



Creative Story-telling and Story-building Strategies to Build Attention, Self-regulation and Imagination of Young Learners



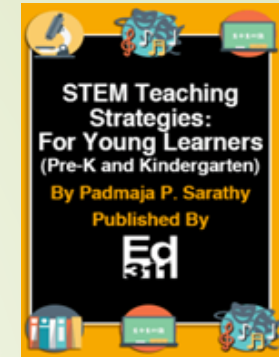
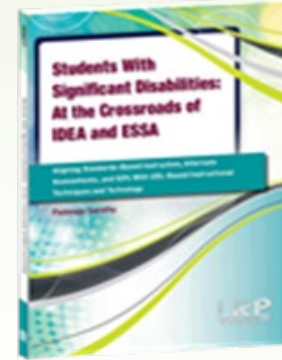
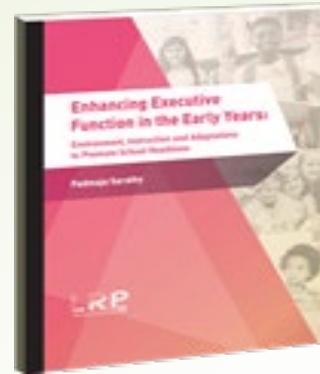
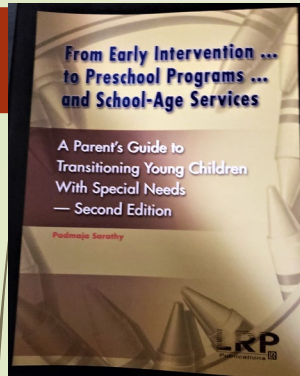
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AbleNet University Webinar
March 25th, 2020

Session Focus and Objectives

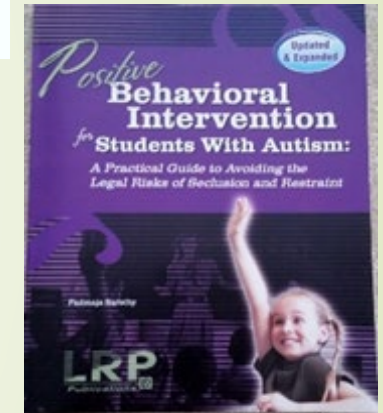
- **Strengthen young learners' attention and self-regulation skills through literacy-building activities of story-telling and story-building strategies**
 - **Use diverse strategies to:**
 - **Stimulate language development**
 - **Nurture executive function skills and**
 - **Build imagination and creativity of young learners.**
- **Gain skills in using an array of individualized and child-specific adaptations and supports based on UDL principles to facilitate active participation of all learners.**

Sarathy's Publications: Books and Quick Reference Guides



Focus Areas

- **Autism: Support Strategies & Interventions, Music CD – Transitions**
- **Behavior Guide (Preventive and Positive Approaches)**
- **Early Childhood: Transition, Parent Guide and STEM Teaching Strategies**
- **Executive Function - Early Years**
- **Paraeducator Training Guide and DVD**
- **Severe and Multiple Disabilities**
- **Significant Disabilities and ESSA**



Story-telling Benefits

Use story-telling strategies to foster attention, self-regulation, critical thinking and social skills.

- Children enjoy listening to and engage in story-telling.
 - Stories are an effective means of attracting children's attention and sustain their motivation.
 - Stories are a fun way to involve children in discussion and story-enactment to teach problem-solving and social skills.
- Literature can help to see things from the perspective of others (Lamme, Krogh and Yachametz, 1992).
 - Help develop empathy not only for story characters but others in real-life situations.
 - Heightened levels of sympathy may lead to more pro-social behaviors.



Let's begin with story-telling...

- The story is: [Are You My Mother](#) by P.D. Eastman.
- Build attention and focus with story telling.
 - Connect children to joyful past experiences.
 - Get them motivated and excited about what are about to do and learn.
 - Give them a role to play in the story.
- Use visual tools to activate children's memory.
 - Pass out cards with pictures paired with text of story characters (Word Wall).
 - Use story props, puppets, concrete objects related to story.
 - Graphic Organizers with pictures and objects.
- Foster imagination. Do not insist on strict match up to story text.



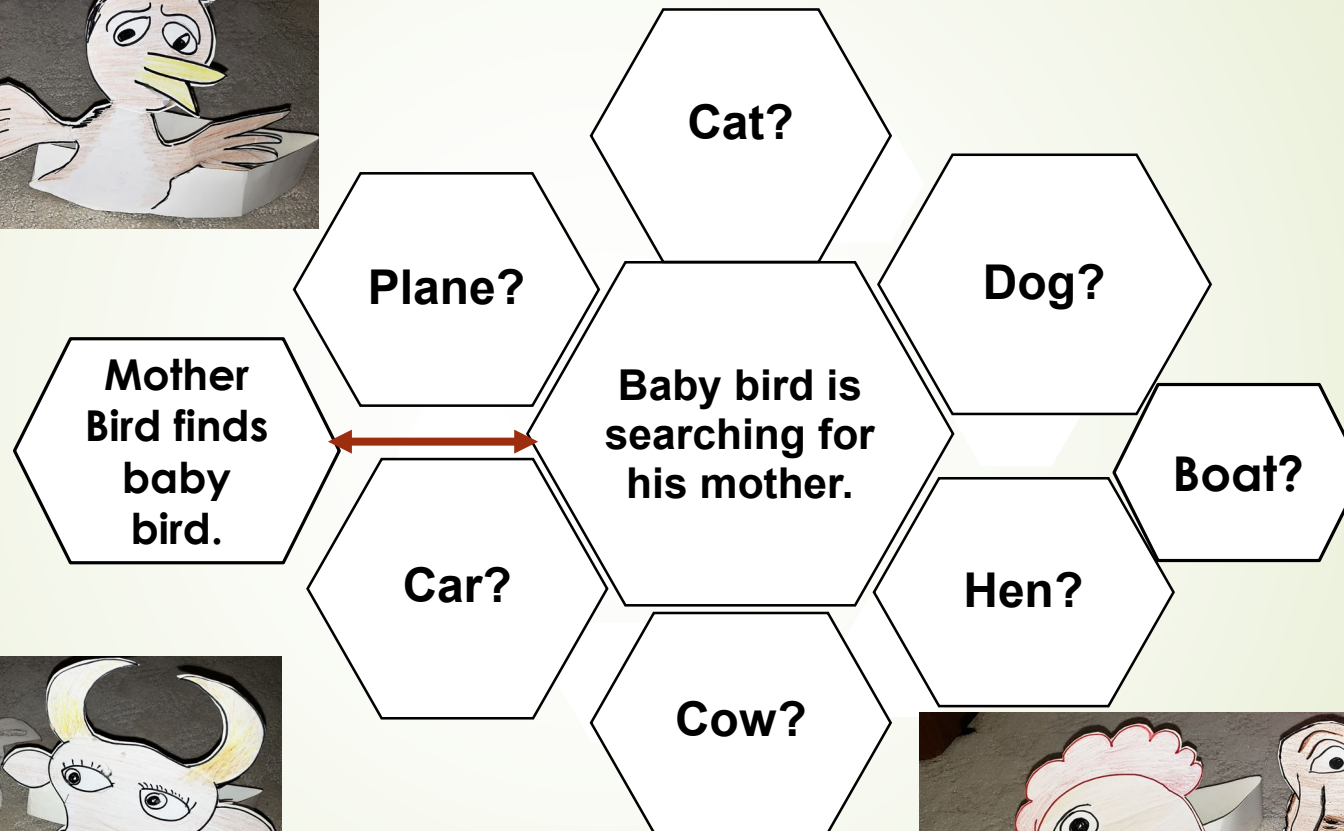
Loving Mother Bird
The Worried Baby Bird

(adapted from Sarathy, 2017)

Story Characters - Graphics



Connecting with Story Characters

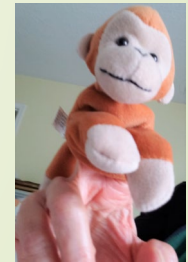


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(adapted from Sarathy, 2017)

Embed Novelty and Multi-sensory Features

- Use story props to enhance story-telling with infusing novelty and **multi-sensory features** (e.g., a tree, a bird puppet, other animal puppets, a toy car or an airplane, etc. as story props).
- Props matched to story will add excitement to the story time and heighten children's motivation.
- With increased attention and focus, it will help children make connections, aiding transfer to long term memory.





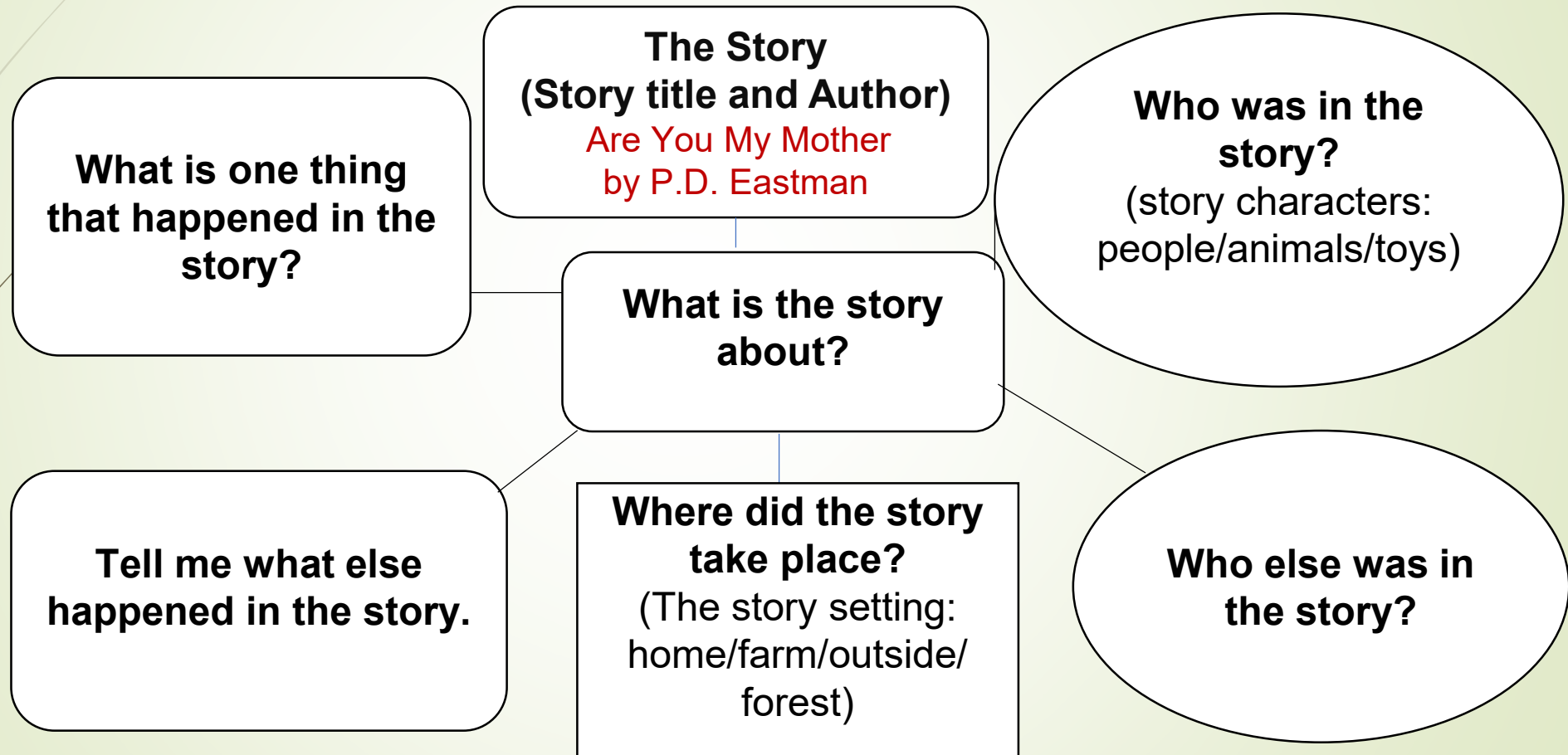
Story-telling Strategies



- **Make story-telling interactive.**
 - Encourage active participation as the story is shared.
 - Be animated and energetic as you tell the story.
 - Use short and playful activities to meet the varying needs and interest levels of children.
 - **Use stories that represent diverse cultures & ethnic backgrounds.**
 - **Selecting books - Story books should contain:**
 - Predictable language
 - Rhymes
 - Repetitive initial sounds
- Repeated refrains will get children excited.
 - Rejoice telling the story again when children can join in.
 - On each occasion you repeat, get children to predict what comes next (strengthens working memory).

Story Map Organizer Tool

Teach story elements aided with a story map organizer to connect abstract concepts with a visual presentation tool as shown below.



Teach Problem Solving with Stories

- Teach problem solving skills using stories. Example: Caps for Sale
 - As you are telling the story, stop to ask, ***“What can the peddler do to get his caps back from the monkey?”***



- Promote opportunities for problem solving through stories, role play, puppets in addition to naturally occurring events in the classroom.
- Children need language to understand the verbal instructions given by adults.
- Children with language delays have limited resources for demonstrating their knowledge and explaining the reasoning.

(adapted from Sarathy, 2017)

The Monkey and the Crocodile –

An ancient Indian fable - Panchatantra Story



Problem-solving

Critical Thinking

Impulse Control



Group Story-building to Foster Executive Function

- **Involve children in story-building activities.**
- The sequence of steps:
 - The teacher starts the story. Then, each child in the group adds something to the story (verbally or aided with an AT device).
 - Children need to pay careful **attention** to each other as the story evolves.
 - They have to **make connections** with what the previous person said, and also wait for their turns.
 - Teacher writes the story down and read it back to the students.
 - Another option: Create a group story with drawing pictures on paper. Children add the text or dictate it for teacher to write.
- The story building activity challenges the three major cognitive processes associated with **EFs –working memory, inhibitory control and cognitive flexibility**

(Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2014).

Group Story-building Activities (Continued)

- The story may be just a series of events or names of things and may lack structure in the beginning.
- With practice, the complexity of the story will grow.
- Students will get to practice holding and manipulating information in **working memory**.



- An added support tool for this group story telling activity is an ear picture and a mouth picture (Galinsky, 2010).



To prevent children from interrupting each other, provide/ point to the ear picture to listen while the child whose turn it is to talk has the picture of a mouth to continue with the story.

- Children will get to practice **inhibitory control** (self-regulation) resisting temptations to interrupt or correct others when it is not their turn to talk.

(adapted from Sarathy, 2017)

Story Starters - Examples

- *Once upon a time, there was a peddler who sold apples and oranges. One day he sold all of the apples and oranges. He was tired and decided to rest under a tree...*
- *One day when I went to the zoo. I saw a lion. It was roaring loudly and I was scared...*
- *My friend came to play with me one day. We played outside on the swings for a little bit. Then we came inside the house to play with blocks, and then...*
- *One day, I saw a caterpillar on a leaf on a plant. It fascinated me and I watched it every day. Then after some time...*



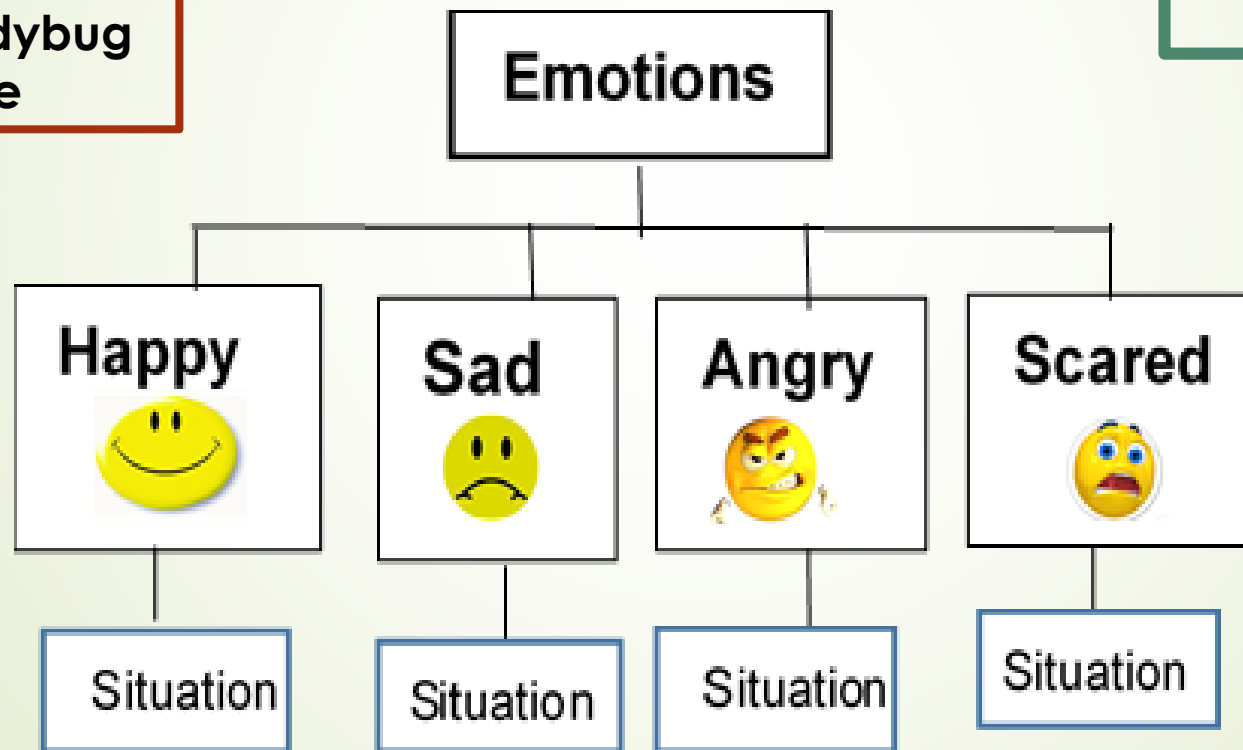
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Use Story-telling and Story-building Activities to Build Emotional Literacy To Label Feelings and to Express them Safely

**Strengthening
Emotional Literacy**
Impulse Control

The Grouchy Ladybug
By Eric Carle



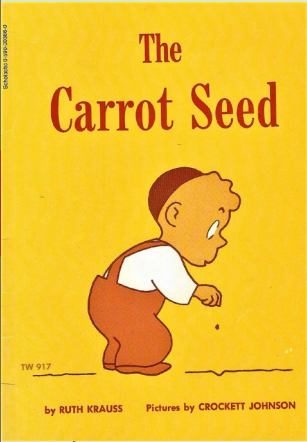
Story:
**When Rosie Gets Really,
Really Angry...**
By Molly Bang

- Use feelings puppets.
- Role play the story.
- Practice mindfulness and calming down.

Adapt the Requirements – Story Time

- Use stories with simple language and are repetitive.
- Provide for the student with attentional problems and cognitive difficulties to play a role in the story.
- Offer a variety of ways for children to respond to the story questions (verbally/pointing to pictures/objects or pressing a switch/head pointer).
- Provide touch cues to get the child's attention.
- Let the child hold a quiet story prop.
- Allow the student to gradually build tolerance for sitting/attending to circle. Allow for brief breaks.

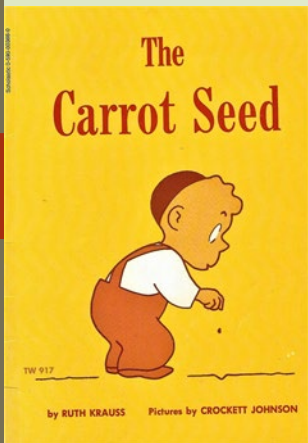
(adapted from Sarathy, 2017)



The Story of Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss



- Focusing on the theme of working towards a goal.
- Understanding how persistence and self-control helps.
- Working towards a goal requires time, effort and believing you can achieve the goal (*Mind in the Making* by Ellen Galinsky)
 - Ask about a time when he/she worked towards a goal (*Mind in the Making* by Ellen Galinsky)
- Provides an opportunity for children to retell the story or reenact it - the Repetition in the story assists with easy recall.
- Enables impromptu role-play and drama.
- Use the story as a drawing/writing prompt for student in Kinder/1st gr.
 - Get your students to draw a family portrait. Label the pictures – the family members.
 - Have them say a word or sentence to describe the picture. The students write their own description aided with text for key words or the teacher writes it down.



In the early childhood classroom...

Offer story activities to engage learners with significant needs.

Integrate the different senses into a planned language lesson.

The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss

Visual and Auditory

See book and the pictures.
Listen to the book.
See Word Wall with pictures.

Tactile

Touch book. Turn the pages.
Planting Activity: Touch seed, soil,
water, etc.

Visual, Tactile and Kinesthetic

Hold and touch a carrot
Create a Student-authored book

Gustatory and Olfactory

Smelling and tasting a carrot

Auditory and Kinesthetic

Drama and role-play

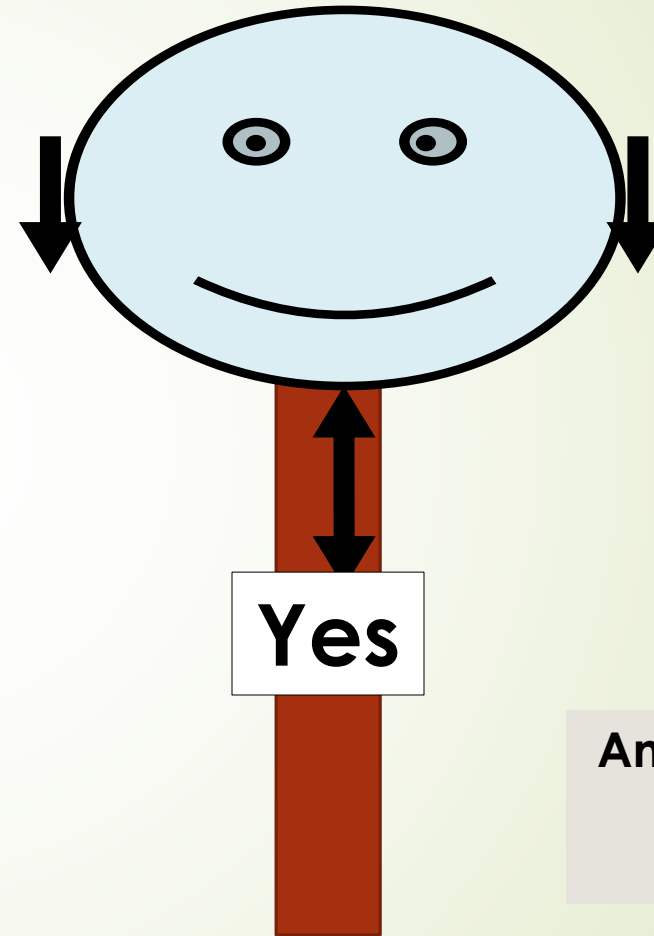
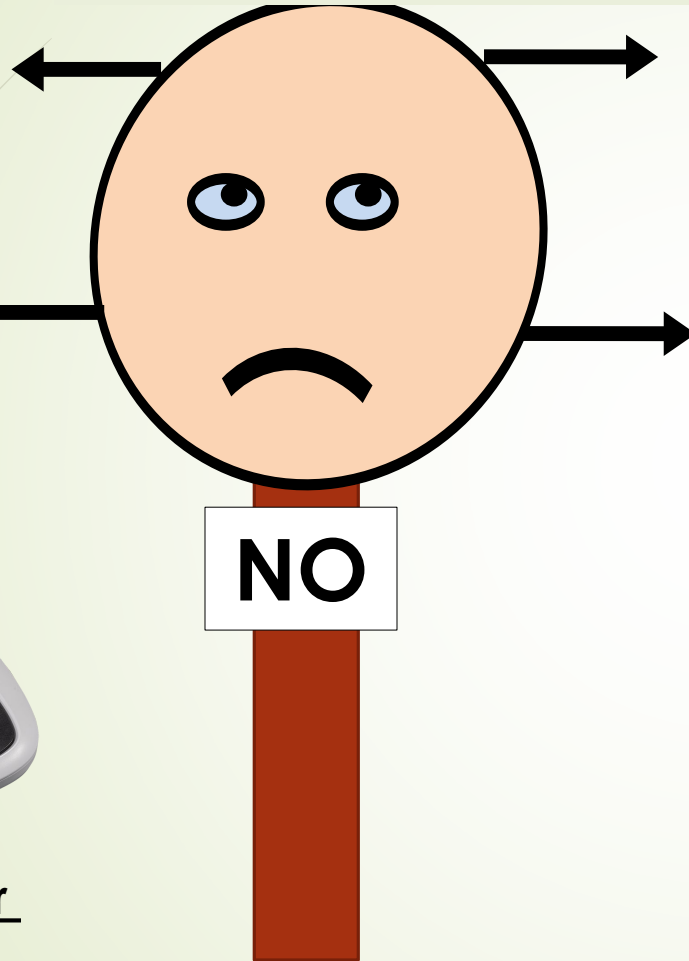
Associated Themes and Concepts

Family, Growing Things (STEM) & Feelings
Executive Function: Focus & self-control

Response and Participation Tools



A Super Talker



An object velcroid
to a glove for
motor needs

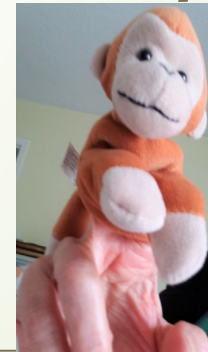
Offer a variety of options to access, participate and respond to story.

Peer Support – Circle and Story Time

- ➡ If child has difficulty responding to questions or making decisions:
 - ➡ Ask peers to pick pictures and give it to the child to put on the board.
 - ➡ Ask peers to make suggestions and let the target child choose one.
- ➡ Assign peers as helping partners.
- ➡ Provide opportunities for children with special needs to be helpers too.
- ➡ Recognize peer helpers for their assistance and help.

Invisible Supports – Story and Circle Time

- Begin with a favorite activity – blowing bubbles, squirting lotion, giving children a turn with a favorite puppet or story prop.
- Start singing: “_____ is in circle, he gets bubbles”. As soon a target child arrives, reinforce with a turn.
- Seat child near a favorite person.
- Allow the child to hold a favorite item or toy that will be used during the story-time activity.



A 5-year old Kindergartner



Strengths and needs:

- In *inclusive setting*; Speaks in 1-2 word utterances; Frequent tantrums; Difficulty following adult directions; wanders at transition times

Adaptations:

- **Circle time:** Uses pictures (aided with text) to participate in story-telling activity; Participates with cues and prompts; A carpet square with his name; Follows a preferred peer and sits next to at circle time.
- **Small group:** Practices story-telling taking turns with his peers during small group with systematic prompting; Encouragement for participation; Own tray and materials; works for 5 minutes.
- **Centers:** Picture schedule with four areas, and make final area a favorite activity; use of timer
- **Transitions:** Instructions for making the transition with pictures and song; prompt with slight physical assistance.

Story Books Suggestions

To Promote Executive Function and Self-regulation

- **Carrot Seed** by Ruth Krauss (Focus and Self Control; Working with a goal in mind)
- **Are You My Mother** by P. D. Eastman (Critical Thinking; Problem-solving)
- **Alexander and the Wind-up Mouse** by Leo Lionni (Social-emotional, Cognitive flexibility, Adjusting to change, and Thinking from different perspectives)
- **The Grouchy Ladybug** by Eric Carle (Practice impulse control and self-regulation)
- **Caps for Sale** by Esphyr Slobodkina (Making connections; Problem-solving; Flexible thinking; Adjusting to change, and Thinking from different perspectives)
- **When Rosie Gets Really, Really Angry...** By Molly Bang (Impulse control)
- **Horton Hears a Who** by Dr. Seuss (Taking on Challenges; Pursuing a goal)
- **The Monkey and the Crocodile** – An ancient Indian fable - Panchatantra Story (Critical and creative thinking and problem solving)
- **Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World's Fastest Woman** By Kathleen Krull (Focus and Self-Control; Taking on Challenges, Working with a goal in mind)

Resources

- **Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2014).** Enhancing and Practicing Executive Function Skills with Children from Infancy to Adolescence. Retrieved from: <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>.
- Galinsky (2010). **Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs.** HarperCollins Publishers. New York: NY.
- Sarathy, P. (2017). **Enhancing Executive Function in the Early Years: Environment, Instruction and Adaptations for School Readiness.** Horsham, PA: LRP Publications.
- Sarathy, P.



THANKS.

A special thanks to AbleNet University
for hosting the webinar

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The next webinar will be on April 8th:

***Play Games, Role-Play, Drama and Movement Activities to
Build the Brain***