# *Beyond Self Care*

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School of Social Work, University of Maryland Baltimore

*Ready at Five, School Readiness Symposium, December 15, 2021*

# *Workshop Description*

Over the past 2 years, our work and lives have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic and related shuttering of classrooms and childcare settings.

While our hope was that this school year would be a return to "normalcy," we know clearly that the children entering classrooms, their families and the early childhood educators and service providers are exhibiting the cost and stress of the past two years, making typically expected tasks significantly more difficult.

This workshop will focus on supports that the workforce needs during this time, and ways to approach this at the individual, classroom, programmatic and systemic levels.

Participants in this workshop will have the unique opportunity to engage in a facilitated learning community beyond the Symposium to support ongoing discussions about practical ways to support the workforce.

# *Agenda*

- What we've learned from the past two years
  - But were not applying it – we are asking kids to operate as if they haven't missed time, families and teachers to do the same
- The result is STRESS - Normalizing and measuring your own stress
- Developmentally appropriate responses to stress
- Implementing Supports for self-regulation and slowing down the process (FAN)
- Community Services like Consultation, MCF, Parents Place
- Returning to the basics: Pyramid Model
- Individual, classroom, programmatic and systemic levels.
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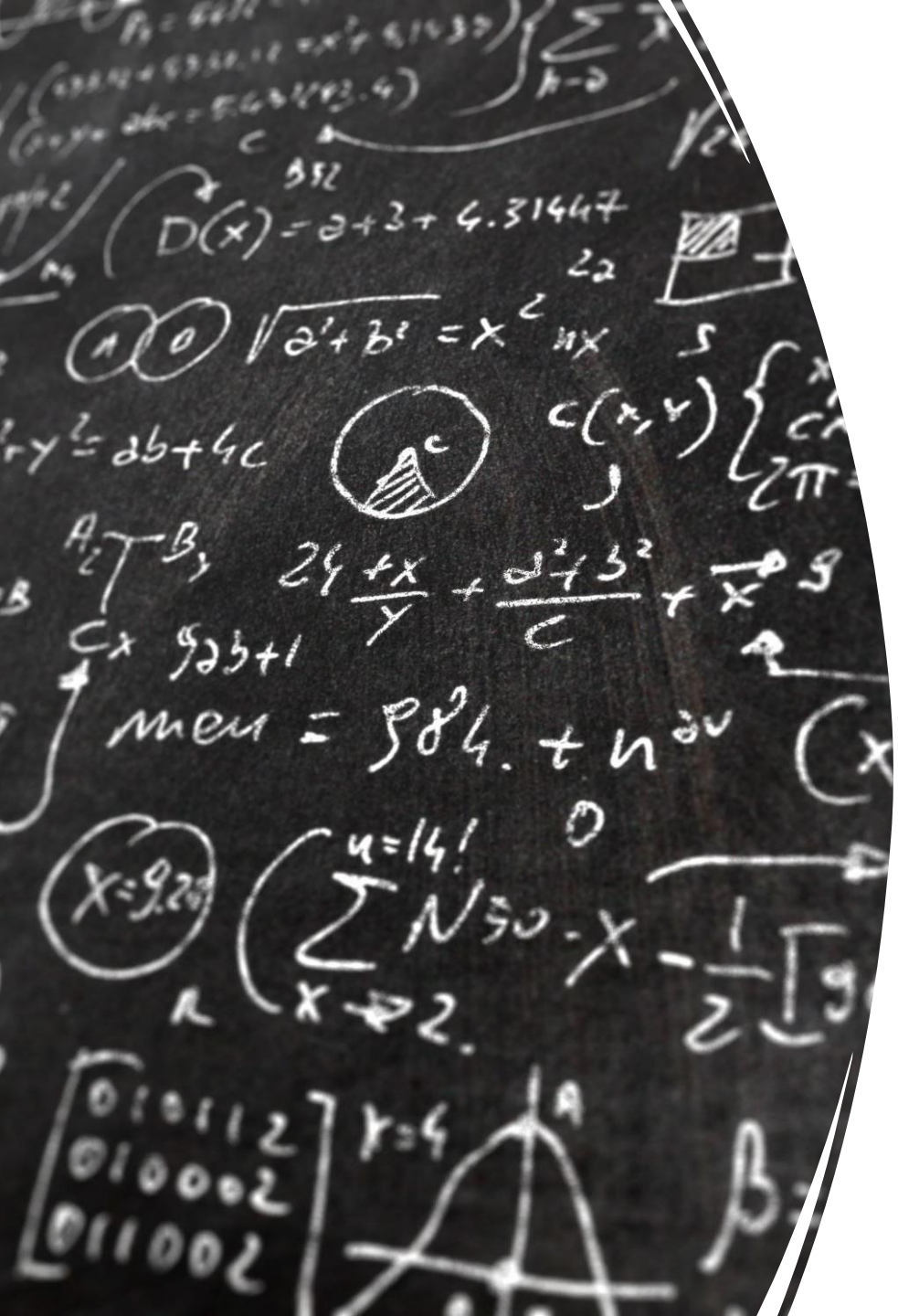

# Objectives for Today

- Define and describe the social/emotional (and overall) programming shifts that are happening within your settings as a result of the current COVID-19 context.
- Share ideas and barriers related to reopening, self-care, and the establishment of routines and expectations.
- Apply this perspective at the individual, classroom, programmatic and systemic levels.
- Discuss the opportunity to participate in an ongoing community of practice and support for the early childhood workforce during this time.

# Introductions

- Your name
- Your role
- Your agency
- What compelled you to select this session?

Now A Little About Us!

# PIEC (Parent Infant Early Childhood) Program

*The Institute for Innovation & Implementation*
*University of Maryland School of Social Work*

***The Institute:*** The University of Maryland's Institute for Innovation & Implementation serves as a training, technical assistance, evaluation, policy, systems design, and finance center to supports local, state and national governments and organizations to implement effective systems and practices to best meet the needs of children and youth with complex behavioral needs and their families. The Institute brings with it nationally recognized expertise in the fields of children's behavioral health, systems of care, evidence-based and promising practices, care management, finance, policy, systems design, evaluation, juvenile justice and child welfare.

***PIEC Unit:*** The Parent, Infant, and Early Childhood (PIEC) unit within the Institute is focused specifically on infant and early childhood mental health efforts throughout the state of Maryland and currently partners with a range of providers as well as state and local agencies to support the growth of the system of care targeting at-risk parents and young children. The PIEC team is comprised of experts in the field of maternal and child health policy, program development, research and evaluation and partners with National content experts as well as the Institutes' National Technical Assistance Network to raise the voice of infants and young children in issues related to mental health financing, homelessness in transition age youth, adult substance use and intimate partner violence. PIEC work output includes: federal and state quarterly and annual reports, policy and

https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/our-work/ruth-young-center-for-maryland/piec/

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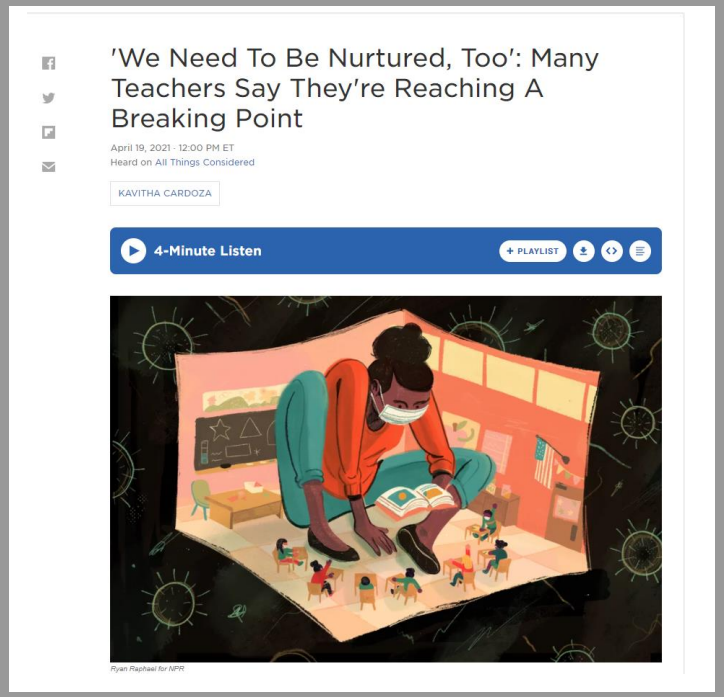
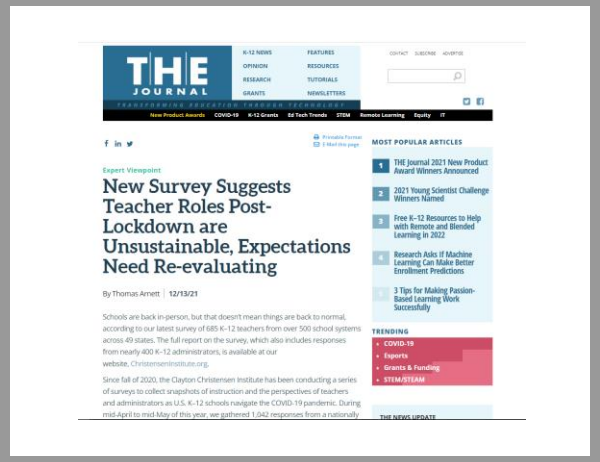
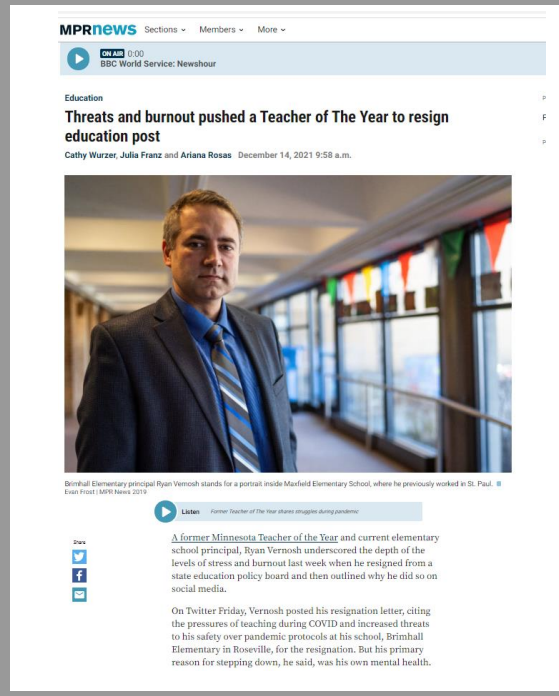
# Perspective During COVID

- The early childhood workforce is adaptable by nature.
- We are community focused, we are used to thinking collaboratively across systems, and generations, and families.
- This situation has raised the profile of many things that we care about:
  - Family trauma
  - Disparities and issues of equity and racism
  - Supporting the ECE workforce
- Policy changes can happen as a result of this on the national, state and local levels.






# *What we know from the past 2 years*

- Teachers are *highly* stressed
- Children are illustrating higher behavioral and developmental needs
- Families are harder to engage - they are blocked from the building, *but it comes at a cost!*
- The system is expecting none of the above to impact test scores or other measures of child impact

# Current Status of Academic Success

**MAP**

- The pass rate for math fell by more than half from the 33% who passed in the spring of 2019.
- English scores were down by about 8 percentage points since testing before the pandemic.

**KRA**

- 40% of students were prepared for kindergarten compared to 47% in the two years before the pandemic.

Source: https://www.baltimoresun.com/education/bs-md-maryland-test-scores-20211208-wk5aen5r5bfx5eag2p57pamjcy-story.html

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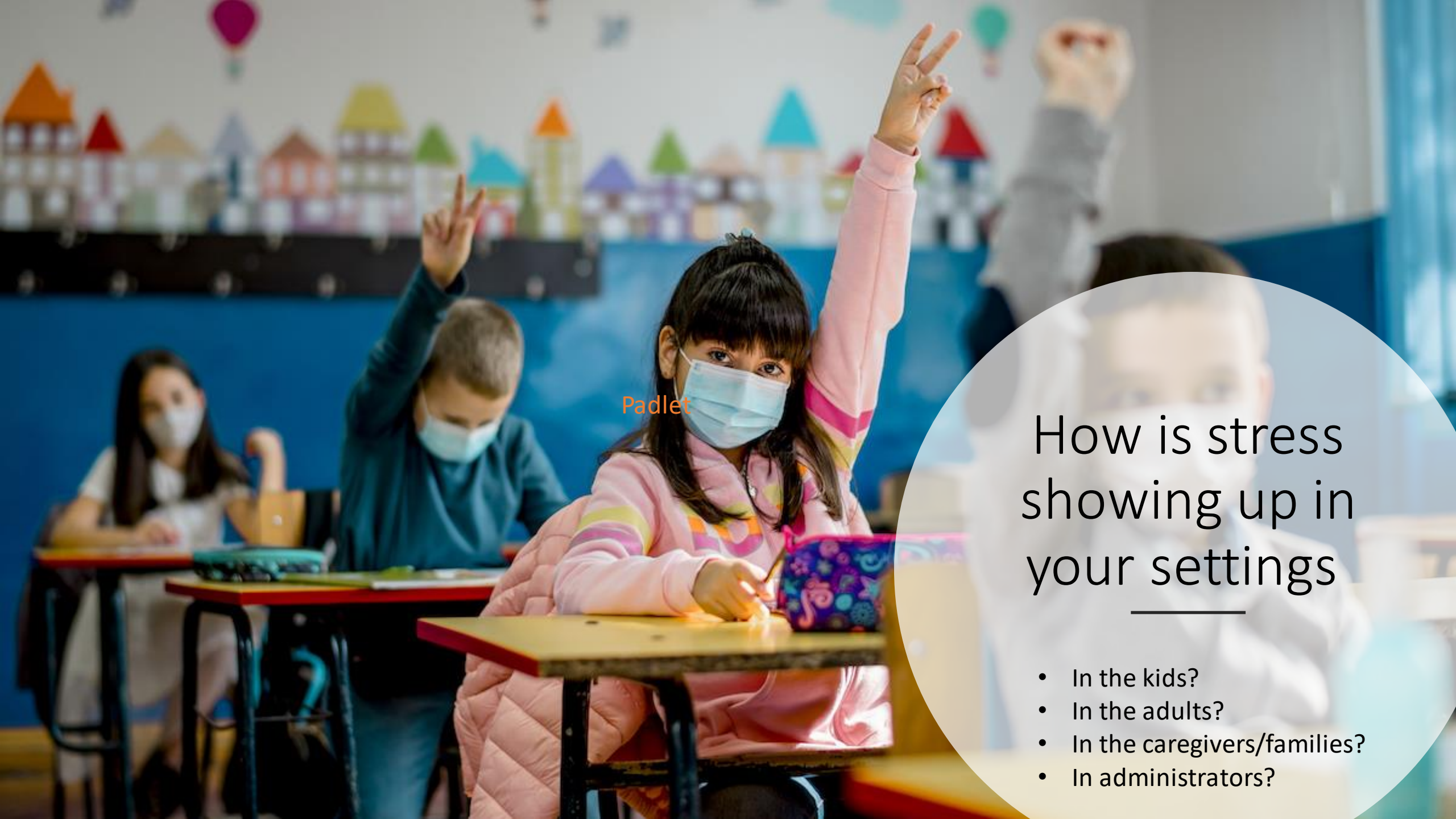


# How is stress showing up in your settings

- In the kids?
- In the adults?
- In the caregivers/families?
- In administrators?

Educators need more than an extra day to extend spring break

What strategies have helped and which haven't?

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*Starting with the premise that kids, and parenting, and families are stressful under normal circumstances!*

# Children are dependent on adults for regulation. So, how do adults facilitate regulation?

- Parents facilitate Emotion Regulation in Empathic & Sensitive Relationships by:
  - Discussion of feelings
  - Modeling
  - Manageable, predictable and consistent routines
  - Parental self efficacy
  - Confidence in parent-child relationship
  - Parent's ability to manage their own emotions

# Social emotional readiness

**Why does getting ready for kindergarten include focusing on social emotional development?**

- Children who are viewed as ready for kindergarten typically exhibit high attention, approach, and adaptability coupled with low activity and reactivity.
- These characteristics tend to be especially valued by teachers and describe a child who is “teachable,” or school ready.
- Since many children enter formal schooling earlier by attending pre-K for 4-year olds, often called 4-year-old kindergarten, there is a need to examine school readiness earlier than kindergarten, which may look very different developmentally.

# *Defining Mental Health for Early Childhood*

Infant-early childhood mental health is the developing capacity of the child from birth to 5 years of age to form close relationships, experience, tolerate and express a range of emotions without lasting collapse, and explore the environment and learn.

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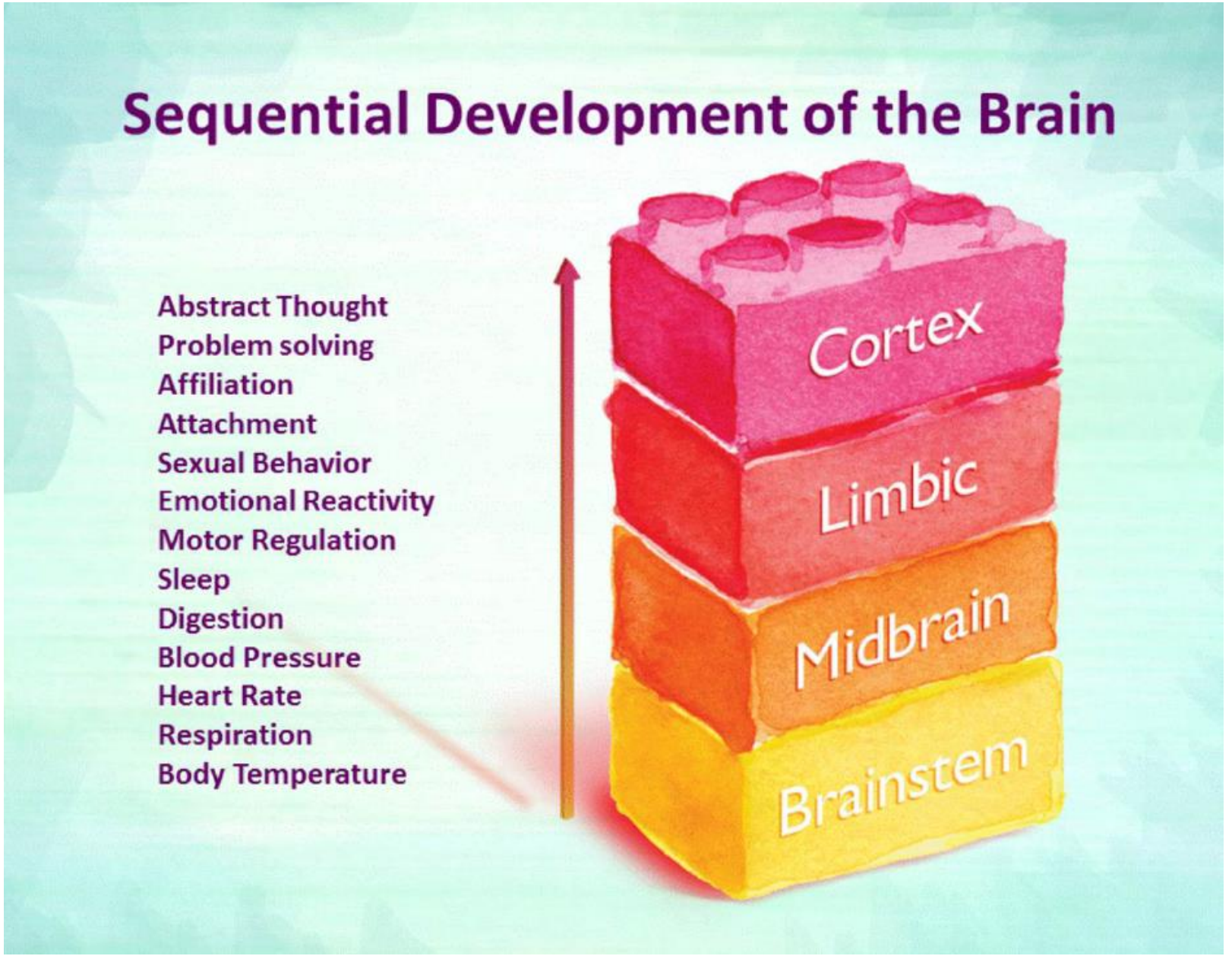
***The:***

***- lack availability of routines,***
***- lack of exposure to environments focused on early childhood,***
***- lack of access to peers,***
***- exposure to the stress of their caregivers,***
***- loss of loved ones has all impacted young developing children's access to these "normal" developmental activities.***



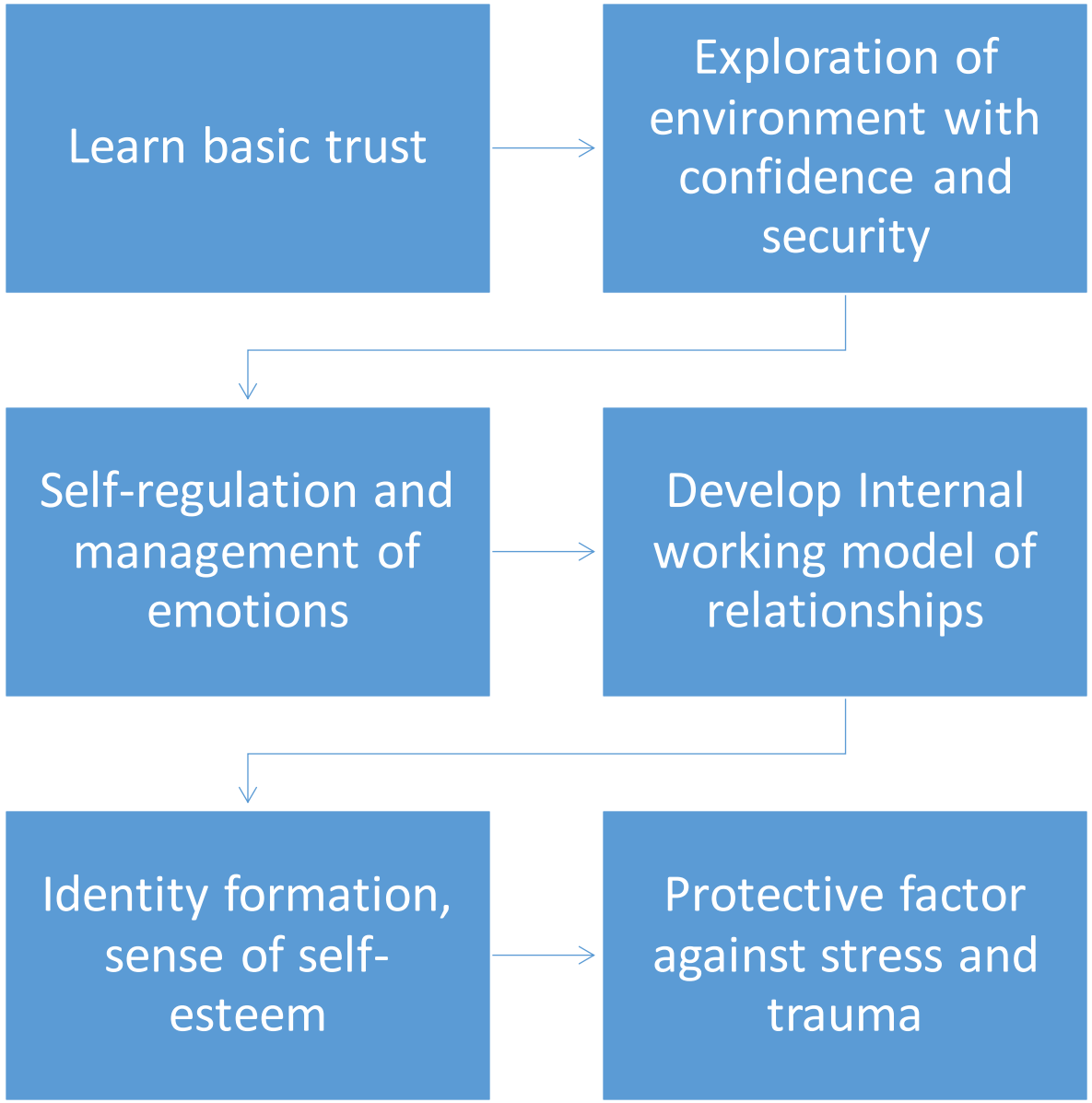

Dr. Linda Chamberlin, Institute for Safe Families: http://www.instituteforsafefamilies.org/sites/default/files/isfFiles/The_Amazing_Brain-2.pdf

# The Importance of Relationships:

- Children grow and thrive in the context of dependable relationships.
- These relationships must provide love, nurturance, security, responsive interaction, and encouragement of exploration.
- Without at least one such relationship, development is disrupted and consequences can be severe and long lasting. If restored, however, a relationship can foster remarkable recovery.
- Nurturing and responsive relationships build healthy brain architecture that provides a strong foundation for learning, behavior, and health.
- When protective relationships are not provided, elevated levels of stress hormones disrupt brain architecture by impairing cell growth and interfering with the formation of healthy neural circuits.

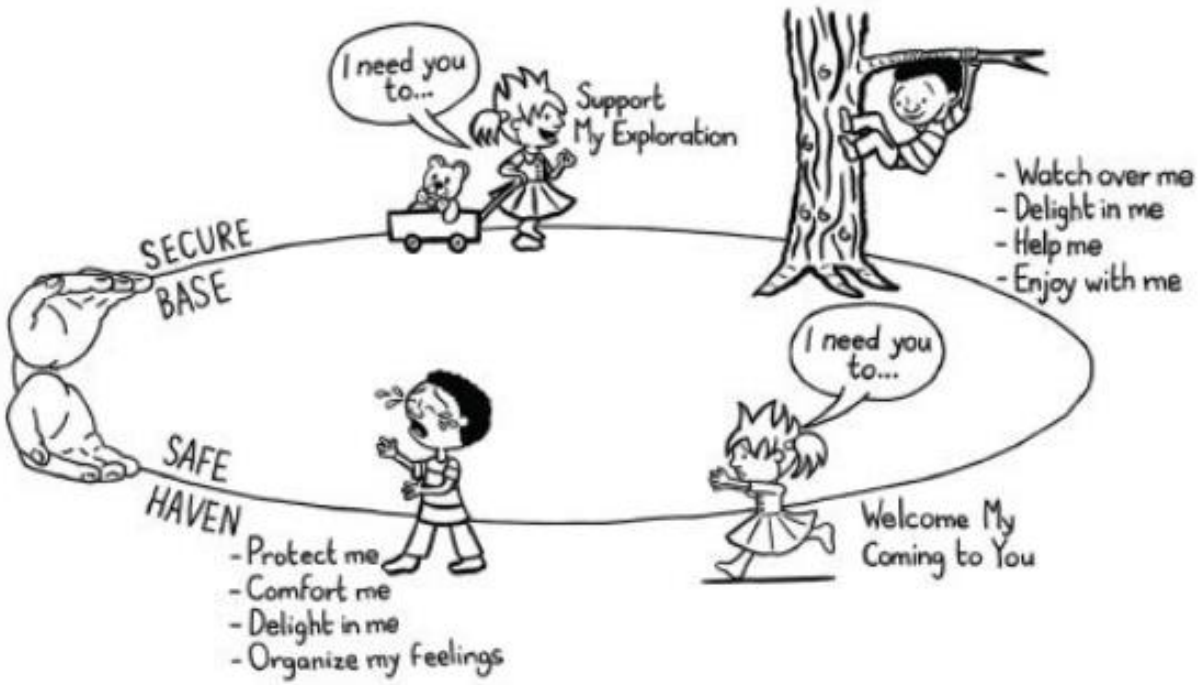
(Neurons to Neighborhoods)

# Functions of Attachment



# Still Faces Experiment

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6czxW4R9w2g

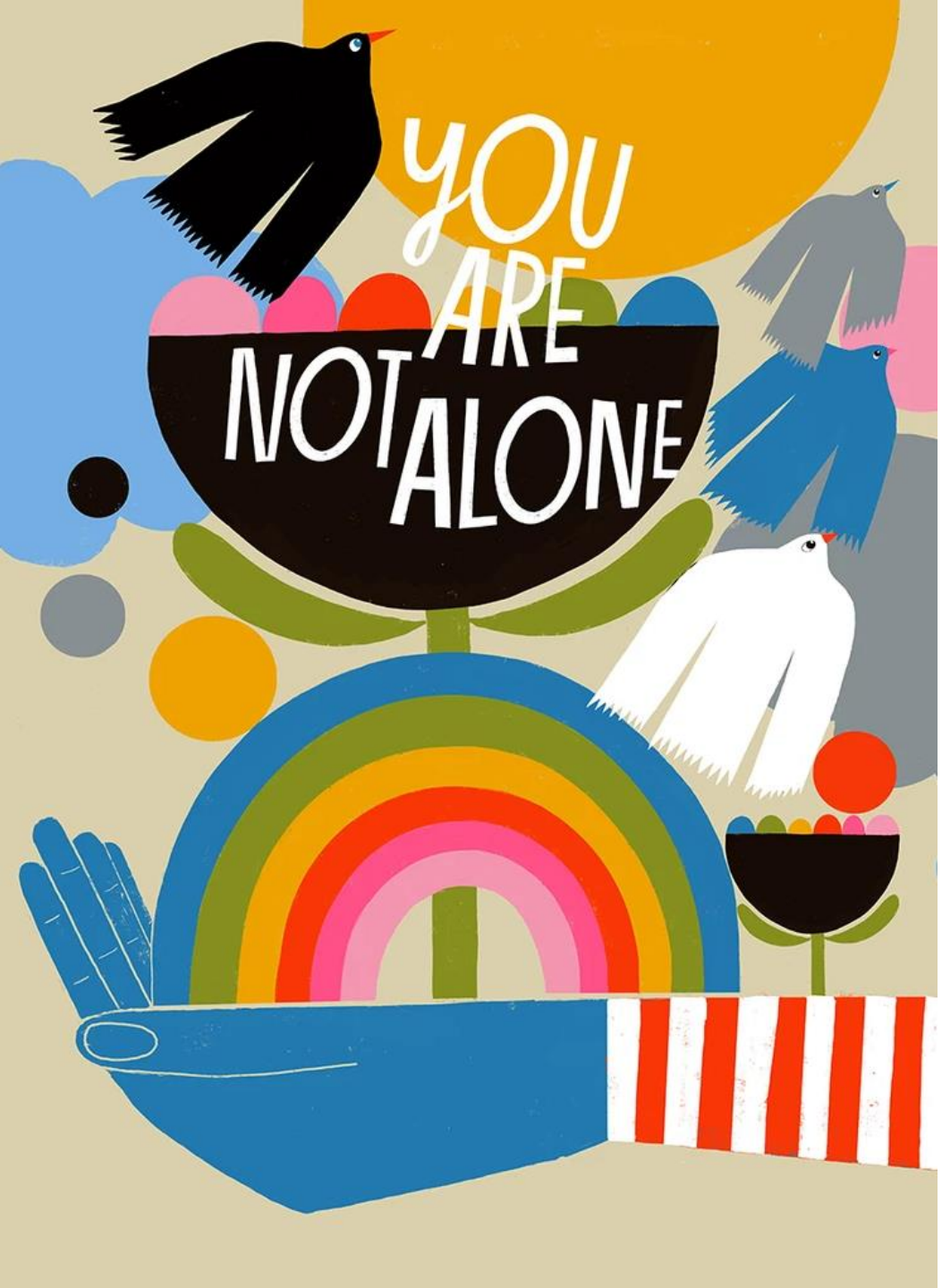



*The Circle of Security showing the child's needs for a safe haven and a secure base.*

# Circle of Security Video



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wpz8m0BFM8




You are not in this alone!  There are supports beond the school/center /classroom walls to help!

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# Fussy Baby Network®

- National model prevention program
- FAN Approach to Family Engagement and Reflective Practice
- Provided FAN training in 19 states and internationally

"Anyone who listened helped."

# Connection is built by BEING WITH:

"To share in another's experience with no attempt to change what the person is doing or believing"- Stern, 1985

# Feedback from Providers and Supervisors

- Stay with the process longer; don't rush to fix
- Feel less stressed in their roles
- Stay calm and regulated in difficult situations
- See more from parent's perspective
- More comfortable holding and exploring parent's negative feelings about child
- Elicit more from the parent
- Focus more quickly on the parent/child relationship
- Home visitors have increased reflective capacity and reduced burnout

# Dysregulation is a Cue and Opportunity

- What do you need.
- What is your response telling you?

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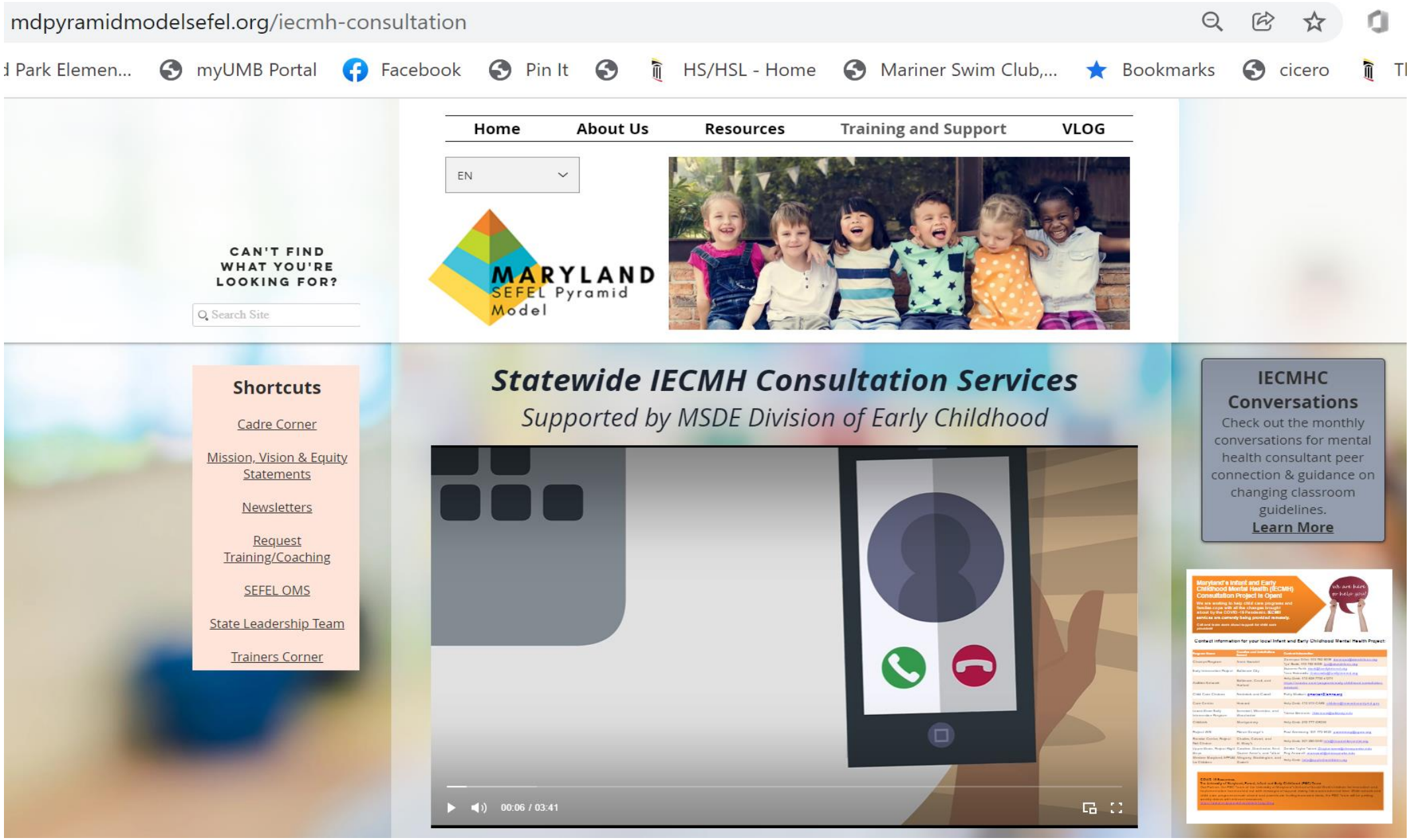
# *Team Approach For Early Educators: Parallel Process of Providers & Supporting Families*

**Importance of Collaborative Teaming:** Early Educators often don't have background in behavior, limited experience with teaming and often lack formal credentials.

# Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation project is both child/family focused and classroom/program focused.
  - This hybrid model allows consultants to focus on specific child behaviors while working with teachers to improve the overall quality of the classroom environment.
  - http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/24/ecmh_brochure_dec2014.pdf
  - ECMH Consultation Project: 1-877-605-1539




- https://www.mdpyramidmodelsefel.org/iecmh-consultation

# Parents Place of Maryland

# Maryland Coalition of Families

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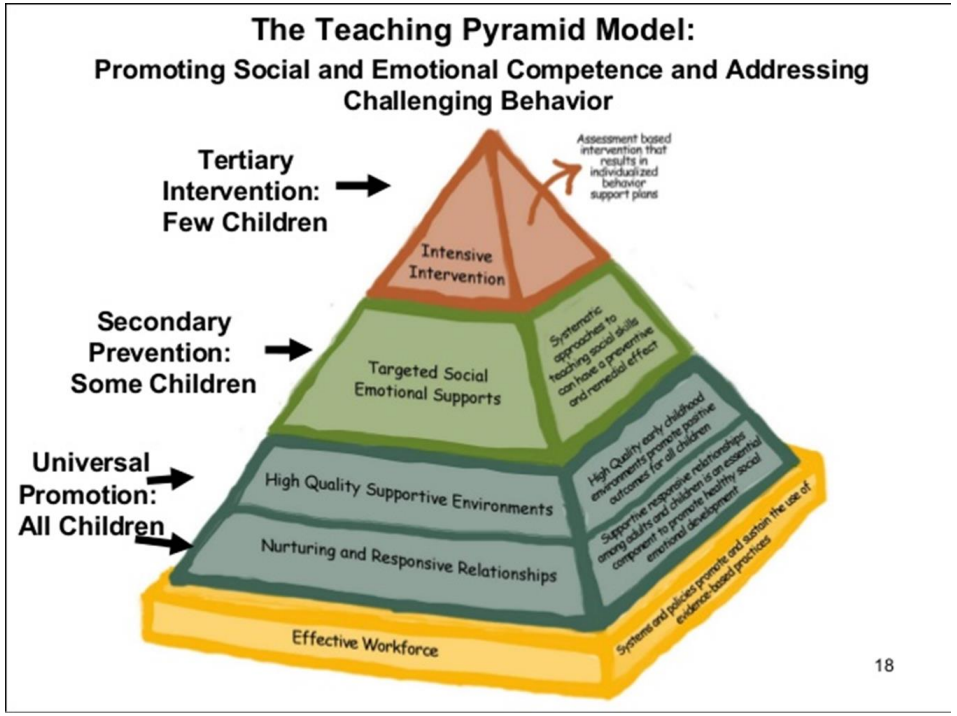
# The National Pyramid Model




- SEFEL (Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning) is a framework that promotes the social and emotional development and school readiness of young children from birth through age 8. SEFEL has been successfully implemented in a wide range of Maryland child care settings and is now being adapted for elementary school settings. The SEFEL model is very much a team approach, so experts are not only offering training to Maryland's child care providers, but also to parents, home visitors, child welfare workers and first responders.
- Online training modules

  https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/sefel/teachers-caregivers/index.cfm

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OpenShot Video | be ready | Research Grants | Hootsuite | At the intersectio | How Families Ca | How To Help A C | Nothing to Fear | Having Trouble | Inbox (584) - kat | Maryland SEFEL

mdpyramidmodelsefel.org

MARYLAND SEFEL Pyramid Model

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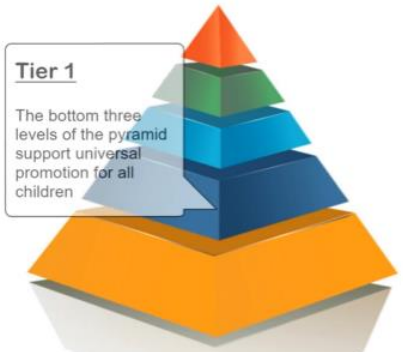
MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

# Maryland SEFEL Pyramid Model

Home | The Model in Maryland | Resources | Training and Support




## The SEFEL Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (formerly known as SEFEL – the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning) is an evidence-based framework for

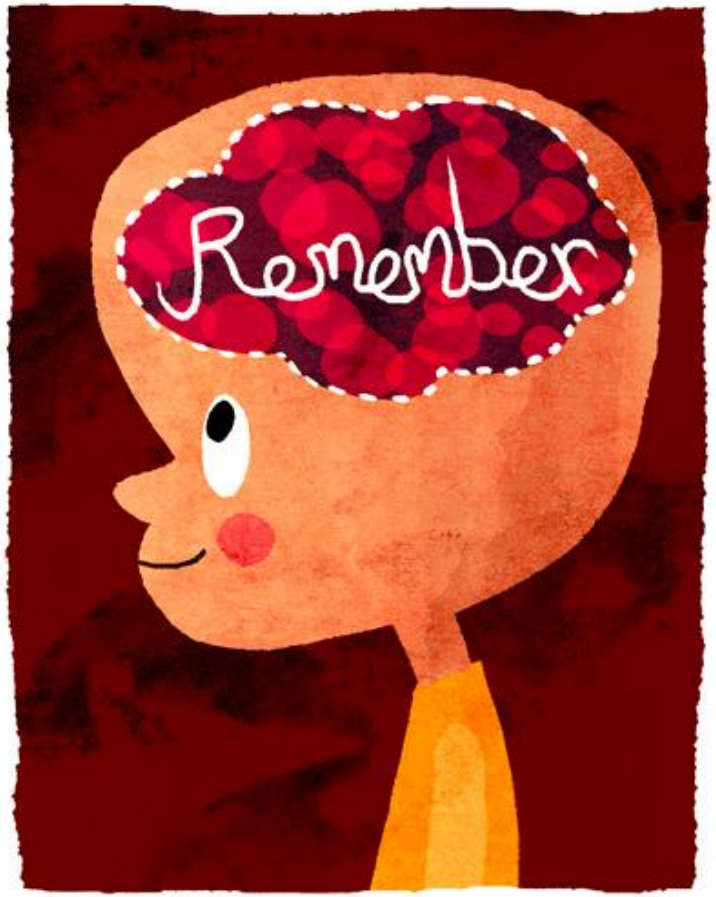
ENG 11:14 AM 11/1/2019

# Your role in the Pyramid

*Many of these strategies will be familiar –*

*the difficulty is to*

*remember (and help other adults to remember) to use them in the moment!*



# *Rituals*

When considering child behavior, the focus often falls on the adult to facilitate consistency and predictability in the routines, rituals and responses to behavior.

Happy

Sad

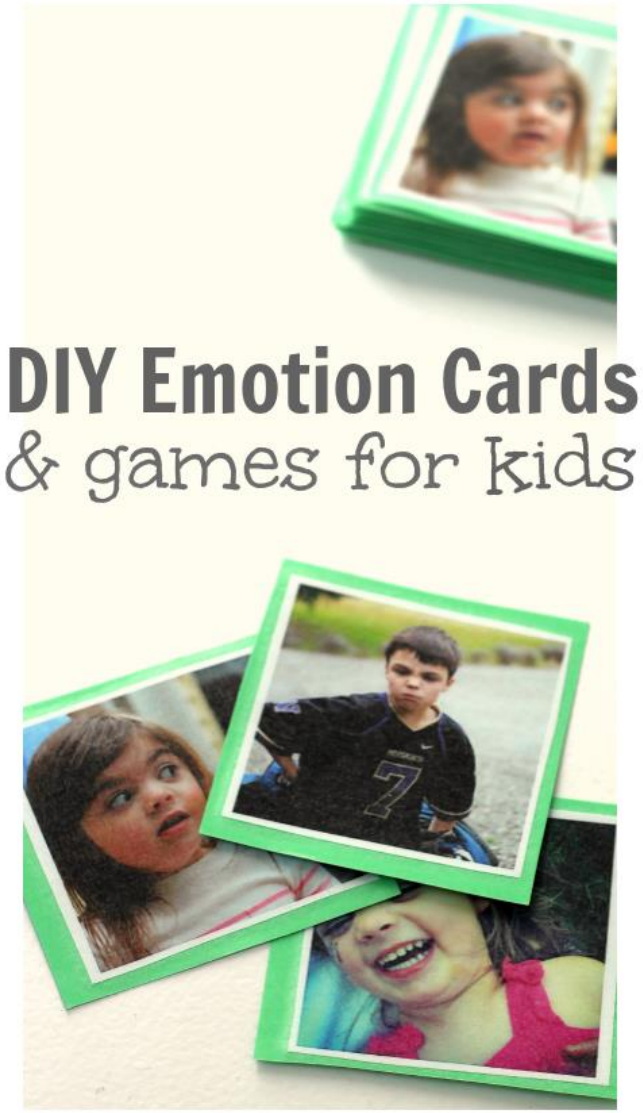
Mad

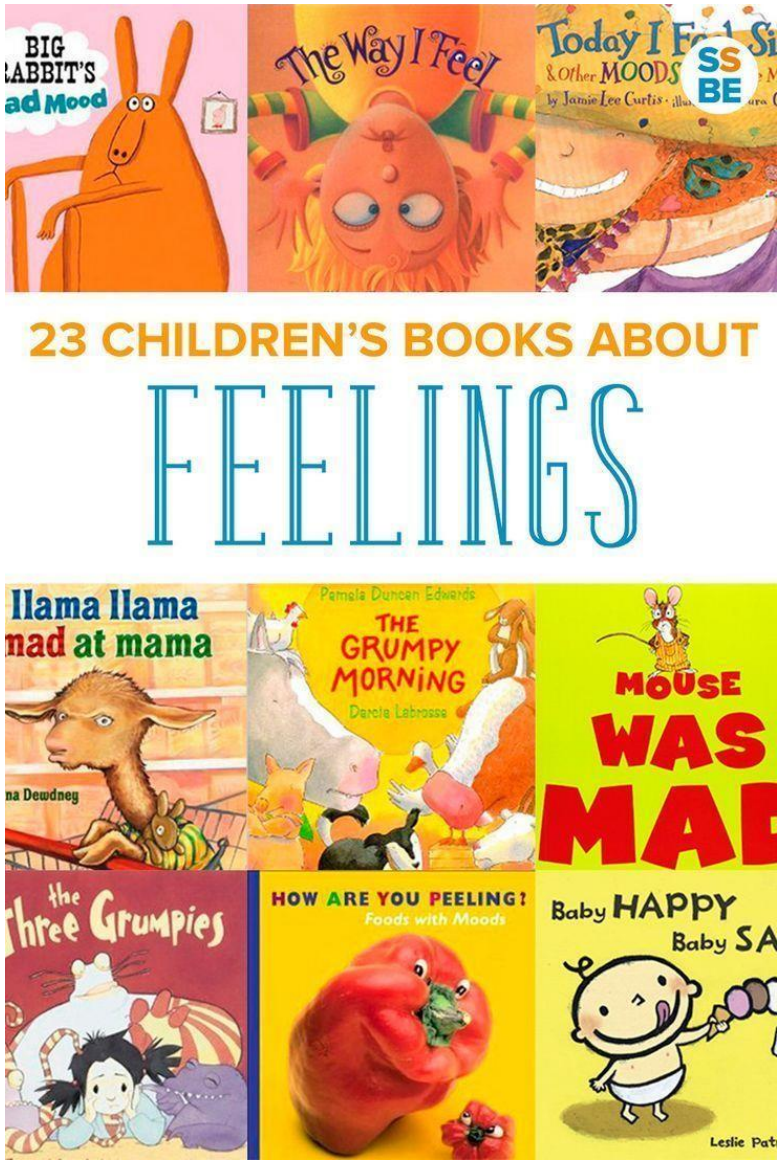
# *Emotional Literacy – Faces Bingo!*

Scared

Sick

Silly

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Leadership Team

Family Engagement

Program-Wide Expectations

Systems to Identify and

Continuous Professional Development

Data Decision-Making Examining Implementation and Outcomes

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# Solutions at the: Individual, classroom, programmatic and systemic levels

| Individual | Classroom | Programmatic & Systemic |
|---|---|---|
| - Kids have missed access to early intervention services and developmental screeners.<br><br>- Kids have missed access to peers and opportunities for social skills lessons and reinforcement. | - Globally we cannot pretend that children have lost access to 18 + months of learning and exposure to learning environments.<br><br>- We need to reduce the stress ***for kids and educators*** and acknowledge that we are starting with the fundamentals and provide curriculum that meets their needs. | - Programs and systems need to adjust expectations for how children and entering learning environments and what their learning acquisition over the course of the year looks like.<br><br>- We cannot start with a deficit and then SPEED through two years of missed time. |

Padlet to discuss recommendations for changes.

# Activity

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# Community of Practice

- Monthly 1 hour meetings for 6 months
- Office hours to discuss how to implement discussed strategies
- How to connect to community resources
- Can be built to be responsive to needs

# *Closing Reflective Activity*

On the electronic white board, write down one thing or concept you liked from today's discussion, one the second write one thing you wish was addressed or covered, and on the third, write what you are wondering about in terms of application in your role/setting/community. *Discuss!*

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