THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
Quality Teaching and Learning

PRESENTER NOTES
BEING AWARE OF CHILDREN'S NEEDS

This guide walks you through presenting ***Building Relationships: Being Aware of Children's Needs.*** These are suggestions, so please use the materials as you see fit. This in-service suite includes PowerPoint slides and supporting materials.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Presenter PowerPoint slides (24)
- Transcripts for Audio Narrations
- Projector and audio equipment
- Learning Activities:
  - » *Being Aware of Children's Needs*
  - » *Responding to Children*
- Tips for Teachers
- Tools for Supervisors
- Helpful Resources
- Flip chart or other large paper and markers for writing participant ideas.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- The purpose of this presentation is to provide information about classroom awareness, and to suggest practices so that teachers can better respond to the individual needs of children in the moment.
- *Being Aware of Children's Needs* is one in a series of in-service suites called *Building Relationships,* all of which lie within the Social and Emotional Support section of the foundation of the House. Each of these in-service suites describes responsive teaching strategies which help support positive teacher-child relationships in the classroom.
- For experienced teachers, this in-service suite may be used to reflect on and strengthen their current level of awareness of the individual needs of their students. For more novice teachers, this in-service suite may be used to introduce the importance of creating positive teacher-child relationships by being more aware of children's needs on a moment-to-moment basis.
- Learning activities offer opportunities for participants to better understand when and how to respond to children's needs.
- Click through the PowerPoint slides at least once before presenting the material, to become familiar with the slides and content of the presentation.

NCQTL

EMPHASIZE

Aware teachers watch for, and act on, the needs of their students in the moment. Responding *quickly and appropriately* to a child is an important component of building positive teacher-child relationships.

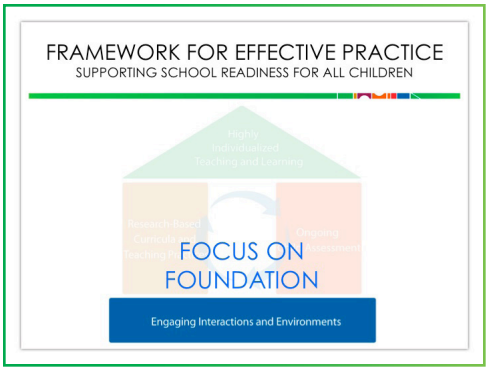
SLIDE 1:
BEING AWARE OF CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Introductions:

- Begin the training by giving participants background information about yourself.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves.
- Provide an idea for an ice breaker related to the topic of Building Relationships (e.g., tell the person next to you one way in which you have been able to find time to connect with individual children throughout the busy classroom day).

Introduce the topic:

Being Aware of Children's Needs focuses on the importance of noticing and responding to the individual needs and successes of children in the moment. When teachers are able to practice having a more heightened awareness of children's needs, positive teacher-child relationships are strengthened, and children's engagement in classroom activities increases. Teachers who notice when children need support or encouragement in the moment can more easily connect with children to provide necessary teaching. Gaps in developmental domains can be addressed immediately when teachers are watching for individual differences.



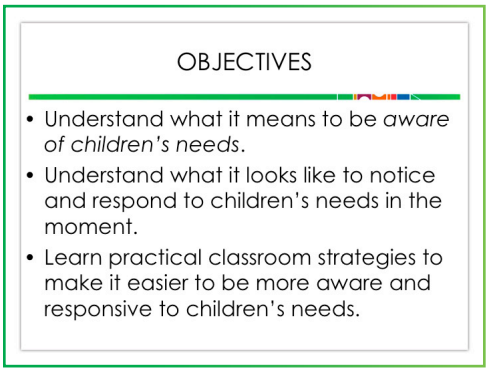
SLIDE 2:
FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Introduce NCQTL.

Review NCQTL framework for effective practice:

- The House structure supports school readiness for all children.
- The foundation represents effective and engaging interactions and environments.
- The pillars represent research-based curricula and teaching practices and ongoing child assessment.
- The roof represents highly individualized teaching and learning.
- All components interact with each other and are essential for effective everyday practice for all children.

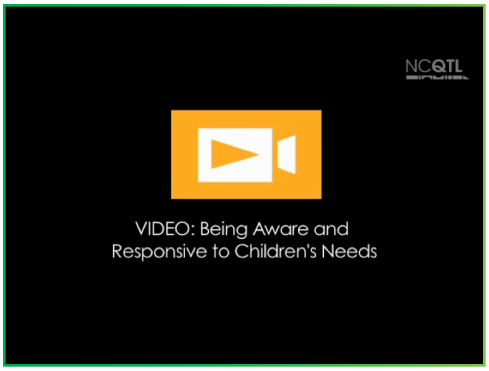
Building Relationships: Being Aware of Children's Needs fits into the ***foundation*** of the House. When teachers are able to meet the academic, social and physical needs of their students, the children's ability to connect and build strong relationships with their teachers increases. Children who learn to trust that their teachers will support, teach, and reassure them when problems arise are much more likely to engage in their environment. They do so knowing that their teacher is watching for times when they need support.



SLIDE 3:
OBJECTIVES

We have three objectives for this presentation:

- Our first objective is for teachers to understand what it means to be aware of children's needs.
- Next, for teachers to understand what it looks like to notice and respond to children's needs in the moment.
- Last, for teachers to learn practical classroom strategies to become more aware of and responsive to children's needs.



Length of video: Approximately 27 seconds

SLIDE 4:
VIDEO: BEING AWARE AND RESPONSIVE TO CHILDREN'S NEEDS

VIDEO

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to discuss the video clip they just watched. A possible question to pose to participants:

- What did the teacher say in this video about being aware of and responsive to children's needs? (Participants may give responses such as: scaffolding, being responsive to children who need assistance, or being attuned to a child's development.)

SLIDE 5:
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AWARE OF CHILDREN'S NEEDS?

When teachers practice being aware of children's needs, they improve children's learning and strengthen the quality of the relationships in the classroom.

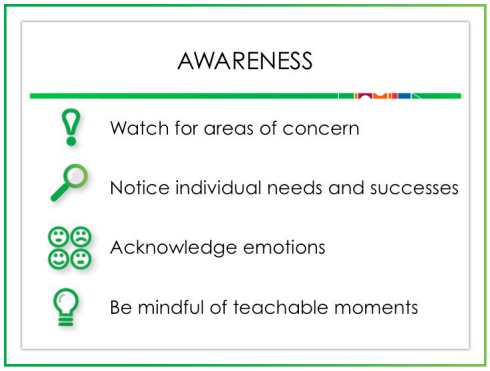
DISCUSSION

Invite participants to discuss the characteristics of an aware teacher and/or the actions that a teacher performs in the classroom to be attentive to children's needs.

This discussion can be either in one large or several small groups, depending on the makeup of the participants. Some answers might include: watching for areas of concern, knowing children's needs and areas they struggle with, teaching emotional literacy, noticing lack of understanding, watching for and celebrating small areas of improvement. If you do this in small groups, bring the class back together and ask participants to share their ideas. Consider recording these ideas on a whiteboard or large piece of paper.

NOTE

Consider tailoring this discussion, based on the experience level of the teachers in your training group. If there are teachers who are more experienced than others, consider letting them take the lead in this discussion. Allow them to share the qualities they feel are essential for being aware of children's needs and why.



SLIDE 6:
AWARENESS

Here are some characteristics of an aware teacher to help condense the ideas generated by the discussion from Slide 4.

- *Watch for areas of concern.* This means keeping an eye out for children who need extra attention. It means asking yourself questions such as: How is this child or these children doing with solving social problems? Do they understand the academic concepts I am teaching? If not, what can I change or modify so that this child or these children understand this lesson better?
- *Notice individual needs and successes.* This means watching for even the smallest gains that children make on their learning goals, and celebrating those gains with them. It also means noticing the individual differences between children's development, and knowing when and where to put energy into supporting them.
- *Acknowledge emotions.* Make this your first step when responding to a child or children in your classroom. Take a moment to pause before reacting and ask children how they feel about what has just happened. Ask children, "How did that make you feel?" or "How are you feeling about this right now?" Acknowledging responses is fundamental to building positive relationships with children.
- *Be mindful of "teachable moments."* This means being aware of those times of the day that warrant a mini-lesson or a re-teaching of skills. Children need multiple opportunities to practice and re-practice skills such as waiting, asking, responding, and behaving according to the expectations of the classroom. When we become aware and are ready for these teachable moments, we are able to provide children with the support and assistance they need.

LEARNING ACTIVITY:
BEING AWARE OF CHILDREN'S NEEDS

This learning activity includes various scenarios that offer participants an opportunity to practice anticipating and being aware of children's needs.

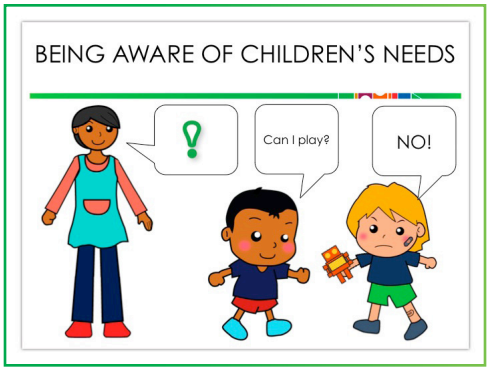
For this activity, participants may work alone or in small groups.

HANDOUT

Distribute and review the *Being Aware of Children's Needs* learning activity.

DISCUSSION

Have participants share their ideas. If needed, sample responses for this learning activity can be found in *Being Aware of Children's Needs: Facilitator Guide*.



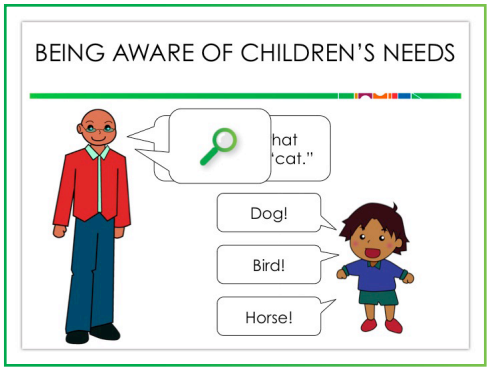
SLIDE 7:
BEING AWARE OF CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Teachers who are aware of children's needs are able to give their students a greater sense of security, predictability, and comfort in the classroom. In the next slides, three fictional Head Start teachers exemplify what it looks like to watch and notice the individual needs of their children.

Lisa has worked as a Head Start teacher for 12 years, James has just begun his third year as a Head Start teacher, and Maria has worked in a variety of roles in Head Start for over 23 years. Each of these teachers understands how challenging it is to notice the subtle differences in their children from day to day, but they have all made student observation a priority.

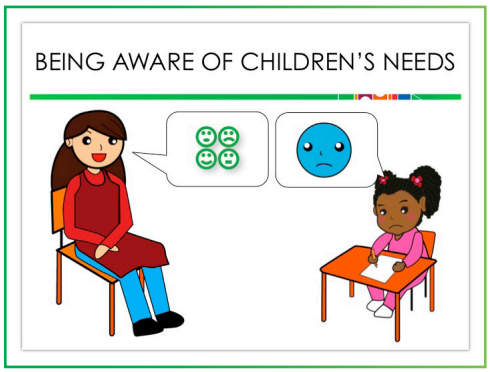
Let's learn how these three teachers notice areas of concern in three specific children:

- During Free Choice time, Lisa notices Kenny, one of her 4-year-old students, getting tense and agitated after another child asks him for a turn with a toy. She notices this because she is sitting close to him as he plays in the block area. Yesterday, Lisa helped Kenny resolve a sharing issue with another child, so today she wanted to be nearby and ready to help if needed.



SLIDE 8:
BEING AWARE OF CHILDREN'S NEEDS

During a rhyming activity, James asks a small group of children to rhyme with the word "cat." James has been working on rhyming and knows that 5-year-old Michael often has trouble with it, so he makes sure to listen closely to his responses. When James asks the group to rhyme with the word "cat," Michael responds with the words "dog," "bird," and "horse."



SLIDE 9:
BEING AWARE OF CHILDREN'S NEEDS

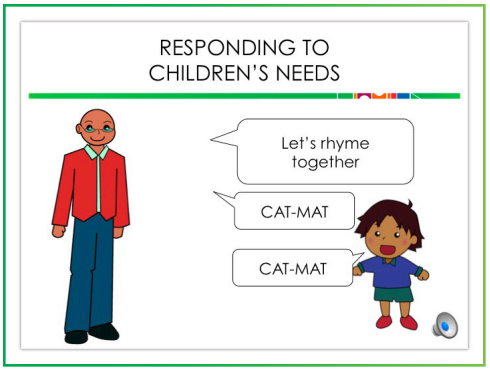
During a name-writing activity, Maria notices that 4-year-old Zeya is having a difficult time practicing writing her name. Maria has been keeping an eye on Zeya today because when she arrived at school she pointed to the "sad" face on the feelings poster during the morning "check in" time.

SLIDE 10:
RESPONDING TO CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Lisa, James, and Maria have each become aware of a problem or concern involving one of their students. Noticing problems as they arise is simply the first step, but responding and teaching new skills in the moment is what will propel children forward in their development. Let's hear how these three teachers have responded to Kenny, Michael, and Zeya.

NOTE

This slide has an embedded narrated audio recording.
Click on the audio icon at the bottom right of the slide to play the recording. *Transcripts for Audio Narration* is available for participants who are hearing impaired.

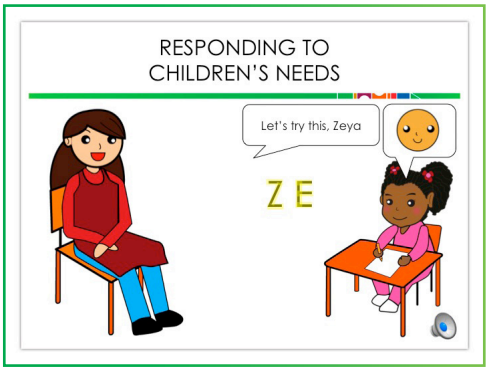


SLIDE 11:
RESPONDING TO CHILDREN'S NEEDS

James responding to Michael.

NOTE

This slide has an embedded narrated audio recording. Click on the audio icon at the bottom right of the slide to play the recording. *Transcripts for Audio Narration* is available for participants who are hearing impaired.



SLIDE 12:
RESPONDING TO CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Maria responding to Zeya.

NOTE

This slide has an embedded narrated audio recording. Click on the audio icon at the bottom right of the slide to play the recording. *Transcripts for Audio Narration* is available for participants who are hearing impaired.

LEARNING ACTIVITY:
RESPONDING TO CHILDREN

The purpose of this activity is for participants to discuss ways for teachers to respond to children's needs.

For this activity, participants may work alone or in small groups.

HANDOUT

Distribute and review the participant handout for the *Responding to Children* learning activity.

For this activity, teachers put themselves into the role of a mentor coach. They have been given permission to observe a first-year teacher and to help her come up with new ways to respond to children's behavior.

DISCUSSION

Have participants share their ideas. If needed, sample responses for items on this learning activity can be found in the facilitator guide for the *Responding to Children* learning activity.

Part 1: Length of video: Approximately 20 seconds

Part 2: Length of video: Approximately 1 minute, 14 seconds

Part 3: Length of video: Approximately 1 minute

Part 4: Length of video: Approximately 1 minute, 40 seconds

Part 5: Length of video: Approximately 47 seconds

SLIDES 13-17:
VIDEOS: AWARE AND RESPONSIVE TEACHING CLIPS 1–5

Introduce the video: Inform participants that the video clips they will view demonstrate the practices in which aware and responsive teachers engage throughout the day.

VIDEO

DISCUSSION

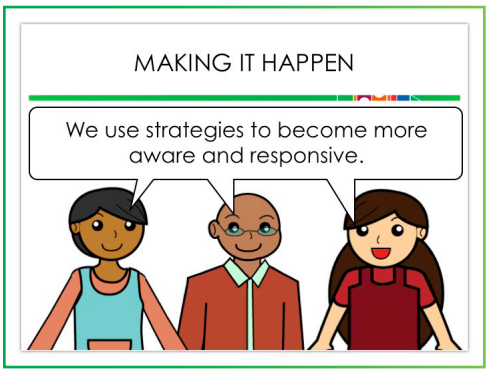
After each video, ask participants to discuss the clip they just watched. Possible questions to pose to participants:

- What did you see the teachers do that led you to believe they were aware or *not* aware of their students' needs?
- Can you "see" yourself in any of the video clips ? If so, what aspects of your own teaching practices could be shown in a video to demonstrate aware and responsive teaching in action?

NOTE

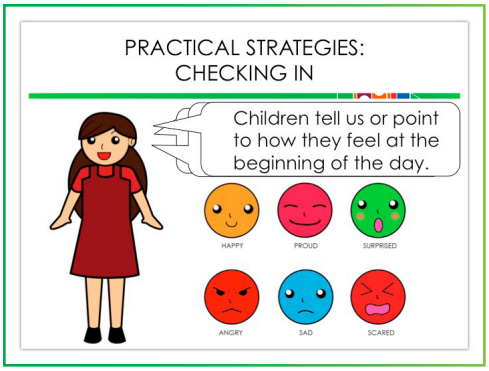
Examples of aware and responsive teaching that were observed in these video clips include:

- Teachers scaffolding children's learning
- Teachers noticing individual needs
- Teachers being aware of when to provide support
- Teachers helping children solve problems



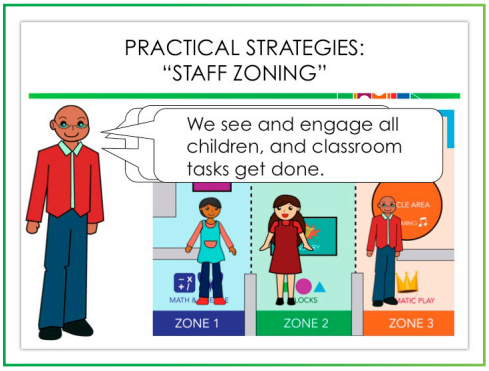
SLIDE 18:
MAKING IT HAPPEN

We know it is challenging for teachers to be aware of children's needs on a daily basis. What can teachers actually do in the classroom to become more aware of children's needs? What actions can teachers take to make it easier to notice and respond to children in the moment? Let's hear again from Lisa, James and Maria to see what strategies they use to be aware of and responsive to the needs of the children in their classrooms.



SLIDE 19:
PRACTICAL STRATEGIES: CHECKING IN

Checking in with children about how they feel as they arrive at school can benefit both teachers and children. Teachers better understand the emotional states of their students, and children see that their teachers care about how they feel. Maria posted a "feelings poster" in her classroom. She did this to provide children with visual pictures to match their emotions. During arrival time, she asks children to point to the picture that best shows how they feel. Whatever method teachers use to check in with children as they arrive, the responses they receive give them valuable information about how a child's emotional vocabulary is developing. It also helps them know which children may need extra attention that day based on their emotional states.

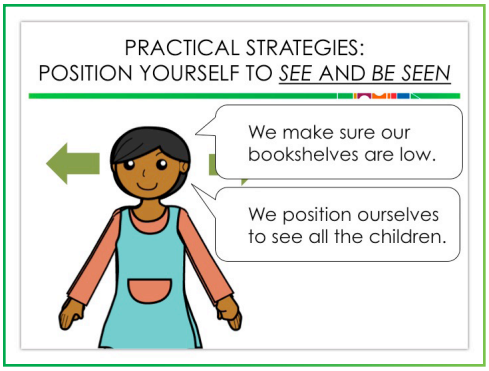


SLIDE 20:
PRACTICAL STRATEGIES: STAFF ZONING

With staff zoning, teachers are assigned to specific areas of the classroom and responsible for set tasks. During each activity, teachers who are practicing zoning will spread out across the room to their assigned spots or "zones." James implemented staff zoning in his classroom. He and his staff developed an organizational chart and listed each activity, routine and transition that happens throughout the day. They then assigned themselves to the activities and tasks for which they wanted to be responsible and posted the chart in a visible location in the classroom. This meant that each staff member understood his role and duties. This system allows for all the children to be easily monitored throughout the day and for clean-up tasks and prep work to be handled more efficiently.

NOTE

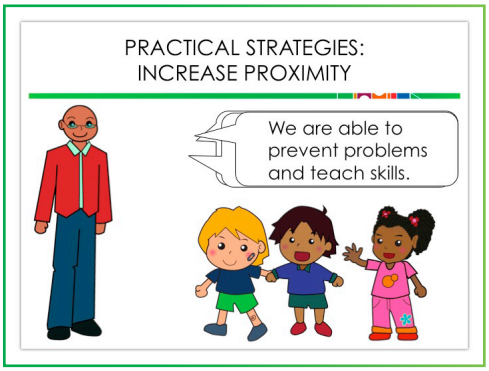
For more information on Staff Zoning, please refer to the *"Staffing: Zoning to Maximize Learning"* in-service suite.



SLIDE 21:
PRACTICAL STRATEGIES: POSITION YOURSELF TO "SEE AND BE SEEN"

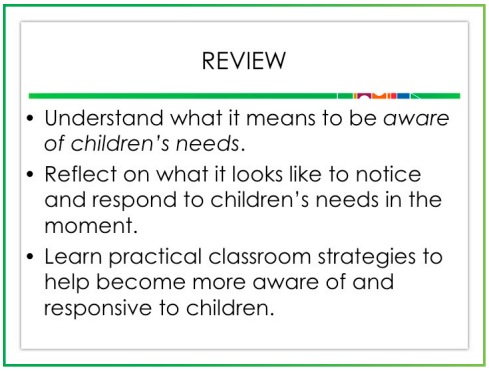
Making sure that you can see all the children in your care with a quick scan of the room is an important aspect of being aware and responsive. When setting up her classroom, Lisa makes sure that the bookshelves in her classroom are low enough to view over, and that her classroom staff position themselves to "see and be seen."

This means when they play with children, they turn their backs to the outsides of the room, rather than to the center of the room. With their backs to the walls, they are more able to view all the children and respond to their needs.



SLIDE 22:
PRACTICAL STRATEGIES: INCREASE PROXIMITY

Increasing your proximity to children or to a particular child is an important strategy for being aware of the needs of children. Teachers who maintain a more static position during activities can easily miss out on subtle problems that arise in a busy classroom. James discussed with his staff the importance of moving around the room and getting physically closer to children, and now the teachers are able to help prevent problems and teach skills.



SLIDE 23:
REVIEW

To review, we talked about what it means for a teacher to be aware of children's needs. Watching for areas of concern, noticing children's successes, acknowledging their emotions, and taking advantage of "teachable moments" are all important aspects of being an aware teacher. We demonstrated what it looks like to notice and respond to children's needs. We showcased three teachers who were aware of problems and were able to respond to their students in the moment. Last, we showed some practical classroom strategies to help teachers become more aware and responsive to children's needs.

NOTE

For more information on ways to build positive relationships and connections with children, please refer to *Building Relationships: Fostering Connections.*

SLIDE 24:
CLOSING

Provide participants with NCQTL contact information and encourage them to visit the NCQTL website for additional resources.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:

Share the following suggestions with participants:

- Work with a colleague to help generate ideas for how to support children who are having difficulties separating from family members at arrival time.
- Devise a fun way for you and your staff to keep track of the number of times throughout the day that you were able to connect with a child in a way that helped to build your relationship with that child. Some simple ways to keep track of interactions are to move a paperclip from one pocket to another, or rubber bands from one wrist to another. Each move of paperclip or rubber band represents one positive connection you've had with an individual child.
- Ask to be videotaped for 30 minutes and watch the video by yourself or with a mentor coach or supervisor. Write down two things you want to celebrate about your teaching and two things you want to focus on with more professional development.

NCQTL

For more Information, contact us at: **NCQTL@UW.EDU** or **877-731-0764**

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FALL 2012