Mindfulness In and Out of the Classroom
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Presentation Outcomes
• Understanding of the research-based benefits of incorporating mindfulness into personal life and early childhood classroom.
• Increased familiarity with mindfulness practices supporting adult development.
• Knowledge of mindfulness strategies supporting child development within early childhood classroom environments.
What do we mean by mindfulness and mindful practices?

- **Mindfulness** is noticing what is happening in and around you. There is no judgment, criticism, or reaction. People who are mindful ask themselves: How am I feeling? Do I need to react? How will my choice affect other people and the environment? Mindfulness as a preschool teacher can transform the classroom environment from reaction to proactive.

What do we know about mindful practices and positive outcomes for young children?

- Supports executive functioning
- Promotes self-regulation
- Decreases anxiety
- Increases working memory
- Increases visuo-spatial processing
- Reduces fatigue

What do we know about mindful practices and positive outcomes for young children?

- Mindfulness techniques have been established through research as a tool that can support social-emotional competence and well-being.

  - (Jennings & Greenberg 2009; Flock, Goldberg, Pinger, Bonu & Davidson, 2013)
Role of early childhood professionals in supporting healthy development and learning

◎ Vital aspect is shaping the development of children’s key social and emotional skills. This is done through:
  ◇ Building relationships
  ◇ Providing healthy examples
  ◇ Serving as essential models outside of the home

(Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Curby, Brock, & Hamre, 2013)

Essential Role of ECE Professionals

◎ ECE professionals:
  ◇ Support children’s adjustment
  ◇ Facilitate and develop social competencies with peers
  ◇ Promote and support academic success
  ◇ Help children adapt to everyday situations by helping them bring stress responses to baseline

Factors that make this vital support challenging

◎ Expectation overload!
◎ Pressures from families!
◎ Resource under-load!
◎ Under-appreciation
◎ Long hours
◎ High turnover
◎ Challenging working conditions
Possible Outcome?
STRESS!

Essential Ingredient: Emotional Self-Regulation

- Emotional self-regulation:
  - Promotes personal well-being
  - Helps maintain a positive emotional climate in the classroom
  - (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009)

Focusing on Mindful Practices
Professionals
“Refractory Period” (Paul Ekman): “That period during which our thinking cannot incorporate information that does not fit, maintain or justify the emotion we are feeling.”

Reaction/Autoappraising
Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way on purpose in the present moment non-judgmentally.

Your body is present. Is your mind?

Past Present Future
Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to chose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

Victor Frankl
Psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor
I. The Stop Light Exam
II. R.A.I.N.
III. Meditate
IV. Set Intention

4 Simple Practices to try out:

- STOP LIGHT EXAM
  - ◎ Recognize
  - ◎ Accept (or Acknowledge)
  - ◎ Investigate
  - ◎ Nonattachment

- R.A.I.N.
  - ◎ Recognize
  - ◎ Accept (or Acknowledge)
  - ◎ Investigate
  - ◎ Nonattachment
“In his work, Thich Nhat Hanh always speaks of the teacher as a healer and offered a way of thinking about pedagogy which emphasized wholeness, a union of mind, body and spirit. But most professors must practice being vulnerable in the classroom, being wholly present in mind body and spirit.

bell hooks, “Engaged Pedagogy”
MEDITATION:
Let's Try A simple Practice…

What Happened?
Focusing on Mindful Practices

Children

Guidelines for Incorporation

@ Start simple
@ Practice what you preach

Within the classroom

@ Start with mindfulness of the environment
* Awareness of an object
* Awareness of self within the environment
Mindfulness of the body
- Attention to the senses
- Awareness of movement
- Meditation on the breath
- Attending to the thinking process

Embedding within routines
- What strategies complement developmental goals?
- What routines are best to include the strategies?
- How can strategies be incorporated on a regular basis?

References
References


For Additional Ideas

◎ For resources and classroom ideas:

http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1916359