



From the Playroom

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New Beginnings

Welcome back to the start of a new school year... A new beginning for schools, administrators, teachers, children, and for Primary Project!

Children often feel excited about new school supplies, new “back to school” clothes, and making new and meaningful relationships. They may feel curious about which faces will be in their classroom, or what their teachers will be like. Children may also feel nervous or uncertain about riding the bus, new school rules, or academic expectations. As adults in school settings, we are in prime positions to help students manage and express their hopes and concerns. If we create a supportive environment that helps children identify feelings – comfortable and uncomfortable – we can provide reassurances so that children feel safe and can begin to “settle in.” As we assist children, we lay the foundation that school is a hub of learning where we play, connect with friends, and explore.

Primary Project is an evidence-based early intervention program that provides opportunities for students to play, explore, create, and express feelings. In turn, students become better adjusted, connected to the school environment, and are better able to learn. In this edition, read an article by Children’s Institute executive director Dirk Hightower, Ph.D., describing how, despite myriad educational changes over the decades, Primary Project has remained a pillar of support for young children in schools. “Bringing the Lessons Home” offers an article about acknowledging feelings with young children. Feel free to copy and share with parents at your building.



The Tide is Turning

Schools are starting to recognize, again, that a concentrated focus on academics without addressing children's social and emotional space does not work. Like most things in life, such as tides, clothing styles, the stock market, seasons of the year, and life, schools have cycles. As an observer with a keen sense of the obvious, it has been a social and emotional desert for many schools over the past decade. The national focus has been on achieving the common core standards, which is not unlike what happened after 1983 when "A Nation at Risk" was published and schools everywhere focused nearly all of their effort on academics. From peak to peak, this last cycle took a generation, 30 years. It is time again to turn our focus on the real basics, working with the whole child, and include efforts to strengthen children's social and emotional health.



Over the next few years we predict there will be a resurgence of interest in and focus on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). For those of us working in field now it will be important to also learn from our mistakes. 4 lessons to remember include:

- Be realistic in what is promised. SEL skills are not silver bullets; they are an important part of development. It takes time to develop SEL skills and observe outcomes. Realistically, it takes 5 to 7 years to create evidenced systematic change.
- Use evidence-based programs whenever possible. One estimate is that it takes 100 times the resources to develop something from scratch than to use existing effective and useful materials and programs. Do not "reinvent the wheel."
- Go slow, start small, work at multiple levels (universal, targeted, treatment), and integrate well. Stand-alone programs typically do not last. Pyramids of integrated programs have the best chance of long-term success.
- Evaluate programs and improve them. Evidenced-based programs should be effective in many settings and should be run with fidelity for at least three years. However, few programs are effective in all settings. Changes may be needed, but only after fidelity of implementation has been achieved.

*—A. Dirk Hightower, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Children's Institute*

Feelings

Take the time to build your feeling vocabulary this fall

There is a range to all feelings beyond the basic ones of happy, sad, mad, and scared. Using a wider range helps children recognize and express the feeling word that best relates to how they are feeling.

FEELING S SENTIMIENTOS

I feel _____ . Me siento _____ .

 HAPPY <i>FELIZ</i>	 SAD <i>TRISTE</i>	 AFRAID <i>CON MIEDO</i>	 ANGRY <i>ENOJADO</i>	 CONFUSED <i>CONFUNDIDO</i>
 PROUD <i>ORGULLOSO</i>	 HOPELESS <i>DESESPERADO</i>	 SURPRISED <i>SORDRENDIDO</i>	 JEALOUS <i>CELOSO</i>	 FRIGHTENED <i>ASUSTADO</i>
 FRUSTRATED <i>FRUSTRADO</i>	 LONELY <i>SOLO</i>	 DEPRESSED <i>DEPRIMIDO</i>	 DISTRACTED <i>DISTRAÍDO</i>	 SMUG <i>COMODO</i>
 SHOCKED <i>PASMADO</i>	 BORED <i>ABURRIDO</i>	 ECSTATIC <i>EXTATICO</i>	 CONFIDENT <i>CONFIADO</i>	 EXHAUSTED <i>AGOTADO</i>
 DISGUSTED <i>ASQUEADO</i>	 HOPEFUL <i>ESPERANZADO</i>	 NERVOUS <i>NERVIOSO</i>	 ASHAMED <i>AVERGONZADO</i>	 WORRIED <i>PREOCUPADO</i>

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Newly Certified Schools

Abelard Reynolds School #42	Rochester, NY
Adlai E. Stevenson School #29	Rochester, NY
Barton Elementary School	Lake Worth, FL
Charlotte Sidway Elementary School	Grand Island, NY
Charter School for Applied Technologies	Buffalo, NY
Clara Barton School #2	Rochester, NY
Country Parkway	Williamsville, NY
Dr. Louis A. Cerulli School #34	Rochester, NY
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School #9	Rochester, NY
Dr. Walter Cooper Academy School #10	Rochester, NY
Early Childhood School of Rochester #57	Rochester, NY
Henry Hudson School #28	Rochester, NY
Highland Elementary School	Lake Worth, FL
Lake Placid Elementary School	Lake Placid, NY
JC Mitchell Elementary School	West Palm Beach, FL
John James Audubon School #33	Rochester, NY
John Walter Spencer School #16	Rochester, NY
Nathaniel Hawthorne School #25	Rochester, NY
Niagara Street Elementary School	Niagara Falls, NY
Northern Adirondack Elementary School	Ellenburg Depot, NY
Palmyra Macedon Primary School	Palmyra, NY
Pinnacle School #35	Rochester, NY
Theodore Roosevelt School #43	Rochester, NY
Virgil I. Grissom School #7	Rochester, NY
World of Inquiry School #58	Rochester, NY



Bringing the Lessons Home

Embrace and acknowledge all feelings

Recently, my 6-year-old son, Kyle, and I went to see the Pixar movie, "Inside Out." The story portrays Riley, an 11-year-old girl, who is uprooted from her life in Minnesota as her family moves to San Francisco. Riley is guided by emotion characters: "Joy," "Fear," "Anger," "Disgust," and "Sadness." These five live in "Headquarters," the control center inside Riley's brain where they manage the ups and downs of Riley's everyday life.

Throughout most of the movie, "Joy" was in charge. Whenever the going got rough, she stepped in and tried to help Riley recover a "happy" memory. However, in the end it is acknowledged that while we would all prefer "Joy," we learn and benefit from all of our emotions. Once, "Sadness" was in charge. Riley was able to say that she missed her Minnesota home where she had friends, a hockey team, and a familiar school. Her parents were then able to comfort her by listening and responding, "We miss it too." There were no quick (dismissing) statements like, "You will make new friends," or, "Things will get better."

At times, children express their feelings verbally, but they are more likely to share feelings with us through body language, facial expression, and tone of voice. An important role that we can play as parents, grandparents, care-givers, or educators is to be ready to listen and reflect back to the child the feelings that we have heard or observed in a non-judgmental way. We do this easily when the feelings expressed are proud or happy; it can feel more challenging to listen to and reflect feelings of sadness, anger, or hurt.

Similar to the film, too often, we want to take "Joy's" role and replace the uncomfortable feeling with a comfortable one. That is when I catch myself saying, "Kyle, it's okay – tomorrow will be a better day," or, "It's not worth getting upset over," or even, "You want some ice cream?" But, as Riley's parents learned, often times "Sadness" or "Anger" are running "Headquarters." To support children socially and emotionally, we need to embrace and acknowledge all feelings, and allow children time to process those feelings – even if "Joy" doesn't return right away.



–Lynn Smith, LMSW
Social Worker, Children's Institute

**Please feel free to copy
this page and share it with
Primary Project parents.**

Trayendo las Lecciones al Hogar

Acepte y reconozca todos los sentimientos

Recientemente, mi hijo de 6 años, Kyle, y yo fuimos a ver la película Pixar, "Inside Out." El relato describe a Riley, una niña de 11 años, que fue desarraigada de su vida en Minnesota cuando su familia se mudó a San Francisco. Riley está guiada por personajes de emoción: "Alegría," "Miedo," "Enojo," "Asco," y "Tristeza." Estos cinco viven en la "Oficina Central," el centro de control dentro del cerebro de Riley donde ellos dirigen las altas y bajas de la vida diaria de Riley.

Durante la mayor parte de la película, "Alegría" estaba al mando. Cuando las cosas empezaron a ser difíciles, ella intervino y trató de ayudar a recobrar una memoria "alegre." Pero, al final se reconoce que, mientras todos preferiríamos "Alegría," aprendemos y nos beneficiamos de todas nuestras emociones. Una vez, "Tristeza" estaba al mando. Riley fue capaz de decir que estaba echando de menos su casa en Minnesota donde tenía amigos, un equipo de hockey y una escuela familiar. Entonces sus padres pudieron consolarla al escucharla y respondiendo, "Nosotros lo echamos de menos también." No hubo declaraciones rápidas (de rechazo) como "Vas a tener nuevos amigos" o "Las cosas van a mejorar."

A veces, los niños expresan sus sentimientos verbalmente, pero probablemente ellos comparten sus sentimientos con nosotros mediante el lenguaje corporal, expresión de la cara y el tono de voz. Un papel importante que podemos tener como padres, abuelos, cuidadores o educadores es estar listos para escuchar y reaccionar a los sentimientos del niño que hemos escuchado y observado sin criticar. Esto lo hacemos más fácilmente cuando los sentimientos expresados son de orgullo o felices; puede sentirse más como un reto escuchar y reaccionar a sentimientos de tristeza, enojo o lástima.

Como en la película, demasiado muchas veces, queremos tomar el papel de "alegría" y reemplazar el sentimiento incómodo con uno cómodo. Esto pasa cuando me oigo diciendo, "Kyle, no te preocupes – mañana va ser un día mejor," o, "No vale la pena enojarte por eso" o aún, "¿Quieres un helado"? Pero, como los padres de Riley aprendieron, a menudo "Tristeza" o "Enojo" están al mando. Para apoyar a los niños social y emocionalmente, tenemos que abrazar y reconocer todos los sentimientos y permitir que los niños tengan tiempo para procesar esos sentimientos – aun cuando "Alegría" no regrese enseguida.

–Lynn Smith, LMSW
Trabajadora Social, Children's Institute



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September 26 & 27, 2015

Saturday, 10am-5pm

Sunday, 10am-3pm

Location: Frontier Field VIP Lot

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 EMOTIONAL HEALTH

A publication of Children's Institute, Inc.
www.childrensinstitute.net

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 Design: Mary Maiolo

Children's Institute is affiliated with the University of Rochester