

Understanding the Relationship Between Staff Wellness and Effective Teaching Practices

Stephenie Hickman: Hey, everyone. Thanks so much for joining us. We'll get started in just a few minutes. We invite you to open up that group chat widget at the bottom of your screen and let us know where you're calling or you're joining us from.

Great. We have so many people joining from all over. We're so excited you guys have taken time out of your day to attend today's webinar, Understanding the Relationship Between Staff Wellness and Effective Teaching Practices, as part of the Education Grantee Manager Series, the first of the year.

So, again, thanks for joining us. I'm Stephenie Hickman, your host and one of your presenters for a session today, and I'm excited to be joined by my colleague, Randi Hopper. But before we begin, I just want to go over a few housekeeping items because as many of you guys know, we have switched online platforms, and we're now using ON24, so I just wanted to cover a few of those features before we start our webinar. So, the bottom of your screen, many of you have already identified that group chat, but you're going to see multiple application widgets that you can use, and all of those widgets, once you open them up, are resizable and movable, so you can customize your screen however is comfortable for you.

You can also expand your slide area or maximize it to full screen, and you do this by clicking on the little arrows at the bottom-right corner of that slide deck. If you have any questions during the webinar, you can submit those to the Q&A widget, and I believe that's the purple Q&A widget at the bottom of your screen. We'll do our very best to answer these. Any tech issues that you're having, please go ahead and put those in the Q&A widget, as well. A copy of today's slide deck and a ton of additional resources are available in the green resource list widget on the bottom of your screen, as well. So, we encourage you to download any of those resources or links, anything that you find useful.

So, for the best viewing experience, we really do recommend using a wired Internet connection if at all possible, and then you want to be sure to close any program or browser sessions running in the background. That could cause some issues for you.

The webinars are bandwidth-intensive, so closing any unnecessary browser tabs will help conserve your bandwidth for the webinar. It's also being streamed to your computer! As you can tell, there is no dial-in number, so for the best audio quality, just make sure that your computer speakers or your headset are turned on and the volume is up so you can hear Randi and I today. Also, we know that some networks cause slides to advance just a little more slowly than others, so if you are on a VPN, if you want to just log off of that, we recommend it just for clarity, and then if your slides are behind, you can just push F5 on your keyboard, and that will refresh the page, and so if you have any other kind of odd tech questions, there are some answers to common issues located in the yellow help widget at the bottom of your screen as well, and just so you guys know, an on-demand version of the webcast will be available about

30 minutes after the webcast or webinar, and it can be accessed using the same audience link that was sent to you earlier today.

So, if you want to minimize any of the widgets, for example, that "Tips for a Great Webinar" pod up on your screen, you can either click on it below, in the widget bar below, or you can click the minimize bar but not to where you can always pull it back up. So, with that said, I am going to go ahead and turn it over to Randi to get us started.

Randi Hopper: Hello, everybody, and welcome. I see there's so many people from, you know, all across the country, but I'm going to send you all a big hello from Southern California, and so I'm going to cover today's session objectives. So, this session is really going to talk about strategies that are going to help you address staff wellness and stress management to really have a better understanding of the relationship between staff wellness and effective teaching practices.

So, after this webinar, we really hope that you have an increased understanding of the role that emotionally supportive practices play in creating learning environments that really show the joy and discovery in being able to meet children's needs, and so together we're really going to explore how to ensure that teachers, home visitors, and family childcare providers receive the support that they need to establish and maintain these positive climates in all settings and offer appropriate responses to challenging behaviors that they experience, including those with disabilities and suspected delays.

So, today's agenda—We're going to start by looking at experiences of two teachers and discuss the strategies that might help them and support them in their work. So, we're going to take a look at some research on health and wellness of teachers and then move into stress from a child's perspective and identify strategies that might help to ensure all children are safe. So, of course, this is where we start taking a really close look at the emotionally supportive positive climates the children need in order to make sure that they're learning and growing, and so naturally we think about the effective teaching practices that help us create that.

So, it's helpful to review our "Framework for Effective Practice" to remind us about the critical role that teachers and education managers play in creating these environments, so we're going to take a look, and if we take a look at our little house graphic here that we've probably all seen before, we're going to focus on the foundation, that blue box that's down there, so the foundation of the house that's really necessary for children to learn, grow, and thrive, and the same is true for adults who work with children.

So, supporting teachers, family childcare providers, and home visitors, and supporting children can be thought as a parallel process. So, when we think about what children need, we also think about what adults need in their work with children to be able to effectively provide the necessary support for children. So, what does it look like when we think about adults? So, these nurturing, responsive, and effective interactions for education staff may look like when they're—When they're interacting with supervisors and education managers, they may be setting up an environment in which teachers and other teaching adults, such as family childcare providers and home visitors, can be successful.

So, monitoring staff's stress levels and well-being, including checking in and reflective supervision. So, with a peer group of adults, we might be looking at TLC groups, embedded

learning opportunities, and planning-and-reflection opportunities, so being able to look at the practices that we're putting into place and then gaining the perspective of—of others. And so with a coach, we might be looking at how to ensure that teachers and home visitors are in a good space to receive coaching, and being able to be reflective on that message and having joint plans that focus on emotional—on being emotionally supportive.

So, as we know, we really want to take a look at when teachers and home visitors have the inability to be emotionally supportive and engage in effective practices with children who exhibit behaviors that are challenging to them is raised, well, we need to take a look at how coaches and supervisors can still play a very supportive role even when those staff are demonstrating practices that are not effective, and so we're going to take a look at two teachers.

So, these teachers have very different stories. So, we're going to take a first look at Carmen. So, Carmen has a difficult relationship with her co-teacher. She also feels like she is the only one who works to create a positive relationship with parents and families. She's frequently asked by her directors to stay late, and she takes her work home with her every night, so she's preparing for the next day. So, we hear this quite a bit, right? She usually uses her lunch break to catch up on paperwork, and at home, she has three children of her own, and her husband works the late shift, so when she leaves late, she has to rely on neighbors to pick up her children from bus stop, and she rushes to get dinner on the table, and many times, she has to stop on her way home to grab takeout, so she helps her kids with her homework, gets them to bed, and before she starts her own work, she still needs to be able to get that—all of the other things situated for her own children.

So, she worries about her bills and how she's going to pay them by the end of the month and knows she needs dental work but will probably put it off until she can pay for it. She often falls asleep while she is working, and she knows she should try to make sure to take more time for herself, but she really doesn't know how. And so our other teacher is Angela, and Angela has similar stressors. She's a single mom to two boys and worries that the stress from her job affects her interactions with her boys, but she has a strong support system at home and at school. Her director checks in with her each week per her relationships with her coworkers, families, and children, and they have regular staff meetings where they discuss any challenges or needs around scheduling.

So, the director ensures that they have coverage for meetings with coaches and plans for curriculum and ongoing child assessment. So, once a month, the staff has a potluck lunch. Once a week, they plan a community walk together for any staff who are interested, and her children attend an after school program that supports them in getting their homework done. So, when she gets home, she cooks a meal together with her kids, spends time reading and helping them get to bed, and she worries about her bills and how she'll make ends meet. She was referred to a program to help get a financial advisor. So, with this, she spends more time with her family, and then she's able to do some reading and some yoga before she goes to bed. So, although these stories focus on teachers, the same two tales could easily be spread to home visitors or family childcare providers. So, when we think about education staff who have similar stressors but different levels of support, we want to ask the question to all of you, how do you think

these teachers will approach their children each day? When we think about those two different—those two different teachers, how do you think they'll approach? So, you can add your responses into the group chat or into the Q&A box as you go, and so you're able to type in, and then we can see them, and we can focus on your response.

All right. So, as you're thinking and typing in any responses that you have, we'll just take a look and kind of talk about the fact that we know stuff on this is so important to staff and really does impact their—the way that they work with children. Oh. Okay. So, I start seeing some answers here and how we're bringing that—So, taking time for herself and being able to give more time to herself, easier when you're supported. Yeah, definitely bringing—Unfortunately, those that are not supported bring those stressors into the classroom.

Those who have strong systems of support are more responsive and readily available to the children within their care, very, very true. And those who have a lack of support have trouble regulating themselves and regulating their children, so that's very true too, and similar strategies that we use for regulating ourselves, we can easily be able to teach children and also being in a survival state. Those are all very true answers. Oh, definitely, and that really does feed on what we're going to talk about for the rest of the webinar, as well.

So, what I'm going to do is—I love all of these answers. And so what I'm going to do is, I'm going to push us forward a little bit, but I definitely—if you've got ideas, definitely keep typing them in there so that we can connect them to things that we're going to talk about later on, especially the importance of staff wellness. That's what we're going to highlight right now, and as we go through, we know that that's so important, so I'm going to transition this off to Stephenie, so she can dive in a little deeper, and then also, we'll be able to connect some of the responses that you gave to some of the resources and strategies that we have going forward.

Stephenie: Great. Thank you. So, you guys have such amazing answers, right, and a big theme that I was seeing was that when teachers are stressed, they bring it into the classroom, so we need to think about, what can we do to help, right? How do we support this idea of wellness, but before we can get to those strategies, we really need to think about what the research tells us about where Head Start teachers are, right? How are they doing?

So, there's been extensive research that tells us about the health of low-income children in Head Start, right? Most of us are really familiar with that but very little about the health of those who are working with them, and so this study, "The Physical and Mental Health of Head Start Staff: The Pennsylvania Head Start Staff Wellness Survey," really aims to do just that. They compare the physical and mental health of women working in Pennsylvania Head Start programs to the health of women with similar socio-demographics, which is great because then it gives us a kind of a better picture, and just so you guys know, this resource is available in your resource-list widget if you're interested in reading the full study, but let's go ahead and take a look at some of the highlights. So, the study identified that women working in Pennsylvania Head Start programs had higher rates of stress-related health indicators, and that included severe headaches and migraines, lower-back pain, obesity, asthma, high blood pressure, diabetes, prediabetes.

All of those, those stress-related health indicators, the Pennsylvania Head Start teachers had more than women in the national sample, but what's even more concerning is that nearly 22 percent reported having three or more of these stress-related health indicators, and only 12.6 percent of the women in the national sample reported having three or more, so very, very concerning, right? And I don't think this comes as much of a surprise to those of you who are supporting education staff or teachers in the Head Start program, so that had some of the physical. So, let's take a look at what the research says about Head Start and Early Head Start teachers are doing with regard to mental health.

So, as you can see here, on this graph, the prevalence of diagnosed depression was higher, again, among Head Start staff than the national sample, so in addition to poorer health, they're also struggling with poorer mental health, and so what does that mean for our children? I mean, you guys said it a little bit earlier, right? Stress then impacts how they're showing up into their classrooms, how they're showing up with families and children, and so we know a lot about the potential impacts of maternal depression on young children, right? There's a lot of research around that, so while this particular study doesn't outline the direct-impact depression of early-childhood professionals or teachers has on children, we can pull from the research on maternal depression and say with certainty that symptoms of depression among Head Start and Early Head Start teachers are associated with lower sensitivity and increased withdrawal in adult-child interactions, and may also interfere with the development of healthy self-regulation and ultimately negatively impacting school readiness, right?

So, we needed to cover that before we could jump into some strategies on how we can help, and so I wanted to just let you guys know, again, that these resources are in your resource list. I see a couple people asking how you can get this information, so I believe it's, like, the second handout in your resource list. So, let's think about wellness. We know that we need to consider coming to this shared understanding of what wellness means in order to support education staff, right? We all have to have a shared understanding, shared definition.

So, we know that wellness is not just the absence of illness. Yes, that's part of it, but it's not all that it is. It's also thinking about how we help staff that we're working with to grow and feel more balanced. So, what is wellness? It's holistic. It's focused on the positive and determined by the individual, and I think that's a really, really important piece of wellness, that from the outside, we don't get to determine how other people are defining their wellness, but wellness is really determined by that individual, and it's also an active process, right? It's not just, "We're well, and we're done, and we're going to be well." I mean, it changes over time.

Again, this is another resource that you can access in that green resource-list widget if you want to dive a little bit deeper. Let's just take a quick poll here. So, thinking about wellness, think about when you have a flat tire, and which of the following occurs when you have that flat tire? You have difficulty steering. Is your ride just bumpy and shaky? Does it cause a wreck, and does it increase your stress? And you guys can answer directly on the screen, so if you just select your answer or answers and hit submit, that's how you can go ahead and answer that poll question.

So, as you guys are answering, I'm seeing a lot of people saying, "The ride is pretty bumpy and shaky," right? When you have a flat tire, that is certainly true. Sometimes, it causes a wreck, not

always. A whole lot of people saying that it increases your stress, and then we have some people also sharing that we have some difficulty steering. So, take a look at your guys' results here. Again, the majority say that, "It increases your stress, and it makes that ride just a little bumpy and shaky." Kind of makes it difficult to steer. It doesn't always cause a wreck, but it does certainly, sometimes, right?

We do know that it makes it really difficult to steer, and ultimately, when you have a flat tire, it causes you to not reach your final destination. So, what does that mean for us? That means that we need to help education staff really learn to find their wellness to avoid coming in with a flat, so to speak. We certainly don't want a wreck in the classroom, but we do know that when wellness or stress is off, or increased, I should say, when stress is increased that it really does impact how they manage their classroom and how they're interacting with children, and so we know that there are certainly a lot of ways that we can support—support our staff. So, we just wanted to go through a couple ways that you can do that so—and strategies. So, the folks at Northwest Missouri University developed some really amazing tools to help understand how to balance what they call our Wellness Wheel.

So, what they did is identified six facets of wellness, and those includes occupational, physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual, so essentially, we need to find balance among all six to achieve optimal wellness but not to worry. This doesn't mean that we're perfect in every area but that we are able to identify what needs just a little more attention to find balance, and this resource is also in your green resource-list widget, and it's titled "Shift Resources Northwest Missouri University." So, let's go ahead, and I'm going to just walk you guys through what this activity would look like if you were to do it in your program, so we're not actually going to be doing this during our webinar, but, again, it's something that you can take back and do. So, basically, they have a guide that really walks you through this activity with your staff. So, as a leader of this activity or a facilitator, you're going to ask a series of specific questions that are directly related to one of the six facets, and your staff then colors in the wheel based on their response. So, I'll give you an example.

So, they—you guys would be asking this question. I guess it's not a question. It's more of a statement. You would be stating this. You would say, "I eat a balanced nutrition—nutritional diet," so if they feel that they're doing this 100 percent of the time, then you would instruct them to color in all of section one. If they do this 60 percent of the time, they'll only color about 60 percent of that section, and so they do this for all six of the facets of that wheel, and what it does is gives them this great visual representation of where they are and where they need to focus on or think about where they can find some more support, and so with that, they have some guiding questions that they're asked to think about.

They have a reflection sheet and a few prompts for how they're going to move forward in achieving their goal for a more balanced Wellness Wheel. So, this is just one strategy that we wanted to share with you that you guys could take back, and Randi is now going to walk us through another strategy that's super, super important, which is mindfulness.

Randi Hopper: All right. So, as we take a look at mindfulness, we notice that there are quite a few definitions that we hear sometimes, and so looking at our slide here and looking at the first point, we see that, "Paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment,

and nonjudgmental." So, in other words, this really represents accepting versus judging oneself and others. So, mindfulness can be described as living with curiosity or being open to others around us, and it acts as a mirror of what is happening in the present moment. So, we think about it and about how we support our staff to understand and build mindfulness, so one option is to use the EarlyEdU modules on mindfulness, and there are different modules that describe what it is, what it looks like and how to start implementing it into practice.

Next, we look at what mindfulness is not. Okay? So, mindfulness is not a religious practice but a way of being. So, it's not a lesson or a curriculum but an approach to life. So, it's not only about relaxation but also being active, actively engaging your body, not about only positive thinking but also impacts executive functions and other high-level brain capacities, and also, we're not numbing or blinking. It's quite the opposite. When you're practicing mindfulness, you're actually noticing what your mind is doing at all times and helps you see your thoughts more clearly, so it increases your awareness, and you start noticing what you're thinking while you're thinking it. So, with young children, we talked about mindfulness as a superhero mind control, ways to see and hear things more clearly, ways to calm the brain, or ways to control your mood.

So, mindfulness has been growing in popularity, and this nonjudgment awareness of the present moment really allows us to recognize our own thoughts, feelings, behaviors as they arrive without getting stuck in our usual automatic responses. In addition to being very free, meaning that we can bring our attention to anything at any time and we don't need special books or gadgets, there is nothing we need to buy. We know that mindfulness really wakes us up to what we are really experiencing in the moment within our own senses and helps us to discover what is the wisest, kindest way to respond in the moment, helps us to connect with ourselves and with the children, and it helps us slow down when we need to and helps us to become more aware of our choices in the situation and reduces our impulse reaction. So, when we look at children who practice mindfulness, we see that the research really shows an increase in the executive function skills, including focused attention, so just being able to concentrate on one thing and not getting distracted by others.

The enhanced cognition—being able to keep information in one's mind long enough to act on it. Mental flexibility—so helping to sustain or shift attention really in response to the different demands or different rules in different settings so coming up with new approaches when a plan fails. Emotional literacy—So, that's identifying, understanding and responding to emotions in healthy ways. And impulse control—the ability to stop and think before acting, self-initiated behavior compliance, so the ability to keep track and evaluate performance as you're doing the tasks. And persistence—so how long someone will keep at a task, especially when the task becomes challenging and determining to still carry through it.

So, when we talk about this—So, now that we've defined mindfulness and know why it's important, we need to think about then what we can do in the moment so helping us stay balanced in the present for the children to see really what they're doing at the time. So, we talked about the ABCs of mindful self-regulation or MSR, okay? So, we talked about the ABCs, which A being awareness so becoming aware of your own reactions, emotions, thoughts, and your body language, balance, so that's employing the strategies to come back into balance and

harmony, so that might be breathing, self-talk, that connection, so connecting with your new awareness. So, just like Stephanie shared in activity, we have this activity, and it's about reading MSR cues, so this is an activity that you can use with staff when you go away, so I'm just going to describe it, and so basically you would get together, draw a line down a piece of paper to be able to divide it into two columns, so the first column like we see on our slide says, "What am I like when I feel balanced and regulated?"

So, here we have a couple bullet points that someone may have written, so then when we talk about body, might be talking about head to toe. You feel balanced all the way down, your thoughts, what images and thoughts or words come to mind when you feel balanced. The feelings, being able to note if they're relaxed or if they feel more present and aware and then the behavior so either neutral, happy, talkative, whatever that person is feeling at that time. So, the second column would be titled "What Am I Like When I Feel Disregulated?" And then we also talk about the body, so you might have a tense jaw. The thoughts, the certain words or phrases that make us feel really disregulated feelings, you might be angry, unpredictable. And your behavior, you might yell, ignore people, stomp, you know, those kind of things, and so once you have those—once you have those, you're able to then pair people off. They can find a partner to share their strategies, and then they'll be able to go through and see how they compare, how they both compare when they feel balanced and regulated and how they feel when they're disregulated.

So, now that we know and we've gone over really what this looks like, what mindfulness can look like, then we talk about kind of distress, and so we're going to transition it to Stephanie so that we can take a look kind of at the transition of adult stress down to what it looks like for child stress.

Stephanie: Great. Thanks, Randi. So, we looked at the impact of adult stress, right? And we explored some ways to help, so we do want to switch gears because we want to think about this in terms of children. Can't really talk about adult teacher stress without considering the perspective of a child, and so what I am—What we're going to do is, we are going to think about how children experience stress and what's required of teachers and other adults in order to be able to support children in managing that stress.

So, in your resource widget, there is a handout called "Brendan's Scenario," and this handout just gives some background information about Brendan and his family, so what we want you to do or we invite you to do is to go ahead and open that up and follow along as I just read this scenario out loud, and then we're going to watch a short video to just more fully introduce Brendan and his family. So, I'll give you a second to open up. Again, it's called "Brendan's Scenario," and I'll just go ahead and start reading it.

So, "Brendan is a 3-year-old boy who lives with his mother and father and older brother. He enjoys spending time building blocks, looking at books, and he loves to dance to almost any kind of music. While Brendan sometimes plays with his brother, his parents report that, for the most part, he does not seem to be very interested in playing with children, and they wonder if this is because he doesn't talk very much, so Brendan's parents are concerned about his behavior, and they report that when they ask Brendan to do things like clean up his toys or wash his hands, he resists and often drops to the ground in protest and has tantrums.

Brendan's tantrums have become such an issue for his parents that they have started to limit their family outings." Right? I think we can all either empathize with this family or know people who are struggling with this right now. "So, even simple things like going to the store or the library are really difficult for them.

Following up on their pediatrician's advice, Brendan's parents have enrolled him in a local Head Start program to help with this communication and social skills." Awesome, right? We give a big thumbs up for that. "After two weeks at preschool, Brendan is exhibiting the same disruptive behavior that he exhibits at home. He has difficulty transitioning between activities, frequently throws tantrums, and also has been aggressive with other children, and his Head Start teachers are concerned about his behavior and are wondering how to best support him in the interim period before his eligibility determination." So, just wanted to give you a little bit of that background and share that with you. Again, you have that in your resources, but let's just watch that little video to just give us a little more insight into what Brendan's mom is doing with in front of a library.

[Video clip begins]

Woman: Then we're going inside. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6...

Brendan: No!

Woman: ...5, 4, 3, 2, 1. All right. We got to go back inside now. Come on. Hand up.

[Brendan crying]

[Brendan crying] [

End video clip]

Stephenie: Okay, so how many of you guys have either supported a teacher who's dealt with behavior like this or a family? Just type in "yes" in the group chat. I anticipate that it is going to blow up here in just a minute because—Yep, here we go, "Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes." We think that most education staff are struggling with these types of situations, right? And many of us have even been part of these challenging situations as education managers, maybe even as parents or TD providers, directors, supervisors, anybody supporting teachers, parents, and home visitors, and so what we'd like to do—Yes, many, okay, I see it. Yeah, right? Everybody, of course. We've all dealt with it, and I think we're still dealing with it, and so that's why we're here.

So, take a look at your screen. There's another poll up there. What are the challenges that you see for Brendan, his family, and his teachers? So, what we have listed there—transitions, limited communication skills, concerned about Brendan's speech and behavior, the feeling of being judged, feeling frustrated. So, right now, I'm seeing some answers start to come in. It's a pretty good split here. I think everybody is—You know, feeling frustrated is definitely at the top of the list. We see transition.

Some people are identifying that transitions are definitely a challenge. Let's see, concerned about Brendan's speech and behavior, not so many. Feeling judged is definitely getting less hits than the others, but certainly we have quite a few people who are saying, "Yeah, transitions are

tough and then also, of course, feeling frustrated." Right? I think we can all empathize with that mom, so let me go ahead and show you guys what your results are. So, as you can see, we're pretty split here. Other than feeling judged, and, again, like I said, feeling frustrated definitely got the most responses. We have some people that say transitions might be a challenge, limited communication, and some concerns about Brendan's behavior so all of the above, I see. "I thought it should be all of the above." I know. I actually almost put that in there. Like, is there an all of the above? Because I think that everybody would have identified that one as being probably the challenge.

So, these are just some things that we thought that we'd share, right, for Brendan, transition between activities, right? We see that as being a challenge for him because he is resisting, and he is throwing tantrums. Also, there is some limited communication skills there. He's a little bit difficult to understand, and so we know that when children have difficulties with speech, they want to be heard and understood, and sometimes that comes out in undesired behaviors, and so then for the family, we thought some challenges might be that they have concerns about Brendan's speech and behavior, right? This mom, she's in the middle of trying to get him to go to the library or come out. I can't remember but also feeling judged.

We definitely had that on there, feeling like they can't go into their community because of Brendan's behavior. That can be really, really tricky. Families start to become isolated in those incidents, and then, of course, like you guys identified, feeling frustrated was definitely at the top of the list for families. And then so, for teachers, we thought that they'd probably have some concerns about his disruptive behaviors in the classroom, right? Transitioning between activities, he's tantruming. That can be super stressful for parents, I'm sorry, for teachers, and then they talk to parents, and then it's the cycle of just frustration on everybody's behalf but also that teachers could be concerned about the aggressive behavior toward other children. We want to be sure that behaviors, that, you know, all the children are safe in our classrooms, and so those are just some things that we thought. You know, when we think about Brendan and we think about a situation in a classroom and at home, everybody is involved, so, Randy, do you think that you could walk us through some ways that we could help support?

Randi: Absolutely. I would love to. So, as we go through, we're—we're really going to take a look at just some strategies, and so the first one we're going to look at is just effective interactions and being present, so we already heard that once, right, about being present, so when we circle back around to effective interaction, we really know that teachers, family childcare providers, and home visitors are engaging meaningfully with children and supporting their learning and development, and they need to be present and to focus on what is happening within those interactions with children so that they can connect with children to scaffold their engagement with new concepts, materials, and experiences all within that learning environment.

So, in our work with education staff, we're reinforcing the need to be fully present with children and also talking to families about being fully present during home visits, so despite that we may want to be going outside of our work setting or how many stressors are present in our lives, it's really critical to be present with the children. So, helping teachers, family childcare providers, and home visitors to apply the practice takes thoughtful planning and supportive workplace

conditions, so, like, as we've already kind of been saying within the session, so helping them to understand what it means to be fully present and available is the first step.

So, within this frame, we're going to talk about obviously being present with the child means focusing on the child, in turn, tuned in and to what the child is doing, saying and feeling so to be fully in the moment in other words, and so this applies to, like I said, parents within home visits so making sure that we're engaging—engaging those families in it and so that we're working together as a team to really identify those cues with children.

So, we're also looking at clearing out static that is happening within our own minds to really fully be available for children and families, and we saw within those two tales of the teachers that even what you guys are saying is that those that are supported really are the ones that can be more responsive and more aware within that environment, so we really need to make sure that that supportive nature is then brought in into being present, and so it also means that you're considering what you know about the children and your own temperaments so being able to judge how—Reflect on how you are and know kind of what things stress you out and then being able to also look at the children and their behavior and helping educational staff to remember to think through also what the children and family members' interests, culture, and language are and whether or not you may need to adjust your own approach to that.

And so, with that, we're also reminding teachers about the power of intentionality, choosing what to say and do to build those relationships, which are then going to make you the most effective teacher for that child in the moment that you need to be. So, we also look at the Infants and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, or the IECMHC. That's a lot of letters there. But we really do look at—The caregivers who have received this consultation really do have a better understanding of how to promote a child's mental health and create nurturing and supportive family and caregiving settings, so this consultation is about capacity building. It involves collaborative relationships between the mental health consultants and the caregiver, so that could be the childcare provider, the home visitor, the teacher, or the parent, so the IECMHC, those consultants really have positive impacts with children by building the caregivers' knowledge and skills, so we're really focusing on making sure that they have a solid knowledge of social and emotional development in order to prevent behavioral issues and to identify and address those—those challenges that do come up.

So, we also look to—Oh, okay, I may not have—Sorry, I may not have changed the slide, and I just realized that as I was going through, so you can take a look at that slide before I change it. About this consultation program, it's really important for them to be able to take a look at their self and be reflective within this process because the teacher has such a solid role on the social-emotional development of young children, and sometimes those children, especially the ones that are very much like us, are the ones that can push our buttons, and so being reflective within that process is really key in that consultative approach.

So, when we take a look at the organization of the learning environment, this looks a lot like CLASS, and so it's when we take a—We've expanded a little bit. Take a look at these learning environments to be inclusive of family childcare and home-based programs, so we take into consideration that these can be used to inform home visitors' discussion with the family, to ensure home environments are responsive, but then we're also taking a look at group

socialization and how those home-like environments and responsive actions can be translated over. So, we also talk in this one about being present and connected to children within the moment and during the interactions and remind education staff that these classroom and learning environments, the organization is essential to supporting teachers and child wellness, so a well-organized learning environment with these characteristics really reduce stress levels for both adults and children, so when teachers, home visitors, or family childcare providers practice mindfulness, they'll be better prepared to respond to children's interests and be flexible enough to follow children's interests and ideas within an environment that is set up to be conducive and really support—support learning overall.

So, we also look at the individualizing teaching and learning strategies, so again, we're really focused on those effective interactions to practice prevention, considering that some examples of teachers, family childcare providers and home visitors about being proactive and setting up the conditions under which children are going to be successful, so by individualizing for children and helping families to also do so within home-based programs, we're really basing what we're doing on the needs, interests, and preferences of what the children are focused on so that we can then turn and scaffold the supports and really make them very individualized and unique to what the specific children need. So, what we're also going to do is, we're going to move forward to take a look at some of those visual cues that go along with being able to create the boundaries and things that children need to be able to have that self-regulation. So, we notice that obviously transitions can sometimes be that trigger for challenging behaviors, right?

So, one of the individualized strategies that can be implemented are the visual cues, so we see here that we have pictures, and then we're able to also see, once you're able to do this activity, we're going forward, but we really want to focus in here is really about, what happens if a child has a different home language? How would we then be able to take these visual cues and make sure that they meet the needs of those children as well?

So, we're going to push forward because I know we only have 12 minutes left within, and we're going to talk about boundaries, and so I'm going to push these forward because we have a couple things when we talk about boundaries, about setting boundaries. So, we have the visuals there, and we talk about the strategies for education staff of simply using the stop sign, right? So, being able to remind children, "This is stop," and it provides them with a boundary and a directive that really allows them to apply and connect their own developmental needs to what the expectations are within the classroom, so there is a video that we would really like you to see, and we want to make sure of that, so in this video, we're going—It really reinforces that practice and demonstrates visual cues.

[Video clip begins]

Teacher: All right. It is time to go outside to the playground. Everybody, put your carpet squares in and line up.

Man: Ooh, here comes Fiona. All right.

Teacher: Here comes Nathan and Azalea. Good job, Samantha.

Samantha: Grabbing a book.

Teacher: And then what's next? Line up. You got it. [Child babbles]

Teacher: Nice lining up, everybody. All right. It is time to go outside to the playground. Everybody, put your carpet squares in and line up.

Man: Ooh, here comes Fiona. All right.

Teacher: Here comes Nathan and Azalea. Good job, Samantha.

Samantha: Grabbing a book.

Teacher: And then what's next? Line up. You got it.

[Child babbles]

[Video clip ends]

Randi: All right. So, now that we saw that video, we're going to check back in with Brendan, and so here we return to Brendan's story because the most successful strategies for managing behaviors that challenge us is to form those partnerships with families and ensure consistent supports for children. So, we remind education staff that the strategies that we use in our classroom are not much different from those that we can really support families with to use at home. So, as we mentioned, these plans are done in collaboration with families, so if we remember back to that first video we saw of Brendan and his mother entering the library, that's where we saw a snippet of Brendan's challenging behavior. Now let's take a look back at Brendan and his mother entering the library again, this time after implementing some of those recommended practices. [Video clip begins]

Woman: It's the library. It's right here. Okay, you can play.

Brendan: Books.

Woman: Hey, nice books. [Inaudible] Let's find two books, and then we'll bring them to the counter. Let's find two. Which one?

Brendan: That one.

Woman: That one and this one?

Brendan: Yeah.

Woman: Okay. I forgot the library card. [End video clip]

Randi: All right. So, now that we can see what's happened with Brendan, you know, we're really excited that that has completely changed, right? So, as we're coming to the very—the very, very close of what's going on, we're going to close out our webinar today by saying thank you so much for joining us to explore these strategies to support staff wellness and the impact on effective teaching practices, and as a reminder, you're going to complete the evaluation link, and we really request that you do complete the evaluation as it really helps us to improve our presentations and plan for the future, and so if you use this link, you should be able, but click on it, and we're going to go through and do that, and as you're looking at that, I also want you to think about the video, and so just reflect on it and thinking about what you noticed, and did you see any strategies that the mother used with success?

And so, if you would really like to add in what you saw, you know, take a minute. Add in what you saw into the group chat and the Q&A as you also fill out your evaluation, and we'll just kind of close it out, and thank you so much for your time.

Stephenie: Yes. Thank you, everyone. Yeah, I just wanted to hop in and say thank you and thank you, Randi. We were so happy that we could do this training with you guys today, and we hope to see you, let's see, in February, February 26, for our next ed manager webinar, "Using Professional Development to Support Transition to Kindergarten."

Hey, guys. For those of you who are still on and having trouble with the URL, the evaluation link, all you'll need to do is click on the slide in the slide-deck area. You just have to click anywhere in that white screen or directly on the link. It looks like it's at the bottom, and just click on that slide, and it'll take you directly to that evaluation.