

Strategies for Students With Social Emotional Difficulties

Proactive Approach is Key

- Reactive is spur of the moment and creates significant variation in response, lots of questions from adults
- Proactive is planned
 - School wide and classroom aligned
 - Staff clear on response
 - Predetermined processes to address student needs
 - Critical to a safe and supportive community
 - Culture, leadership, training, classroom strategies, role of mental health, policies, and procedures explicitly designed to meet the needs of students
 - Enhances work with all students

Safety: Presentation

- Worried/Anxious
- Hypervigilant
- Avoids interactions
- Withdrawn
- Inappropriately affectionate
- Transition issues
- Reactive
- Fearful
- Physical or verbal aggression
- Oppositional

Safety: Strategies

- Explicitly discuss safety as a classroom goal
- Structured, predictable environment
- Quiet or safe zone in classroom
- Aware of seating assignments
- Clear expectations
- All children are accountable
- Consistency
- Student voice in classroom rules/norms
- Reinforce positive behavior
- Facilitate structured positive interactions
- Available to talk with students
- Engage social emotional supports
- Curriculum supports-Develop social skill

Regulation of Emotion: Presentation

- Anxiety
- Poor impulse control
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulties communicating effectively
- Shutting down
- Over reactive to mild/moderate stress
- Misinterpretation of intent and language of others
- Negative remarks about others, group
- Argumentative
- Unbounded expression of anger
- Fidgeting, self harm, nail biting

Regulation of Emotion: Strategies

- Maintain a calm voice and demeanor
- Be aware of student body language
- Teach self awareness-Recognize and gauge emotional state (Visual as well as verbal)
- Teach vocabulary for discussing feelings
- Teach affect modulation/Calming
- Response examples for social situations
- Identify trigger situations
- Provide a safe space to express emotions
- Breaks and calming techniques

Avoid

Trivializing student feelings

Engaging in a power struggle

Regulation of Behavior: Presentation

- Withdrawn
- Blaming
- Teasing, bullying
- Verbal aggression
- Sneaky
- Manipulation
- Lying
- Ignoring rules
- Easily agitated, Reactive
- Aggressive
- Disruptive

Regulation of Behavior: Strategies

- Develop student's self awareness
- Clear and consistent expectations and consequences
- Provide student with strategies and a plan that rewards using strategies
- Provide vocabulary for talking about feelings
- Offer limited number of choices
- Quiet or "Chill" zone for student to calm down
- Scheduled breaks-Physical activity (Walks, etc.)
- Use school resources to develop student social skills
- Debrief incidents as a learning tool
- **Avoid**
 - Raising voice, engaging in power struggle
 - Embarrassing child in front of class

Anxiety: Presentation

- Feelings of excess worry or fear
- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Feeling keyed up
- Sleep difficulties, Loss of energy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Mind going blank
- Somatic complaints

Anxiety: Strategies

- Self awareness of feelings and validate as how student feels
- Teach and model responses to stress
- Teach strategies for relaxation response and calming
- Fidgets/Sensory tools
- Choice whenever possible/Or no choice depending on student needs
- Avoid competition
- Identify safe person/advocate in classroom/school
- Connect to adults and peers
- Connect to classroom community-contribution
- Exercise, more favored (competent) activities
- Choices (UDL) for presenting material and show what you know (testing)