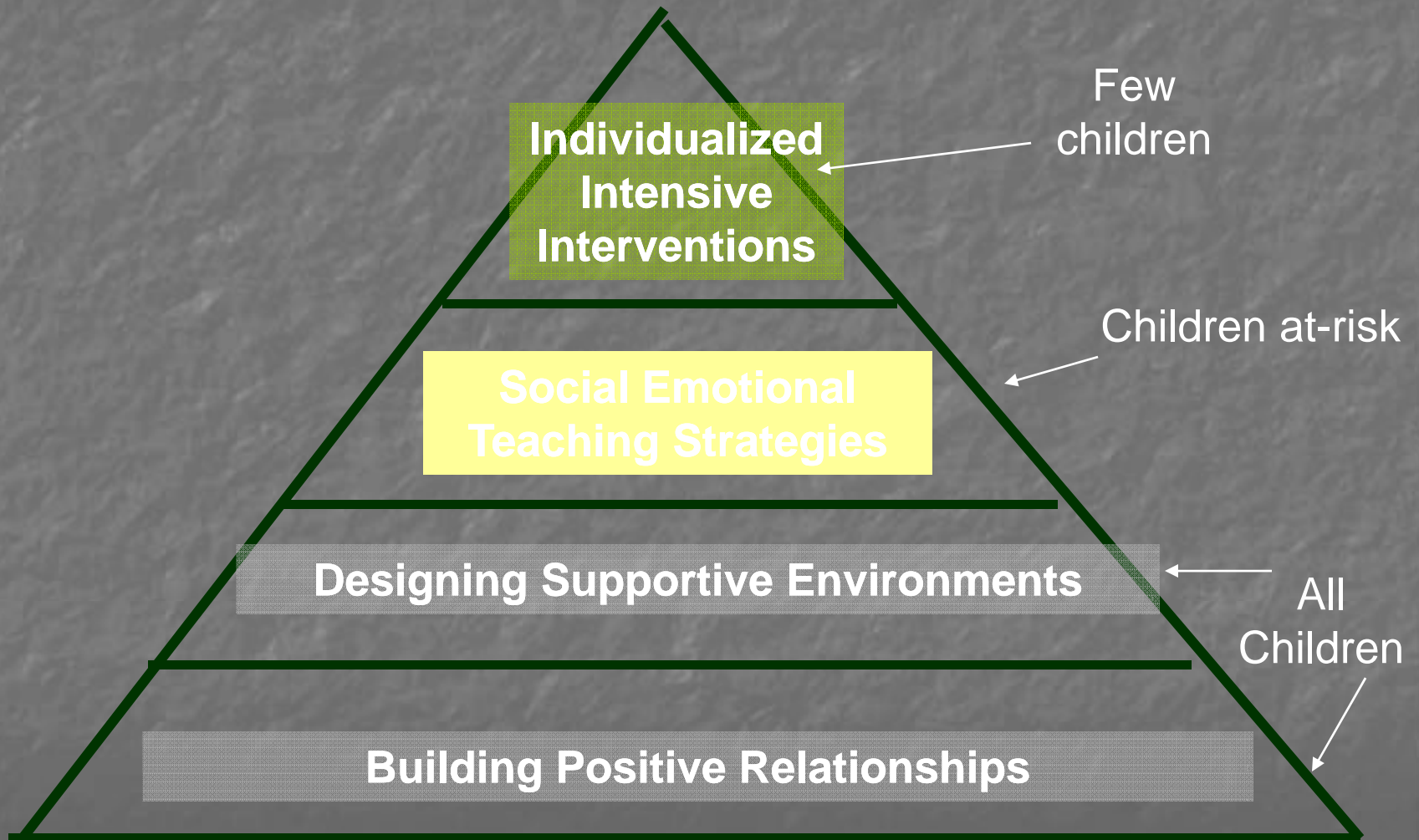
The teacher intercedes. "Calvin is not being such a good friend to you right now. Show someone else who's interested," she tells Ira.

Resources for educators: The Pyramid Model



- A 3-tiered model developed by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) - a national consortium centered at Vanderbilt University focused on improving the social and emotional outcomes of young children.
- Purpose: providing resources to teachers and families to systematically support young children's social and emotional development by promoting social skills acquisition with enough intensity to build social competence and to prevent challenging behavior.

3-Tier Pyramid Model



Three Tiered Models

ACADEMIC SYSTEMS

INTENSE, INDIVIDUAL INTERVENTIONS

Individual students
Assessment based
High intensity procedures

TARGETED, GROUP INTERVENTIONS

At-risk students
High efficiency
Rapid response

UNIVERSAL INTERVENTIONS

All subjects
All students
Preventive
Proactive

BEHAVIORAL SYSTEMS

INTENSE, INDIVIDUAL INTERVENTIONS

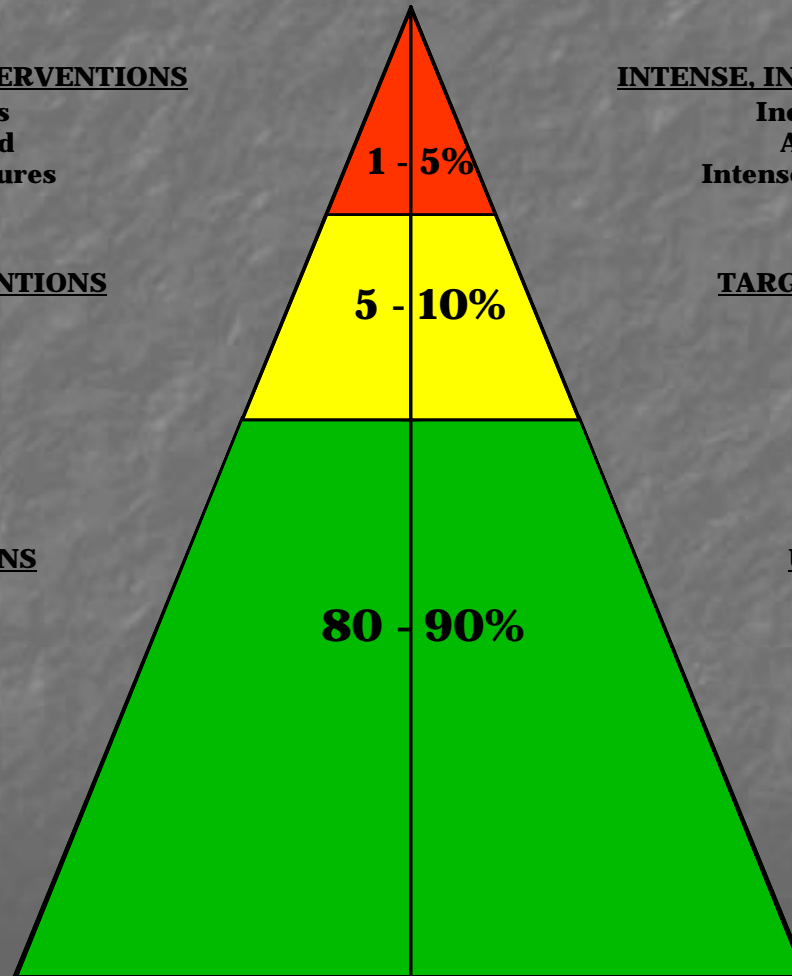
Individual students
Assessment based
Intense, durable procedures

TARGETED, GROUP INTERVENTIONS

At-risk students
High efficiency
Rapid response

UNIVERSAL INTERVENTIONS

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What's at the web site?



- Materials in English/Spanish
- Infant/Toddler, Preschool, & Parent Training Modules with videos, activities, & case studies
- Sections for families and teachers
- Scripted stories
- *What Works* briefs
- Research syntheses

[CSEFEL: Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning](#)

Reframing Activity

(adapted from the Multicultural Early Childhood Training Team, 1998)

Problem Statement	Reframed Statement
She constantly knocks over other children's constructions and destroys their artwork.	She may want to join children's play but doesn't know how. She may be frustrated because she doesn't know how to use the materials.

Focus on teaching new behaviors

Behavior Support Plan

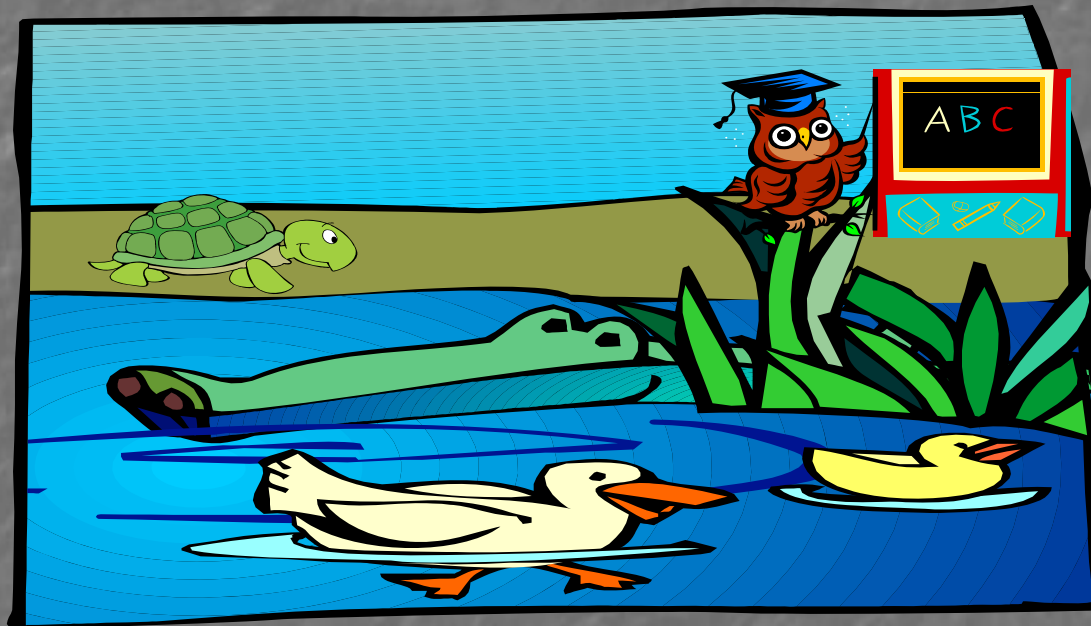
Preventing

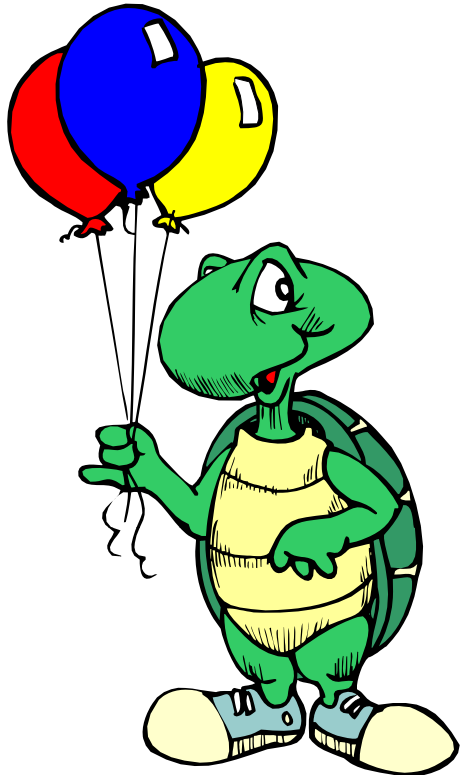
Teaching

Responding

<i>Behavior Support Plan</i>		
Preventing	<u>Teaching</u>	Responding

Social stories





Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think

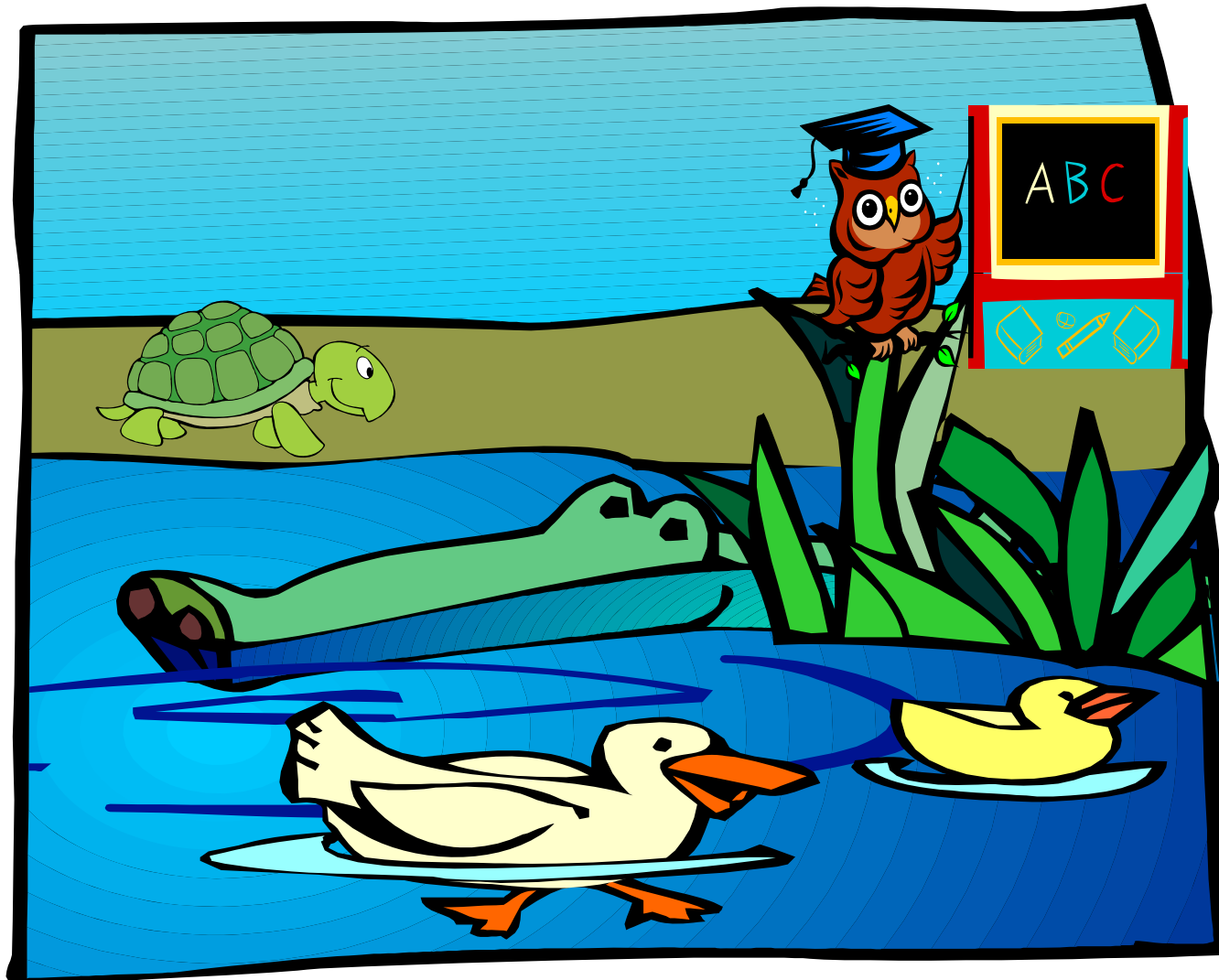
A scripted story to assist with teaching
the “Turtle Technique”

By Rochelle Lentini, University of South Florida

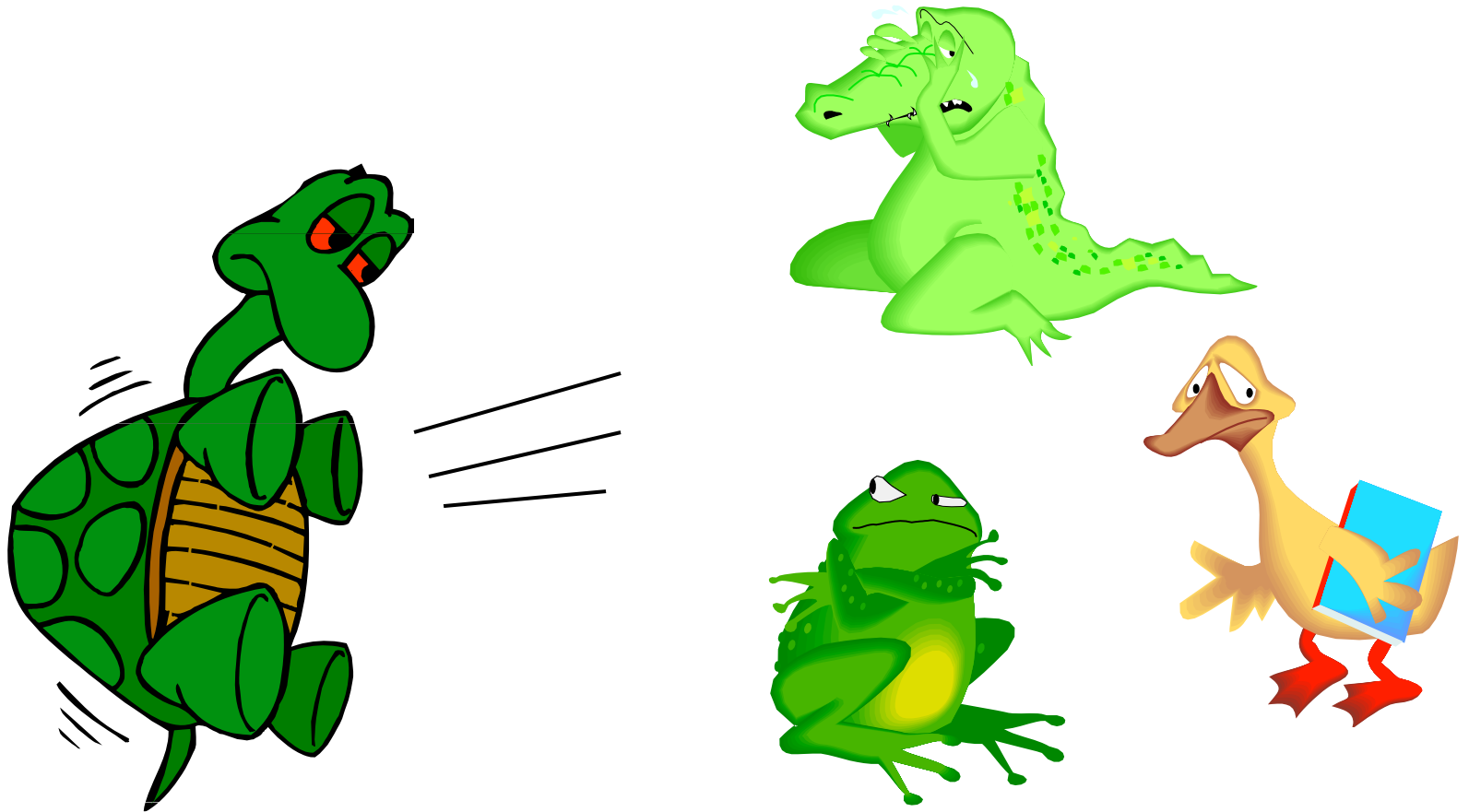
Updated 2007

Created using pictures from Microsoft Clipart® and Webster-Stratton, C. (1991). The teachers and children videotape series: Dina dinosaur school. Seattle, WA: The Incredible Years.

Tucker Turtle is a terrific turtle. He likes to play with his friends at Wet Lake School.

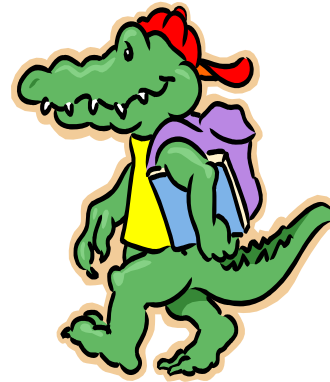
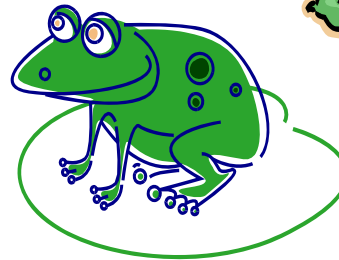
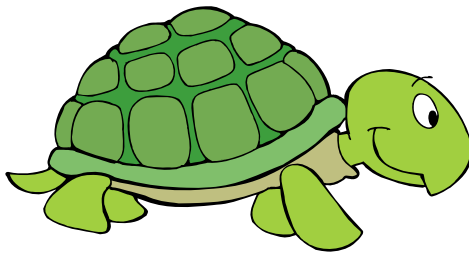


When Tucker got mad, he used to hit, kick, or yell at his friends. His friends would get mad or upset when he hit, kicked, or yelled at them.

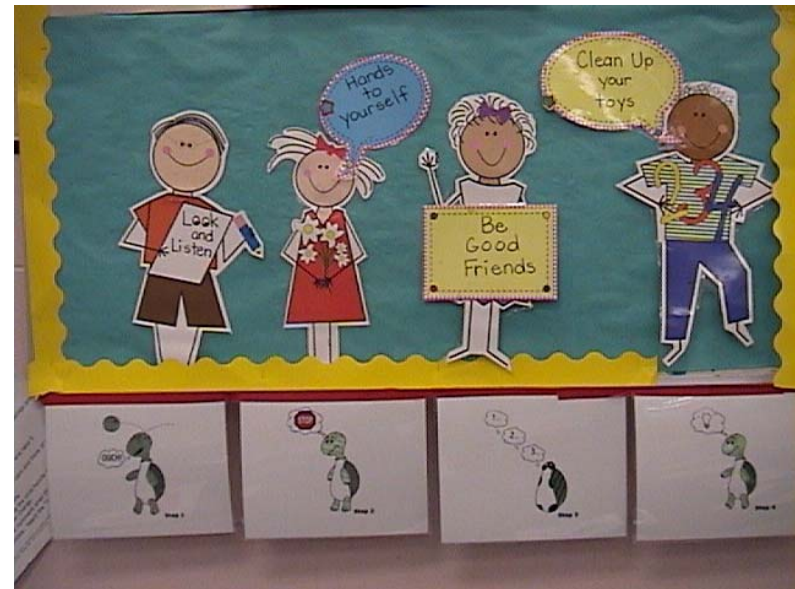
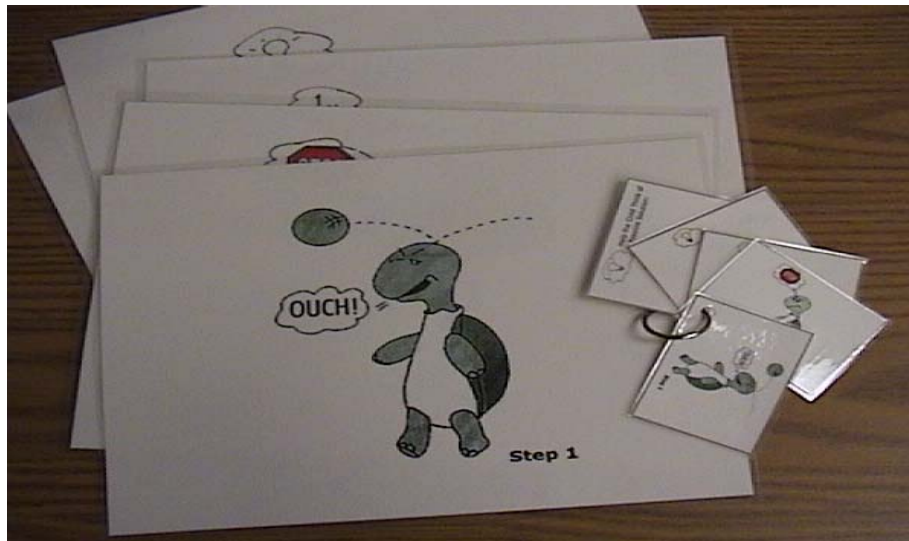




Tucker's friends are happy when he plays nicely and keeps his body to himself. Friends also like it when Tucker uses nice words or has a teacher help him when he is upset.



Use Turtle Technique within Daily Lessons



Example: using video



Key messages



Positive relationships serve as the foundation for supporting social competence.

When expectations are consistent & developmentally appropriate, when activities are meaningful, and the environment is supportive, children are more likely to engage in prosocial behavior.

Social skills can be actively taught, including friendships skills, emotional literacy skills, coping skills, and problem solving skills.

Resources

- Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports <http://www.pbis.org/>
- Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention <http://challengingbehavior.org>
- New York State's PreKindergarten Learning Standards http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards/pdfd/ocs/prekindergarten_learning_standards_jan_10_2011.pdf