Social Emotional Learning and Executive Functioning

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ABSTRACT

The goals of the Social Emotional and Executive Functioning Project are: 1) Increase the capacity of staff to understand children’s social and emotional development; 2) Develop and approach student behavior as teaching opportunities; 3) Provide supports and individualized interventions for students demonstrating a need for more; 4) Integrate executive functioning opportunities into existing curricula and activities, and 5) Provide parents with common language and activities as they help prepare their students for kindergarten; and 6) Learn what mental health supports are needed for the Educare students.

This first year has been formative. Information has been gathered through focus groups, interviews, formal observations and informal observations. Teachers have received training and coaching on universal supports and practices. Years two and three will continue the work started with the PBIS framework, build more executive functioning explicitly into programming and develop a parent piece incorporating the executive functioning skills leading to school readiness.

Participating Educare Schools

Educare Lincoln
Educare Omaha at Indian Hill
Educare Omaha at Kelborn
Educare Winnebago
Educare New Orleans

Beliefs About Behavior
Adapted From Browning-Wright & Cook (2009)

Beliefs About Behavior (Select questions used as part of training)

WTH? Often need to address belief systems to understand current capacity and to develop effective, targeted professional development.

DISCUSSION EMPHASES
1. Reflections by staff on beliefs
2. Team planning for goals around their own behavior
3. Ability to discuss underlying belief systems in a non-threatening manner

Need 1: Common System for Behavior with a Common Language for ALL staff

Year One Activities

Needs Assessment
To assess the needs of each center, focus groups and interviews were conducted using comparable questions and prompts. Participants for the focus groups included Master Teachers, Mental Health consultants, Lead Teachers and for some centers the Family Support Staff. Interviews were conducted with leadership at each center.

Beginning Universal Practices
PBIS teams were established at 3 of 5 centers with one more beginning this spring/summer and one center starting in the fall. Centers are developing common expectations and a common language.

Establishing Partnerships
Tulane University
University of Nebraska at Lincoln-Children, Families and the Law

Future Directions

Continue developing staff using CSEFEL modules
Build capacity to provide behavioral and mental health interventions
Develop a parent piece around school readiness for importance of executive functioning
Increase planful integration of Executive Functioning into daily classroom activities

Need 2: Strategies, Interventions and Supports for students who demonstrate a need for more

Resources

Beliefs About Behavior (Browning Wright & Cook, 2009)
Second Step (www.secondsstep.org)
LINC Social & Emotional Skills Curriculum (relationships.org)
Baby Doll Circle Time (ConsciousDiscipline.com)
CSEFEL website (csefel.vanderbilt.edu)

Current Practices and Curricula

Pyramid Model – Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)
Vanderbilt University
Curriculum
Creative Curriculum GOLD (Lincoln, Omaha and Winnebago)
Second Step (Lincoln and being considered by New Orleans)
LINC Social & Emotional Skills Curriculum (Omaha Sites)
Preschool (Head Start Classrooms)
Baby Doll Circle Time (Omaha Sites)
Infant and Toddler

Need 3: Integration Executive Function activities into current programming