

Teacher Time: Early Head Start Infant/Toddler Series

Emily Adams: Hi, and welcome to our very first episode of Infant/Toddler Teacher Time. My name is Emily Adams from the National Center on Early Childhood Development Teaching and Learning.

Carol Bellamy: Hi. I'm Carol Bellamy, early childhood specialist. I'm also the other co-host.

Emily: Thank you. And we're so excited that you're here. Before we get started, we have a little bit of business to go over. This is the first of eight new Teacher Time episodes, four infant/toddler episodes and four preschool episodes. Each episode will have a follow-up Teacher Time Coffee Break where your questions will be answered by our experts. So, please send your questions into the chat as we go along. And I just want to clarify that when we use the term teachers, we're really talking about everybody in Early Head Start and childcare programs who work with infants and toddlers. So, family childcare providers, home visitors, even sometimes parents, this information will feel really relevant to you. And also note that there is a Viewer's Guide where we have a summary of a lot of this information as well as some more wonderful resources for you. And with that, we're going to go ahead and get into some of our content. So, first of all, we know that programs all have a developmentally appropriate and research-based curriculum, but we also know that it's really important to take a responsive approach, particularly with infants and toddlers. So, we're going to talk a little bit. Carol, tell us about using a responsive approach with infants and toddlers as a way to implement your curriculum.

Carol: Sure, Emily. So, a responsive approach is how a teacher implements their curriculum and makes it really responsive to the children that they're working with. That's really, really important. When we're talking about responsive approach, we're talking about the three Rs: respect, reflect and relate.

Emily: Wonderful. Can you tell me what does that mean: respect, reflect and relate? And before you get started, I just want to tell people we have a chat available. We're going to ask you what it means to you to be using a responsive approach within your curriculum, and you can send your answers into the chat box and we will get them right here and share them back with you. So, Carol, tell us a little bit more about the three Rs.

Carol: So, The three Rs, respect really means respecting what the child is interested in, what the child is doing, following that child's lead. So, when a teacher is respecting what the child is doing, it's a win-win, because you're following what the child likes to do. Reflect: that means taking what the child likes to do and reflecting on how I could extend on that interest and create activities to really grow that particular strength that that child is interested in.

Emily: So, just taking some time to think about what's going on?

Carol: Yes. Exactly. Reflect. And then respond of course is putting that into action; taking what you thought about what the child likes to do and putting that together to extend that child's learning. That's what we call responsive approach to learning.

Emily: That is so wonderful. What a great way to be working with infants and toddlers. So, I wonder if you could tell us a little story or something about a responsive approach in action.

Carol: Sure. I have a little story about a little girl named Abbie. Abbie was using the words in and out. All day long her teacher was noticing that she was putting blocks into a container and container and taking them out of a container. Her teacher, Cara, noticed she liked that, so every time she worked with Abbie, she would say, "Abbie, let's put your foot into the shoe," or, "How can you get your foot out of the shoe," or she would say, "Let's put the blocks in the container and take them out." So, just being responsive and really using that child's interest to build upon that skill.

Emily: I love the way that the teacher in this story really takes what this child is interested in and then expands it throughout the day. She's really reinforcing these concepts of in and out, and then bringing them throughout the rest of her day through these basic routines.

Carol: Exactly. When you do that, you're strengthening that child's interest and also that skill, and that child sees that those concepts are in more than one place. So, it's just a win-win for that child.

Emily: That's so wonderful. We have here: Tracy says a responsive approach to curriculum is all about relationships, and that is so key, because you really can't have this kind of understanding of in an infant or a toddler without having that relationship.

Carol: Yes. That actually is the real R—relationships. When you have a good relationship with a child, you're definitely going to have a responsive approach to curriculum.

Emily: Yeah. It really is sort of the foundation that underlies everything else. Ramone is saying that part of a responsive approach is really noticing a baby's cues and then responding to those cues.

Carol: Exactly.

Emily: Yeah. That's wonderful.

Carol: It's very important to do that.

Emily: Yeah. Wonderful. Thank you so much for your participation. Don't forget you can also use the chat box to send your questions into us. Just remember, when we're talking about this responsive approach to curriculum, as Tracy said, really the foundation is about relationships. And, in order to do that, you really have to- This is so funny, because a comment just came in from Maria, when you know the child and their family. And you do. Right? You need to have relationships with all of the important people...

Carol: Exactly.

Emily: ...in this child's life so you can really understand what do the parents feel about this child.

Carol: Exactly.

Emily: What sort of cultural context is this child living in? How can I really be respectful and supportive of all that's going on in this baby's life? And that is. It's following the cues. For example, think about if you have a child who is throwing things in the classroom, rather than just saying, "That's inappropriate behavior."

Carol: Find a way to have that child throw things appropriately, like into a basket or maybe a ball on the playground instead of telling the child, "No."

Emily: That's right. It's really figuring out, "What are you interested in?" and then helping them do that.

Carol: Exactly. Exactly. Now I want to introduce Carrie Germeroth, a literacy expert Welcome, Carrie. From NCECDTL.

Carrie Germeroth: Thank you for having me.

Carol: Carrie, can you tell us a little bit about how books and reading support emerging literacy and language in young children?

Carrie: Sure. Babies are born with an innate capacity to pick up on the patterns and different sounds that our voices make as soon as we start talking to them. And as adults and caregivers in their life, it's up to us to provide meaningful experiences for them to develop language and literacy skills. Shared reading and read alouds are a great way to accomplish this. Books provide a vehicle to encourage that language development. It's an opportunity to practice listening as well as using language and literacy skills. Books allow you to provide more background information to children so that they know how to navigate through their environment and make sense of what they see and do and hear all the time.

Carol: How can I help teachers, or how can a teacher select a book to support a young child?

Carrie: That's a great question. I think what illustrates something really nicely is this video clip that we're going to show. In this video clip you will see that our young children at very early ages are drawn to reading. In this clip the teachers have one idea of what they're going to do that morning, and that's prepare breakfast, and the children have another idea. So, let's watch this clip.

Teacher: Are you going to come have—come with us and eat breakfast? Hmm?

Student: Horsey.

Teacher: You're trying to find the horsey? I don't think there is a horse in that book.

Student: I read book.

Teacher: You want to read a book?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Okay. Pick a book and we'll read a book real quick. Which book am I reading?

Student: That one.

Teacher: Which one? Fall?

Student: Yeah.

Teacher: Okay. Let's do Fall first. Okay? He's got a whole lot of leaves in his arms, doesn't he? He's carrying them. Do you think he's bringing— Where do you think he's taking them to? The basket? That's right. He's going to put it in the basket. Oh, look. Sunflower seeds. We had a sunflower, didn't we?

Student: Mm-hmm

Teacher: Yeah. And see how the seeds fall?

Carrie: So, hopefully in that clip you saw how that book reading experience became a vehicle for conversation. The children were really interested in reading, and so the teacher changed her plan and responded in a very responsive manner. She was able to use a lot of different strategies to support language and literacy. She connected what they were reading to their own personal lives, to previous learning, and she also got in some new content in there as well. So, really just a great way to show that when children are read to and have that experience of being read to, they ask to be read to over and over again.

Carol: That was so wonderful that the teacher responded to what the children were interested in at that moment. Supporting interest in books and emergent literacy, can you tell us a little bit more about that? How can I support a child who does not speak English?

Carrie: First, it's important to understand how children develop language and literacy skills and certainly to provide lots of new and varied vocabulary in your interactions and discussions with them. Make it fun and engaging and motivating for them. Not just books, but also through rhymes and songs and music that also provide opportunities for conversation. A really important goal is to keep children talking and to have those kinds of interactive experiences. That is another important way to encourage literacy development.

Carol: So, it really is all about relationship building with the teacher and the child, or the caregiver. Can you offer any strategies for reading to young children?

Carrie: Yes. You're so right. Learning happens in social interactions. For babies, they are really using the building blocks of language, so inattention and attention, their gestures and vocalizations. You have to pay attention to those things. If a baby just wants to practice turning pages of a book, let them do that. You can just narrate that experience for them. If you notice that they're just really focused on a particular page or an object, stop there. Linger on that page. Share that attention. And if they don't want to read anymore after that, that's great. You don't have to. Whenever they lose interest, pay attention to those cues and move on to something else. Toddlers are certainly more direct with what they're interested in. They may demand to read the same book over and over again. Repetitive reading is great to build children's background knowledge and build deeper concepts so children can experience the same book, but in different ways. I just want to remind the viewers about the Viewer Guide that has a lot of great strategies and tips for them to check out after this.

Carol: Thank you, Carrie. Can you think of a time when you chose a specific book based on a child's interest? Tell us about that time.

Carrie: For me, and maybe why you're out there filling in the chat box on how you've chosen a book, I would say that— and you probably have this experience as well—children tell us in subtle and not-so-subtle ways what they want to do of course, and so again paying attention to those cues. Young babies like to explore with their mouths, so let them do that with a book. As they get older and want to participate in the book reading, books that have pulls, tabs and holes that they can poke their fingers through, that's great. Toddlers are doers, and so give them ways to interact with the book, so whether that's through rhymes or some interactive storybook shared reading, let them become involved and choose books that are related to the things they're learning about their life. Like they're learning about emotions, and they're learning self-help skills. And, of course above all, make it fun. Right?

Carol: Definitely. Thank you so much. Thank you, Carrie. What can we do to support children's home languages in their early years? Many of our classrooms have children who speak other languages.

Carrie: Yeah. That's a great question. We know, from research, that children who learn their home language first have an easier time learning English, and they're more than capable of learning more than one language at a time. Definitely it is okay to read to children in the environment in more than one language. Some good strategies to use would be to have books of different languages in their learning environment available to them, sending the same book home with children for parents to read in multiple languages, so in both English and their home language. Certainly, above all, respecting their home language and their home environment is an important thing to do. If you're able to have a teacher or a volunteer come in who can speak the home language, that's even better or a great addition that you can provide. Another thing that we're finding from research is that it's a cognitive benefit, and that children who have the cognitive demands placed on them of having to switch between two different language systems, it actually improves their executive function skills, which is critical for paying attention and reading comprehension, but also their theory of mind so being able to take the perspective of another person. So, really being able to speak multiple languages should be looked at as a benefit and something that we want to encourage.

Carol: Very good advice. Thank you. Thank you so much, Carrie.

Carrie: Thank you for having me.

Carol: You're welcome.

Emily: Thank you. That was so fantastic. I loved hearing all of her great ideas and information about emerging language and literacy, and especially talking about home languages, because the research is really there to support how important it is for children to learn their home language.

Carol: Exactly. Remember, when you're reading to young children, it's about the experience. If they don't want to turn the page and they want to stay on a page, stay on that page with that child. Let them touch and turn and go back to that book again and again.

Emily: Yeah. I remember a program telling me that a parent— they were saying to parents, "Read with your toddler. Read with your toddlers." And this parent said, "But I don't know how to read." And they said, "That's okay. Neither do they. Just enjoy the book together."

Carol: That's right. They don't know how to read. They just love the experience.

Emily: Exactly.

Carol: And you're also building a relationship with that child.

Emily: Exactly. It's a great moment to be responsive. I love it. We do have a couple of responses to the chat. We have one teacher, Mr. Tony, who says that a couple of his children really like trucks, so they have some books about trucks. I have a four-year-old son, and we also have some books about trucks. So, I understand that. Then Carlethia said, "My babies are so interested in looking at each other." That's another really common one.

Carol: Yes.

Emily: Babies love other baby faces. So, they have provided a lot of books with pictures of other babies in them.

Carol: Also it's really great to take pictures of your babies and make a book. Let them look at themselves. What a wonderful addition.

Emily: That's such a great way to help. And then you're also building those peer relationships among babies, which is an episode that we have further down the road.

Carol: Okay. I like that.

Emily: Yeah, wonderful. Claudia said she has a toddler in her classroom, and their family just got a pet dog. So, guess what that child is very interested in?

Carol: Very interested in dogs. Yes.

Emily: Yeah. Lots of great books about dogs and opportunities to touch the books and stuff. That's wonderful. Thank you so much. I really appreciate your chats, and don't forget that if you have any more questions about this, please send them to us and we will answer them during the Teacher Time Coffee Break. At this time we are really lucky, because we have an expert here. She's an early childhood consultant and an expert in using a responsive approach to curriculum. Welcome to Alissa Mwenelupembe. Hi.

Alissa Mwenelupembe: Hi, Emily. Thanks so much for having me.

Emily: Thank you so much for coming. I'm really excited that you're here. What I'd love for you to tell us about is, first of all, why are we even talking about this? What is the benefit of using a responsive approach?

Alissa: I think it is so important right now to talk about this idea of using a responsive approach, because we know so much about how babies' brains work and how they grow and how they develop. What we do know about those beautiful brains that they have is that they learn in the context of relationships. The great thing about this responsive approach to curriculum is that it's all built on this foundation of solid relationships with children. So, I think when teachers are able to spend time with children, closely observe their play, reflect on their own self in that situation, they're able to provide these really rich, meaningful experiences with children and help them develop.

Emily: I Love that. And that works really within any curriculum that you might be using in your program. This piece makes a lot of sense.

Alissa: Oh, definitely. There are lots of different curriculums out there. All of them can be responsive to young children.

Emily: Yes. Wonderful. And they really should be.

Alissa: Yes.

Emily: Exactly. We talk a little bit about following the children's lead. We have a video that we're going to show, and then we're going to talk a little about it. I love this video, because this could have gone really differently with a less-responsive teacher.

Alissa: Definitely.

Emily: But this teacher was following the children's lead, and they weren't using the materials exactly as they are typically meant to be used, but that was okay with her. She really went with it, and I think the children had a great learning experience from it. Let's watch this video.

Teacher: Wait, Maather. Do you think it's enough space right here? I don't think that's enough space.

Student: I want to go in.

Teacher: How about we let Yahya have a turn, and then when Yahya's finished, then Maather can have a turn? Yahya, come out. Let's see if Maather can fit in there. Can Maather have a turn?

Student: No. My turn. No. Yahya's turn? Oh, he said, "It's my turn." Shall we give him one more minute? Did that make you sad? Why? Because you want a turn? Well, look over here. How about we push this out? Do you want to try to—here. [Laughter]

Student: Wow!

Teacher: Uh-oh. Yahya's getting company. [Laughter]

Emily: I love that video so much. What a great teacher.

Alissa: Definitely.

Emily: There is so much happening. When the little boy is in the sink and the little girl is also trying to get her body in, we know that toddlers don't have a great sense of how big they are. We've all seen a toddler try to back themselves into a doll's chair or something like that. It was a great chance for this teacher to work on some problem solving with the kids. Like: "It doesn't look like you're both going to fit in there. What could we do?"

Alissa: Right. And I love how the teacher really took some time and reflected on the intent that the children had. She could have stopped that from the first minute of that interaction to say, "We don't do that. That's a sink. This is for washing dishes." Instead she really took time to watch what the child was doing, and then think about how she could support that instead of shutting it down from the first minute. And then I loved how the other little girl joined, and she wanted to do that also. She didn't stop Yahya from doing what he needed to do, but she found a way to support both children to be able to have that experience.

Emily: That's right. It was a really fantastic example of following children's leads and being really responsive to what they're doing in the moment, and helping children learn through play.

Alissa: Yeah. Definitely. Definitely.

Emily: It was great. I noticed in one moment there she really reflected feelings back to the little girl when she said, "Okay, Yahya, your turn is over," and he was like, "No, it's not." She was like, "That makes you kind of sad. You really want to" —and then she helped them find a way so they could both fit in the furniture.

Alissa: Right. I think that that teacher did a great job of carefully observing what the children were doing. Because she so closely observed what they needed in that moment, then she could offer

something to help expand that learning. And so then two children have the opportunity to figure out some spatial reasoning by climbing into the furniture instead of what could have happened if she would have stopped that play when it started.

Emily: Yeah. Or let it go on without any kind of adult support. And we've talked a little bit here about the importance of relationships. One thing I would like you to tell me a little bit more about, because I know this is your area, is how critical observation is in terms of understanding how to work with young children. We talk about it a lot in terms of observation and assessment and curriculum, but in terms of the day-to-day, like we just saw.

Alissa: Right. Yeah, I think observation is a huge piece of this, because how can you possibly know what the children are interested in if you're not paying close attention to it? It all goes along with those relationships. If I know you, Emily, and I want to provide the best experience that I can for you, then I'm going to pay attention to what you're doing. The same with children. When we care about them deeply and we want to provide the highest quality education for them, we have to pay attention to what they're interested in, and that all comes through observation.

Emily: Awww. And that made me feel so good to think about. You know me so well and getting the best for me.

Alissa: Right. And think about how that feels like, not only to the children, but to their families knowing that their teachers of their children are so in tune with them that they know about them. They want to know more. They want to spend time carefully observing their interests and their play to provide that next step for them. >>

Emily: Yes, and I have children, and, as a parent, that is so important. When you have a teacher who can really do that, you really do value how well that teacher sees your child.

Alissa: Right.

Emily: It's so wonderful. Alissa, thank you so much. I just want to remind everybody that Alissa will be back, answering all of your questions during the Teacher Time Coffee Break. So, please send us your questions, and you'll be able to view that in a couple of weeks on MyPeers.

Alissa: Great. Thank you so much for having me.

Emily: Thanks for coming. Carol, that was so much fun.

Carol: That was. Yes. [Laughter]

Emily: Wonderful. Now we have this opportunity. We were able to go out to programs and see some of this in action and talk to teachers. So, we get to have teacher voices here about some of these same things.

Carol: So now let's take a moment and connect our responsive approach to curriculum in the Head Start classrooms looking at the videos.

Emily: Okay. Wonderful. Thank you.

Emily: We saw you spending a lot of time this morning meeting one particular infant's needs. Can you talk about the benefits of that individual time, and can you talk about the challenges of when children really intensely need a lot of one- on-one time?

Angie: Well, since he's younger, the benefits is like securing that attachment and the bond with him, because he just started maybe like a month ago, and so he's months, and he's just with mom and dad. So, trying to get that secure bond with him so he's comfortable with me and stuff. And the challenges is he was just not happy today. I felt bad, because with teamwork with Misty and me, and then with Chris and I, we do a really good job team working, because we'll spend time with one, but we'll also be watching around. And then the other one will take on all the other kids and responsibilities and stuff like that. But it can get challenging at times. One of us will be feeding a kid and one will be down there, and then all of them will be playing. So, that's always hard when there's just that one kid that's just so upset and doesn't want to sleep or anything. But it makes a really good bond and a secure attachment with them.

Emily: So, you really saw this need for him, and you were—

Angie: Oh, I can't let him cry. [Laughter]

Emily: Yeah. You were just there to meet that need.

Angie: Yeah. He's teething, and he has—I think he has a stomachache too, so—yeah. He was not a happy camper today.

Emily: That's hard. That's a lot for a teacher. That really demands a lot of you.

Angie: It's my job, though.

Emily: Yeah. How can you tell what children are interested in, especially babies?

Angie: Well, like I said, with the littler ones—

Emily: Uh-huh.

Angie: ...they're just kind of getting their, umm, new development, like their motor development and stuff. But with the older ones, we had one that was enjoying to— umm, dad got him to climb on his back at home.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Angie: So, he was so excited to come into school and try to ride the babies' backs.

Emily: Oh, no.

Angie: So, he was interested in that. So, we got the rocking—those rocking horses.

Emily: Yeah.

Angie: Those, umm, cushion horses for them to ride on, so— and to climb on and stuff. So, if they're interested in climbing and stuff, we'll add more stuff to the gross motor area. Umm, they're interested

in looking at the van and stuff, so we'll get out more books about motor transportation and stuff like that.

Emily: Mm-hmm. That's wonderful. So, you took something that could have been really challenging.

Angie: Yes. [Laughter] It was challenging.

Emily: And you were saying, "Here's an opportunity to"—

Angie: Yeah. It was—

Emily: ..."follow this child's lead and help them learn."

Angie: Yeah. It was cute for a second, but—

Emily: Right.

Angie: [Laughter]...after you see that happen a couple times, the little babies are not liking it.

Emily: Yeah.

Angie: I mean, it's stuff that he learned at home, which is perfectly fine. He was happy and excited.

Emily: Right.

Angie: And we just told mom, and she was like, "Okay. That's a good idea."

Emily: Well—and it's wonderful that you respected what was happening at home.

Angie: Yeah.

Emily: And instead of saying, "This has to stop," you were like, "Here's how we can use it..."

Angie: Yes.

Emily: ..."in our classroom."

Angie: Yes. And we have great relationships with the parents and the families. We just talk to them and we just communicate just like they were like our friends and are like our best friends.

Emily: That's wonderful.

Angie: Yeah.

Emily: So, what's so great about that video is we had the opportunity to go see some programs, and here was this teacher with a very young baby who was having a really hard time. And she had a lot of ideas about why that was. But what she was able to do was just respect that this baby really was having a hard time and not try to change that; just understand this is where he was today. And she was able to reflect what would be supportive of this baby, and maybe thinking about what mom and dad would do. She really was able to just spend time rocking that baby. He didn't always feel okay, but she was right there with him helping him through this hard moment. You know?

Carol: That's wonderful.

Emily: And you can tell she really could relate to what he was going through and just really be there with him. She was doing such a great job of using the three Rs.

Carol: Yeah. To me, she's building a relationship with that child. Maybe he's a new child. The child is transitioning into that classroom. She's respecting where he is, and she tried a few things. She reflected, "That's not working. Let me try something else." That's what responsive approach is all about.

Emily: Right. And it looks sometimes so simple, like, "Well, she's just rocking a baby." But really this can be a piece of implementing a curriculum.

Carol: Exactly.

Emily: It can look like that.

Carol: Exactly. Really good.

Emily: Yeah. Really wonderful.

Carol: Yes. So, we want our viewers to try this also. Try the responsive approach in your classrooms, in your homes with your own children. If you're a family child care or home visitor, try this out. Try the three Rs, respect, reflect and relate and let us know how things are working.

Emily: And you're welcome to join our MyPeers Community. You'll be getting an invitation to that, and we can all have a conversation about it.

Carol: Exactly. Right now I want to introduce to you our Early Head Start specialist, Peter Pizzolongo. He's here to tell us all about the ELOF Minute.

Peter Pizzolongo: Hello! I'm Peter Pizzolongo. For this portion of Teacher Time we'll focus on ELOF: The Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five as we continue to unpack today's topic: The Kids Are in Charge: Children Guiding the Curriculum. In each Teacher Time episode we'll present an ELOF Minute, but I'll actually use more than one minute for this, because it's really important. Now, some of you might be asking, "What is the HSELOF?" often shortened to ELOF. So, I'll begin with a brief overview of ELOF before we home in on Children Guiding the Curriculum and the role that ELOF can play to inform your practice. ELOF is a framework that represents the continuum of learning for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers: what children should know and be able to do during their formative years, from birth through age five.

As you know, the first five years of life is a time of wondrous and rapid development and learning. ELOF outlines and describes the skills, behaviors, and concepts that Early Head Start and Head Start programs must foster in all children, including children who are dual language learners and children with disabilities. ELOF is organized in a way that can help teachers and families understand child development and guide the ways in which we help children learn. You can learn more about ELOF by going to the ELOF pages on the ECLKC Website, the Office of Head Start's Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. For this ELOF Minute, I want to focus on three components of the framework: the domains, goals, and developmental progressions. Domains are broad areas of early learning and development.

Goals are broad statements of expectations for children's learning and development. And developmental progressions are the skills, behaviors, and concepts that children will demonstrate as

they progress along the developmental continuum toward a curricular goal. These components are probably familiar to you, since these three— domains, goals, and developmental progressions —are typically addressed by curricula for young children.

Today's topic, *Children Guide the Curriculum*, makes me think about the domain Approaches to Learning. Earlier, Carol gave an example of one-year-old Abbie putting orange juice lids into a coffee can with a slit in the top, and putting blocks in a bucket and dumping them out again. Remember that? I'll bet you've had such experiences with a baby. These are examples of the ways in which children demonstrate they're attending to or mastering skills and concepts— the developmental progression that leads to a goal that teachers and families can set for a child who is at Abbie's stage of development. Looking at the ELOF, in the Approaches to Learning Domain, one of the goals is "Child develops the ability to show persistence in actions and behavior."

Your program's School Readiness Goals could include a goal that is similar to this goal from the ELOF, such as "Children will attend, persist, and demonstrate flexibility in learning." Abbie truly is showing persistence, which is needed to get that orange juice lid into the slit in the coffee can lid and drop each block into the bucket, dump them out again, and to do it over and over. Looking at the developmental progression for this ELOF goal, "Child develops the ability to show persistence...", we see that the skill falls within the range of typical skills for children between and months of age: "Shows willingness to repeat attempts to communicate or to repeat actions to solve a problem even when encountering difficulties." So, you might be wondering, "What skill would a child typically have mastered prior to the skill that we see in babies between and months of age?" Well, looking at the ELOF developmental progression continuum, a child would "Show increasing ability to continue interactions with familiar adults or toys for more than just a brief time."

And, I'm sure you're also wondering, "What should I expect this child to be able to do next?" I'm glad you asked that. The ELOF developmental progression continuum shows us that a child would "Show increasing ability to stay engaged when working towards a goal or solving a problem—often trying different strategies until successful." Have you seen that with the babies and toddlers in your care? Once they've figured out how to do something that works for them, they might try different ways to get to the same result. Your program's curriculum will have activities or learning experiences designed to help children explore, practice, and master skills and concepts. So understanding the ELOF goals and developmental progression continuum can guide your teaching practices, and, with your program's curriculum, informs your implementation of high-quality learning experiences that are responsive to and build on each child's individual pattern of development and learning. A mentor once said to me, "In early childhood education, we meet children where they are, but we don't leave them there."

When we understand the concept of developmental progression, and know the skills and concepts children typically learn as they progress toward a goal, we are meeting children where they are and helping them to grow and learn. For example, as a competent caregiver, you know that you'll need to provide materials so that children can learn and practice skills as they develop persistence, such as coffee cans or buckets for children to put things in, take them out, and put them in again. And you know each child in your care, so you know the best kind of support to provide to each as he or she is progressing toward a goal. In Carol's description of Abbie, her teacher, Cara, knows that sitting near Abbie and using the language "in" and "out" to describe what Abbie is doing is one kind of support that Abbie needs. With another child, perhaps sitting nearby and quietly watching what the child does would

help that child focus on what she is doing without being interrupted. Knowing what comes next on the developmental progression for this goal in which a child tries different strategies to complete a task, you're prepared to help a child recognize that there might be more than one way to do something, which might require different materials, or perhaps using a different teaching approach or practice, which is part of individualizing for children. I'll bet you're wondering how this goal for infants and toddlers is related to the goals for preschool children—what the infants and toddlers in your care can progress to. I'm glad you asked that, too. Looking at the ELOF Approaches to Learning Domain for preschoolers, you see the goal, "Child persists in tasks."

The developmental progression shows us that preschoolers, between 24 and 36 months, typically "Persist on preferred tasks when presented with small challenges with or without adult support." Have you seen a child persist at building a tall tower with blocks even when some of the pieces fall? The persistence that infants and toddlers demonstrate with the support of their caregivers and families guides them to become preschoolers who persist at a task, even when things are not going along swimmingly. I hope that this segment has helped you to better understand the Early Learning Outcomes Framework, and you recognize how the ELOF can help you to be a better caregiver. Thanks for watching I'll see you at the next ELOF Minute. And now, back to you, Caroland Emily.

Carol: I want to thank Peter for that wonderful ELOF Minute. And I want to remind all of our viewers about the wonderful resources we have linked on our Viewer's Guide. So, check out all the wonderful resources we have for you.

Emily: Yes. And most of those are actually going to be found on the ECLKC, which you are all well familiar with and know very well. There is a lot there on that Viewer's Guide. Definitely check that out. Wonderful. Now I'm very excited to introduce Amy Hunter from the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness. Amy, welcome.

Amy Hunter: Great to be here, Emily. It's so good to see you.

Emily: I know. It's great to be together here.

Amy: Thanks for having me.

Emily: Yeah. So we are going to talk about the Relationship Building Minute, which really is kind of a focus on how can we help children who might be experiencing behaviors that we find challenging as teachers or parents.

Amy: Never happens.

Emily: No, it doesn't. Certainly not to me. [Laughter] One thing that I know was hard when I was a toddler teacher, and I hear from a lot of teachers about is they're struggling with kids who are having tantrums —two-year-olds having tantrums. I know it's hard to believe, but I'm hearing that it's happening from people.

Amy: And now they say threes are harder than twos.

Emily: I think that I believe that as well.

Amy: Yeah, tantrums are a very big topic among the toddler set. Whether you're a teacher, whether you're a parent, if you're working with twos and threes, you are probably experiencing tantrums at

some point in time. And I think one of the things that's really important to think about tantrums is the children's need for control. So, often tantrums are sort of an expression of that need of control, which in so many ways fits with what you've been talking about all afternoon in terms of respecting that child's need for control.

Emily: And you have to know, I think about toddlers, and there is so little in their life that they have any control over. We tell them when it's time to eat and go to bed and wake up and go outside, and there's really not a lot that they get to be in charge of.

Amy: Imagine if you put yourself in their shoes, right, if I had to go through the day with someone telling me when I was eating, when I was sleeping, when I was getting up, when I was going places and sometimes not even telling me but just doing those things, I'd probably be having some tantrums too.

Emily: Yeah. I can understand their frustration.

Amy: Yeah. So, there are some things we can do thinking about respect, in particular. We can respect their need for control and build in ways throughout the day to give them a sense of control. So, for instance, we can ask them pretty much about everything—choice. "Do you want the red cup or the blue cup?" "Do you want your sandwich cut in a rectangle or in a triangle?" "Do you want to put on your coat first or your jacket first?" You could pretty much think about anything in terms of giving children a choice, which will help them feel more of a sense of control throughout the day, and less of a need to express that.

Emily: Yeah. And I love how those are really pretty simple strategies. You were saying, "These are two choices. Both of them are okay with me." But it feels like a choice for the child. Those are some great strategies when we think about prevention, but what happens when we're kind of in the moment with this child who is experiencing really big, intense, overwhelming emotions? How can we help them?

Amy: I want to answer you. I definitely do. And I also want to give one more prevention strategy, if I could. But just this idea of telling children what you're doing throughout the day, "First we're going to have lunch, then we're going to go outside." "It's time to change your diaper." "I'm going to pick you up and let's change your diaper." Or if they are having a hard time with that and really engaged, "It's still time to change your diaper, but I see that you're really engaged with blocks. I'm going to come back in a minute." So, by communicating with them about the day, that sense of control and predictability, which really helps.

Emily: And that's so respectful. You say, "You're really engaged, and I understand that's hard, but we still need to change that diaper. But you can come back to this."

Amy: But I haven't forgotten your "in the moment," because I know that's what people are really interested in, is in that moment.

Emily: It's really hard.

Amy: And so I would say, sticking with your theme of this responsive approach the first thing you can do in that moment is reflect: What is this child trying to tell me through their tantrum? What is the meaning of their behavior? Are they trying to tell me they are so sad that they are here and missing their mom? Are they trying to tell me that, this other kid is just in my space and I need some more space. Are they trying to tell me, "I'm tired. I've had it." Like, "This whole day I've been holding it together and I just

need a break.” What is the meaning of the behavior? And so you’re really sort of putting on that detective hat and thinking about, “What do I need to know about what’s happening here? What is this child trying to say to me that they can’t say in words or they don’t know any other way?”

Emily: That’s really hard. I know that... I’ve also had personal struggles as a parent with kids having tantrums.

Amy: We all have.

Emily: I think it’s hard also when you think about the relating piece that we’re really trying to support long term this development of their ability to manage these emotions.

Amy: Again, if you put yourself in their shoes, when I’m wanting to have a tantrum, we hopefully have a little more experience so that we aren’t having that tantrum. But when you feel like you want to, what would help you in that moment? And what would help is somebody saying to you, “I get it. I understand. It makes sense.” And what doesn’t help is the opposite when someone says, “Why are you so angry?” or, “What’s wrong with you?” or, “Get it together.”

Emily: Yeah. “This isn’t a big deal.” That doesn’t help. But it really helps to say, “You are so mad right now. You don’t want to stop playing. You don’t want to take a nap. You don’t want to go inside. You’re having a good time. I get that.” And that really goes a long way to reduce the intensity of tantrums, reduce the need for tantrums, because then the child begins to learn, “You understand me. You get where I’m coming from. I can communicate well, and you understand it.”

Emily: Right. That’s so important. There is so much there. Thank you. So, that actually was our relationship building minute, but now we’re going to talk a little bit about resiliency and wellness, because, as you were talking, I was just thinking about how emotionally exhausting it is to consistently be really respecting, reflecting and relating with children as they go through all of these big emotions and transitions. We need ways to really take care of ourselves as we do this so that we can be present for children.

Amy: You’re % right. It’s exhausting. This work is absolutely exhausting. And so one of the best things we can do is taking care of ourselves. Before we talked about reflecting on the child’s behavior. What’s the meaning of the child’s behavior? What’s going on for the child? But now we’re going to talk about taking care of ourselves and reflecting on ourselves. And so when we reflect on ourselves, let’s take that toddler example again and say, “Oh, my gosh, I’m getting upset.” And you notice that. You notice maybe your shoulders are up into your neck or next to your head because you’re so tense. I know I hold a lot of tension in my jaw. Your heart might be beating quicker. So, all of these physical things going on when you start to get frustrated, and then your thoughts when you’re in that moment of dealing with a toddler tantrum. You might be thinking, “Oh, my gosh, I wish I was a better teacher.” “I wish I was a better parent.” Or maybe someone’s thinking, “I’m not a good teacher,” or “I’m not a good parent.” And so now all these thoughts are going through your mind. So, reflecting on what’s happening for you, like noticing that I’m having these thoughts, I’m having these physical sensations going on. That’s the first step noticing and reflecting on what’s happening.

Emily: So, this is making me really anxious. What can we do when we notice that we’re having these cues from our bodies? What can we do?

Amy: Right. That we're paying attention to them. And so once you're paying attention and you notice and recognize that that's what's happening that you're having these thoughts and these sensations is calm yourself. Right? And there are lots of different ways to calm yourself, and the best thing to do is try to experiment with some different ways and find what works for you. For some people it's taking three deep breaths. For some people it's just thinking about a word that's calming, like calm or peace. For some people it's visualization. I know someone gave the example when I was in a training once of a wheat field, and for them that was really calm seeing the wheat flow back and forth. For some people it's a beach scene. But there are all these different strategies you can use to try to center yourself, get calm— really distract your mind from that tense moment that you're in. And then the final piece is deciding what you're going to do.

Emily: I just have to share with you a strategy that has really worked for me which is when you start feeling that way, sometimes it's like you have tunnel vision and you can only see the thing that's really difficult.

Amy: You really get stuck in it. Right?

Emily: Oh, my gosh. It's so hard. And then you start thinking those thoughts, like, "I'm not being a very good teacher right now." And if you can step back and think, "I'm going to look for and name ten things in this room." It will pull you out of that, and it gives you something really concrete to do. For me that's been a really valuable strategy in this moment. It kind of takes the pressure off of the intensity of what's going on that you're supposed to be resolving. And you can pull back and kind of feel like you have a sense of control over your own reactions.

Amy: You really get stuck in that moment, so finding a strategy—and that's a great strategy, by the way— finding your own strategy that works for you so that you can center and become calm, and then go to your thinking brain; not your reactive brain. Sometimes when you're in that physical moment or your thoughts are getting carried away, you just react. Instead of making an intentional choice about, "What would my best self do in this situation? What is the best teacher response to this child's tantrum in the moment?"— and what you said earlier is so great. Sometimes it's just being there for the child. So, my homework for the audience today is to go back and use reflection thinking about your thoughts, your feelings, your physical body, developing a strategy to calm down that works for you. Practicing some different strategies, and then ask yourself, "What would my best self do here?"

Emily: I love that. Thank you. Those are some really good strategies. And I like thinking about taking yourself away and thinking, "What do I really want to be in this situation?" because that helps you get back to that place where you can be that excellent teacher again. Amy, thank you so much for joining us.

Amy: Thanks for having me. It's a lot of fun.

Emily: I appreciate that. We'll have you back. Thank you so much. So, now we're just about done. We're going to wrap it up here. Before we go, Carol, remind us of those three Rs.

Carol: Today we talked about a responsive approach to curriculum. I want to remind everyone what those three Rs are—respect, thinking about what the child is doing, what the child is interested in, trying to follow that child's lead. Reflect—reflect on how you can grow that skill or that interest. What can you add to that child's learning? And then Relate. How can you relate to what that child is engaging in and make that a wonderful situation. That's being responsive.

Emily: So much learning can happen within that kind of a relationship.

Carol: Exactly.

Emily: That's so wonderful. Thank you so much for joining us. We would like to remind you again, please go ahead and submit your questions for the Teacher Time Coffee Break, and we'll have our expert, Alissa, answering those questions. Don't forget to check out the MyPeers page so we can continue this conversation. We'll be there, and we really want to hear about your experiences. And don't forget we have a lot more Teacher Time to come.

Carol: That's right. And also don't forget we have a lot of wonderful resources for you on our Viewer's Guide, links to the ECLKC wonderful information to help you as you keep working with your young children.

Emily: Yeah. Wonderful. Well, thank you so much. Before we leave, we just want to leave you with this Moment of Learning video. Watch this little girl and start practicing your respect, reflect and relate as you watch her with this wonderful learning activity that she chose herself and created. So, enjoy. Thank you so much.

Carol: Yes. Thanks for joining us and we'll see you next time on Teacher Time.