

naeyc[®]
annual conference

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

Insights and Tips from DAP to Strengthen Infant and
Toddler Teaching

November 7, 2024

Marie Masterson, Ph.D.



Handouts and contact:

Marie Masterson, Ph.D.

www.mariemasterson.com



I will be at the NAEYC booth
at 12:15 today!
Come see me there!

Visit the
Council for Professional Recognition
Booth # 319 in the exhibit hall!



Assessment to Earn CEUs

At the end of the presentation, you will receive a code to access and complete an assessment in ***NAEYC Learning Lab***.

You have until **48 hours** after the conclusion of the conference to access and complete the assessment.

Note: CEUs not issued after the **assessment is closed.**

Access Code:

XXXXX



Agenda

1. Look at development in context for culturally safe, inclusive teaching
2. Identify big opportunity strategies for positive impact
3. Explore professionalism for self-agency, leadership, and advocacy



Agenda

Big opportunity strategies will apply to:

1. Relationships with families
2. Learning from children
3. Purposeful play
4. Caring routines
5. Behavior guidance
6. Trauma-informed teaching



Let's Talk!



- What do you enjoy most about teaching infants and toddlers?
- What are some struggles you want to address?
- Has DAP provided practical support? How have you made changes?



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

What are some key shifts with DAP?

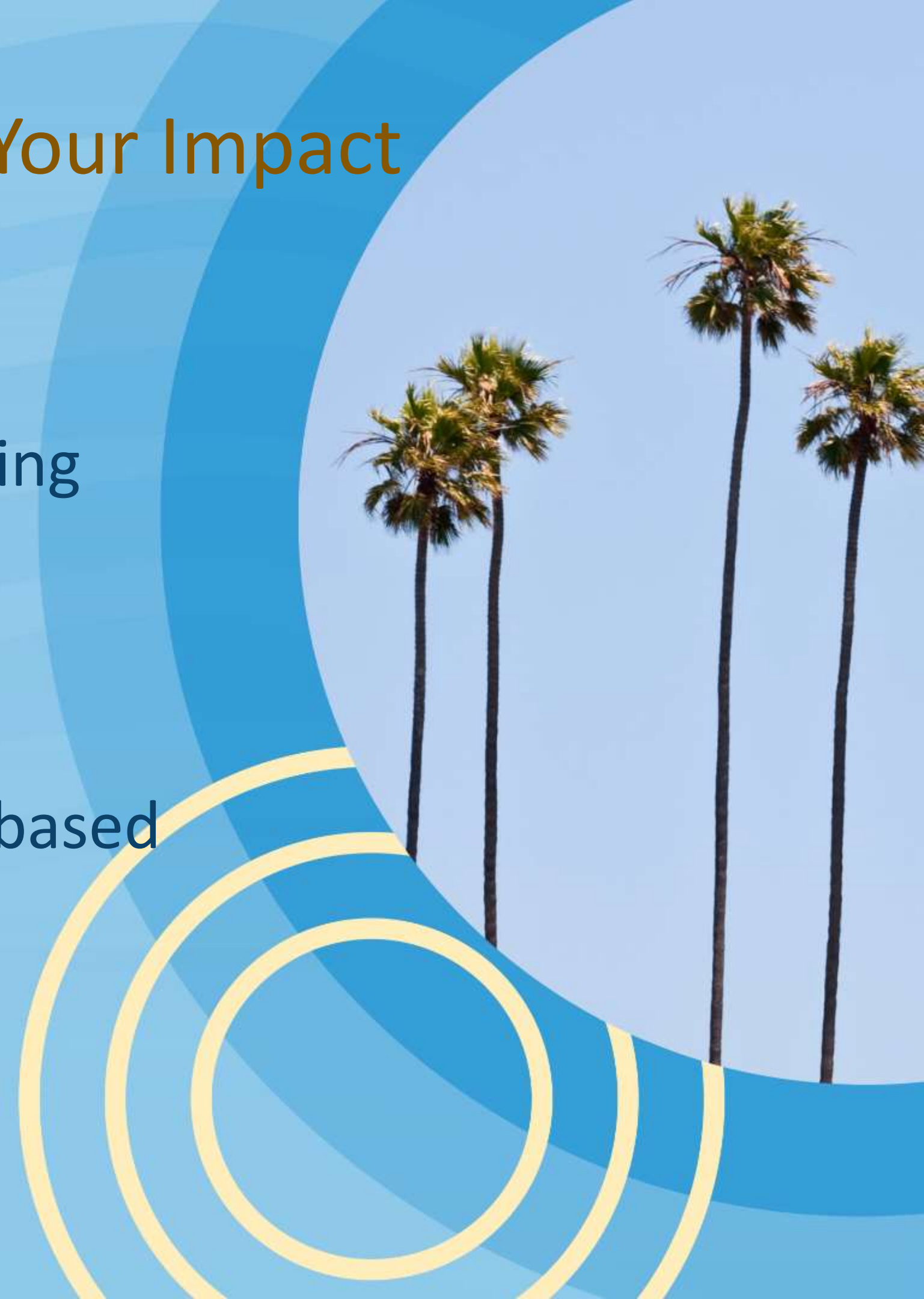
- Knowing what’s best for the group as whole.
- Valuing and teaching each child individually.
- Expanding understanding of child development.
- Viewing differences as strengths.
- Building on family, community, and cultural contexts.



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

What are some key shifts with DAP?

- Connecting children’s identity and well-being to meaningful teaching.
- Interrupting bias and removing barriers to access and equity.
- Developing a more complex, yet strength-based view of teaching.



Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Six Guidelines

1 Creating a Caring, Equitable Community of Learners

2 Engaging in Reciprocal Partnerships with Families and Fostering Community Connections

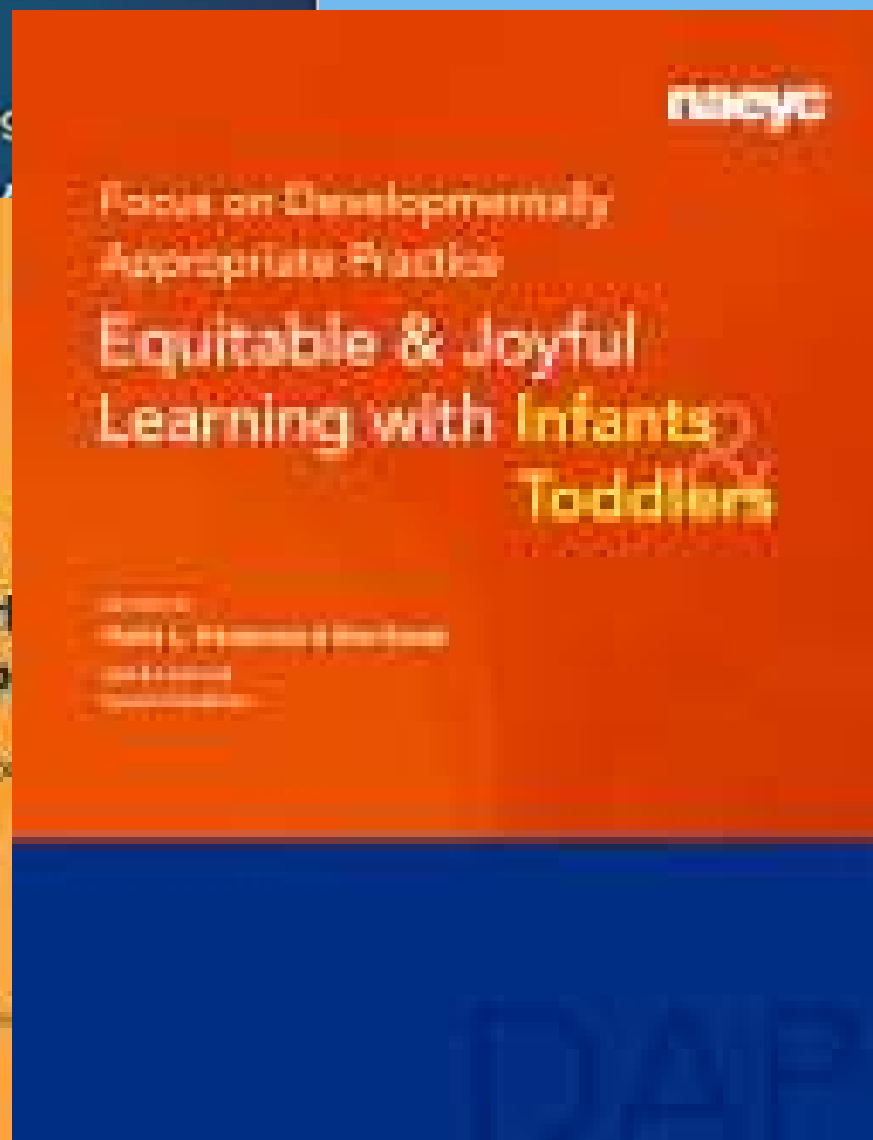
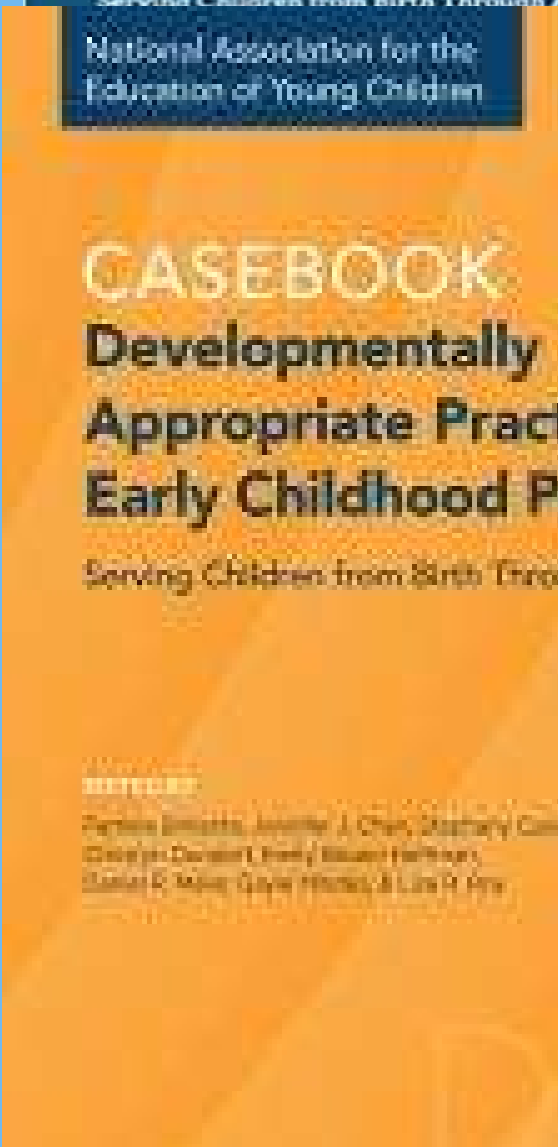
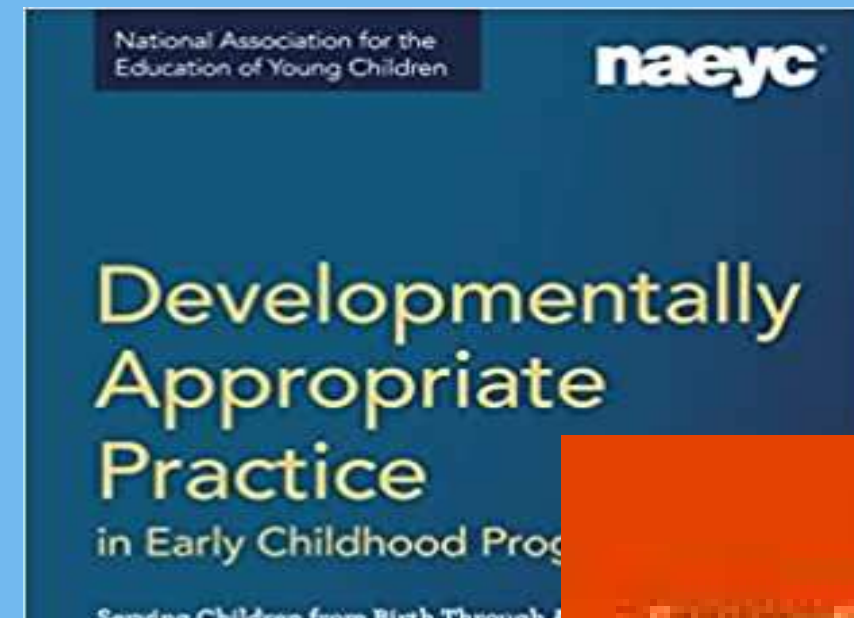
3 Observing, Documenting, and Assessing Children's Development and Learning

4 Teaching to Enhance Each Child's Development and Learning

5 Planning and Implementing an Engaging Curriculum to Achieve Meaningful Goals

6 Demonstrating Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact



- Check out *Focus on Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Equitable & Joyful Learning with Infants and Toddlers*
- It's part of the NAEYC series.
- See you at the booth at 12:15!

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

- Bias infiltrates the work of infant and toddler teaching in a unique way, because ways of caring for children, beliefs about teaching, staff communication, perceptions of families, and expectations are *culturally determined*.



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

- Implicit biases can be seen through deficit-oriented language that conveys beliefs about what is normal, who is capable, and attitudes about families’ economic status, mental health, and other lifestyle choices (Spence et al., 2022).



- ✓ Families reinforcing dependence.
- ✓ Goodness of care based on how children are dressed.
- ✓ Compliant children more intelligent.
- ✓ Family is strict or lax.

What is normal, valued; who is capable; and views about families and children.

We can begin to listen with sensitivity – recognizing that biases convey deficit thinking and must be shifted!

“He’s so slow to talk with the other children.”

“What’s wrong with her. She’s too old for diapers.”

“Why don’t they wash her hair or at least try to dress her nice?”

“Charles’ mother babies him. Why doesn’t she make him put on his coat by himself?”



Studies find that early childhood educators are less likely than other educators to expect bias to be present in programs. This mindset is known as the “bias blind spot,” where people may recognize bias in others but not in themselves (Ehrlinger, Gilovich, & Ross, 2005; Blackson, et al., 2022).



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

Developmental skills depend on context and vary in timing and sequence.

- Child development must be considered in context, including cultural, linguistic, racial, ethnic, and social contexts.
- Each child develops on a unique time table, with some skills moving ahead of others.

What do we need to know?



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

Strengths-based teaching does not label differences – or what children cannot do - as a weakness.

- Instead, it builds on what children *can do* and accomplish with support, using language that communicates **what children can do** and building on each child’s unique funds of knowledge.

What do we need to know?

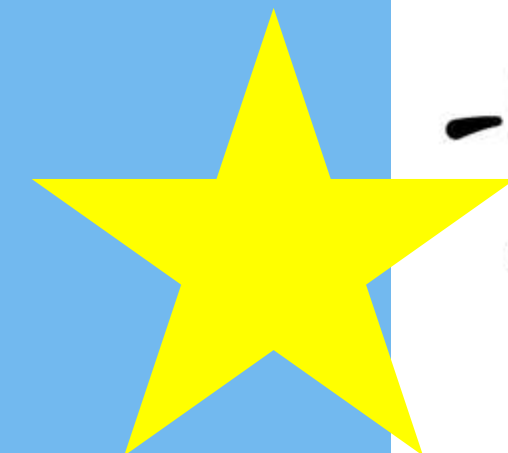


“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

Why may teachers fail to actively address hidden norms and expectations?

- Teachers may fail to address hidden norms and expectations actively.
 - ✓ Families often do not speak up due to fear of retaliation.
 - ✓ Teachers may be unaware of hidden issues.
 - ✓ Teachers should actively talk with families about norms and practices both at home and in the program.

What do we need to know?

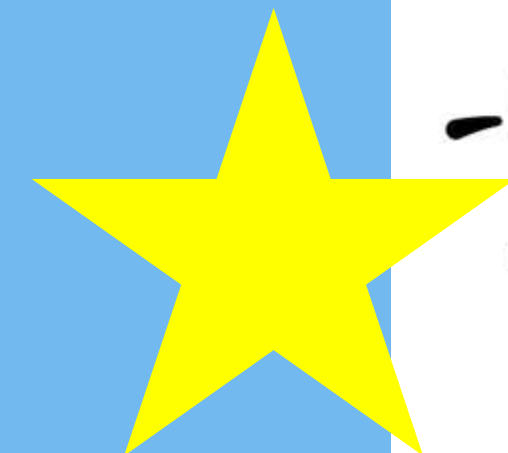


“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

Why is bias so prevalent in infant and toddler teaching?

- Teacher perceptions about families are often unexamined.
- Culture often guides teaching at the unconscious level.
- Teachers tend to think bias is present elsewhere, rather than in their own practice.

What do we need to know?



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

Equity challenges for infant-toddler teachers

Studies find that racial bias is less likely to be recognized in early childhood programs than in other settings. This is known as the “**bias blind spot**,” where we may recognize bias in others (and other places) but not in ourselves (Blackson et al., 2022).



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

How can bias be missed?

- Differences attributed to personality or choice
- Teachers miss children and family cues.
- Assumptions and expectations are inaccurate.
- Communication differences lead to misunderstanding.
- Coteachers vary in understanding and approach.

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

Why don't families speak up?

- Not recognizing hidden norms.
- Embarrassment
- Fear of retaliation
- Fear of leaving children.
- Can you think of others?



What is culturally determined?

Some aspects of culture are visible:

- Ways of dressing
- Language or accent
- Formal vs. informal greetings
- Personal space
- Time management
- Body language and posture

Some aspects of culture are invisible:

- Ways of showing respect
- Managing conflict
- Making requests
- Beliefs and values of child-rearing
- Ways of teaching children
- Ways of sharing/asking for information

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

Let’s look at cultural variations:



- Carrying vs. using a carrier.
- Facing inward vs. outward
- Focus on child – or on others
- Anticipating and structuring support – or waiting for child.

Families need to **SHOW AND TELL** you how they interact, calm, and care.

Let's Take Action!



- Describe a cultural barrier or conflict you have experienced?
- What have heard teachers say about families that may reflect positive feelings? What about judgement or misunderstanding?



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

What are relationship models of care?

- We know authentic relationships matter.
- We are wiring children’s brains for future connections.
- Relationships are the foundation of security and learning.



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

Teaching with infants and toddlers is primarily relationship-based.

- What are the three types of relationship-based teaching approaches?



- A cocaring model of care
- Primary caregiving
- Continuity of care



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

Co-caring models of care are provided when caregiving decisions are shared by families and teachers. **Teachers:**



- Know family’s ways of nurturing.
- Include families in decision-making.
- Insure consistency between home and program.
- Honor language, culture, values.
- Children feel secure.



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

Primary caregiving means one teacher takes main responsibility for a small group of children. **Teachers:**



- Facilitate caring routines, individualize teaching.
- Maintain records and communicate with families.
- Establish deep and rich bonds with families.
- Children feel “familiar” and comfortable.



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

Continuity of care means that children and teachers stay together as a group for two to three years – with the goal of the third year.



- More secure attachment.
- Fewer behavior and emotion adjustments.
- More security and connectedness.
- Greater affirmation of identity.
- Great support managing stress.



Let's Take Action!



- How do you currently divide caring and teaching responsibilities with your coteacher?
- What steps can you take toward a more complete relationship-based approach to teaching?

Areas of High Priority



Agenda

High-priority strategies will apply to:

- Relationships with families
- Learning from children
- Purposeful play
- Caring routines
- Behavior guidance
- Trauma-informed teaching



Priorities: Identifying key priorities for the field

- What are the big pay-off priorities that matter?
- How do we promote creative, linguistic and social-emotional expression, through playful learning?
- How do we use child-centered teaching that includes sensory, social, and cognitive challenges?



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

1. Relationships with Families

***Caution:** We do not always see at least two family conferences a year happening. Make this a priority!



Family engagement means listening to families to learn about their goals and priorities for children.

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

1. Relationships with Families

Cultural **humility** recognizes the unique cultural experiences of others and how these impact their lives.

- Start with your own beliefs and cultural identity.
- Explore dynamics that impact your reactions and choices.
- Reserve judgement to bridge divides.
- Use sensitivity and openness, supporting others.
- Identify and eliminate power imbalances.



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

1. Relationships with Families

Cultural **safety** acknowledges and attends to children’s frames of reference, even if not fully understood.

- Embraces family values, knowledge and networks.
- Honors personal stories through deep listening.
- Uses strengths-based lens.
- Shows curiosity, empathy and respect.
- Promotes family relationships with children and others.



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

1. Relationships with Families

What can interfere with cultural safety?

- Norms are taken for granted.
- Students are new to a program/Families new to ECE program.
- Communication differences and expectations differ.
- Power imbalances remain hidden.



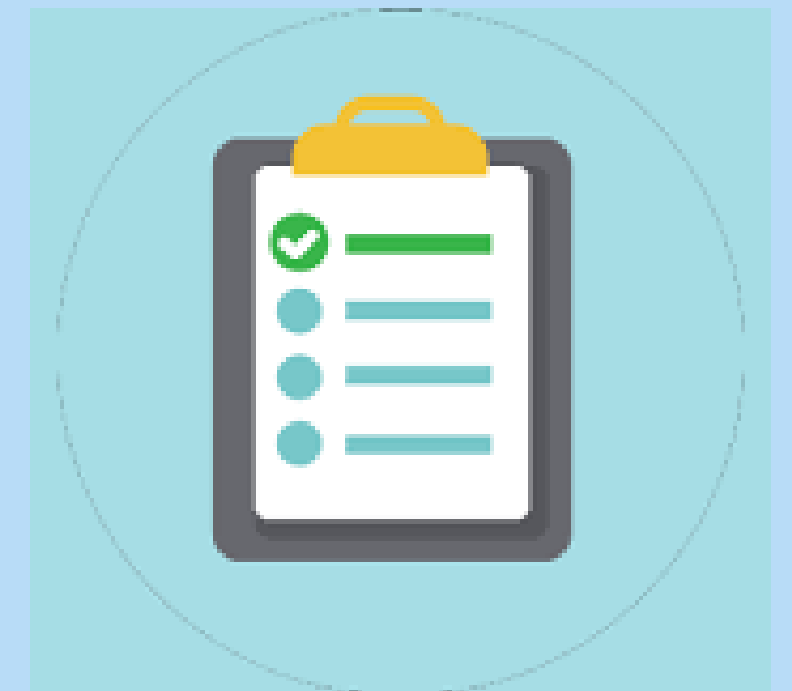
“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

1. Relationships with Families

Learn from families! Ask families to demonstrate – invite them to show what they prefer and how they interact during diapering, meals, sleeping, and other routines.

See my website for Family Survey Handout.

- Family priorities
- Cultural coherence
- Favorite activities and people
- Ways of emotional and physical support



The handout includes a comprehensive family survey.

→ See p. 4 of session handout.

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

1. Relationships with Families

What strategy is **most important** for family engagement with infants and toddlers?

- Listening to families to learn about their goals and priorities for children.
- Ensuring families are partners in making decisions and setting goals.



Let's Take Action!



- What is the most rewarding and the most challenging part of working with families?
- What steps do you want to take to incorporate family ways of being?



SSSSSSSSSS
SSSSSSSS
SSS

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

2. Learning from Children

***Caution:** We do not always see screenings! So make this a priority!

- What we see in the field: A critical need for training and focus on screening, observation, documentation, and assessment – recording notes, taking photographs, using videos, and collecting samples over time.

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

Priorities: Identifying key priorities for the field

- Only 34.2 percent of children birth to three are screened.
- Only 28.5 percent of children from families living in low-income are screened (Cole et al., 2023).

Children are often referred for an IPE, but families are handed the IEP and do not understand what this means for their child based on screening results.



2. Learning from Children: Attunement

- Two-way transaction – child and teacher.
- Aware of child's feeling, focus, intentions
- Affirming children's belonging and identity



Seeing through the eyes of children. .



2. Learning from Children: Intersubjectivity

- Entering the feeling states of children
- Affirming inner experiences are worthy and sharable with others.
- Creating space for culture sharing
- Protecting sacred space for meaning making
- Learning about self and others.



Children are companions and cooperators – the heart of equity.

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

2. Learning from Children



Commercial apps should not **take the place** of other strategies.

- Each teacher needs a clipboard with names and space for notes.
- Take photos, videos, and use documentation boards.

Such an important fix! Share findings of observation with coteachers and families. Plan activities to strengthen (build on) the skills observed.

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

2. Learning from Children

What do we need to know?

- The most important strategies for observation, documentation, and assessment include *recorded notes, photographs, videos, and samples over time.*
- Use multiple sources of evidence over time, as rapid development, personal factors, stress, and variability require an accurate picture.



Let's Take Action!



- What strategies other than TSG or a commercial assessment do you use for observation and documentation?
- How does observing, documenting, and assessing change the way you plan for teaching?



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

3. Purposeful Play

*See my website for **High Priority Teaching Strategies!***

***Caution:** What we see? Structured play, like craft type art, circle time, lack of challenge, and lack of personal, meaningful and challenging learning to deeply engage children.



- *Sit on the floor* just inside your classroom.
- Where would you go first, if you were a child?
- What would be inviting to you?
- Are there a range of challenges in each play area?
- Is the space adequate for the number of children and materials?

Shifting to an Equity Lens

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

3. Purposeful Play

■ **KEY CHALLENGES**

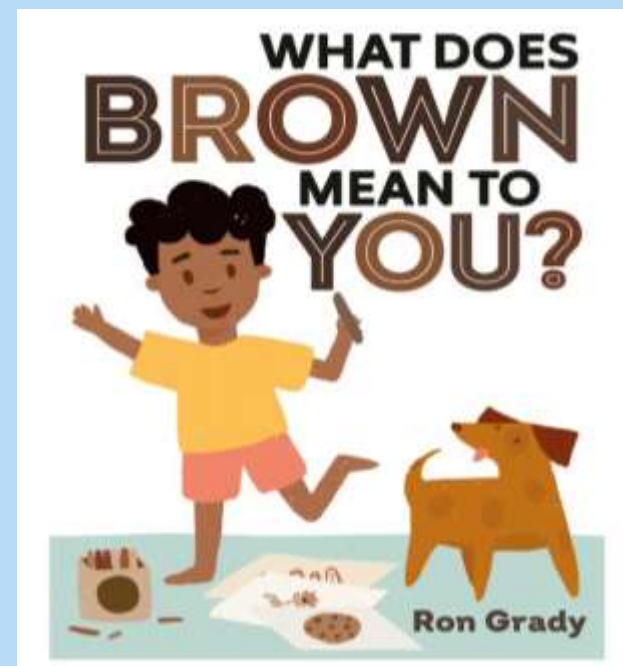
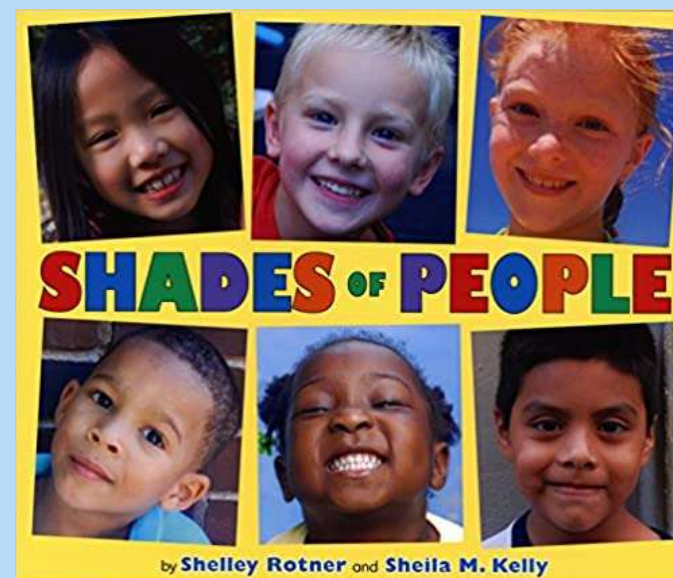
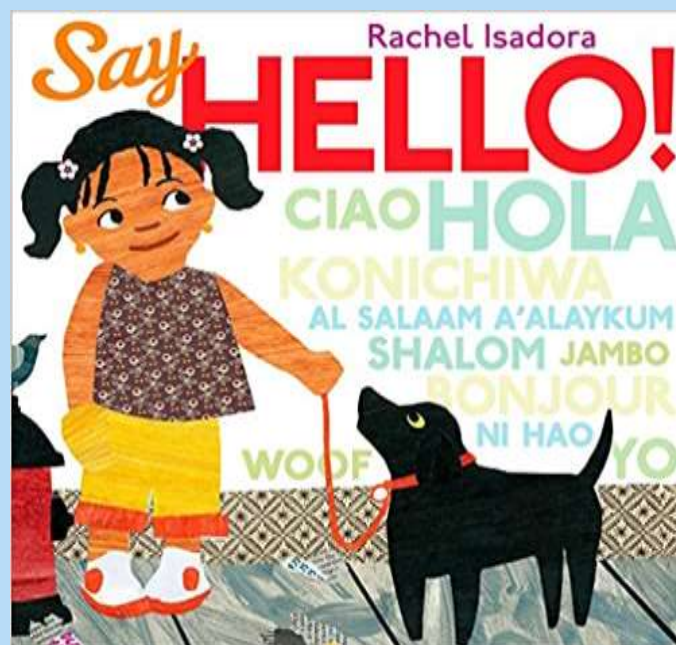
- Little meaningful talking – NO talking during diapering and meals.
- Little personal conversation – Mostly group directions.
- Low level challenge, without goal and purpose
- Little to NO book reading of any kind.
- Extended waiting times in cribs and high chairs, without interaction
- Lack of supervision. Must be within arms reach.

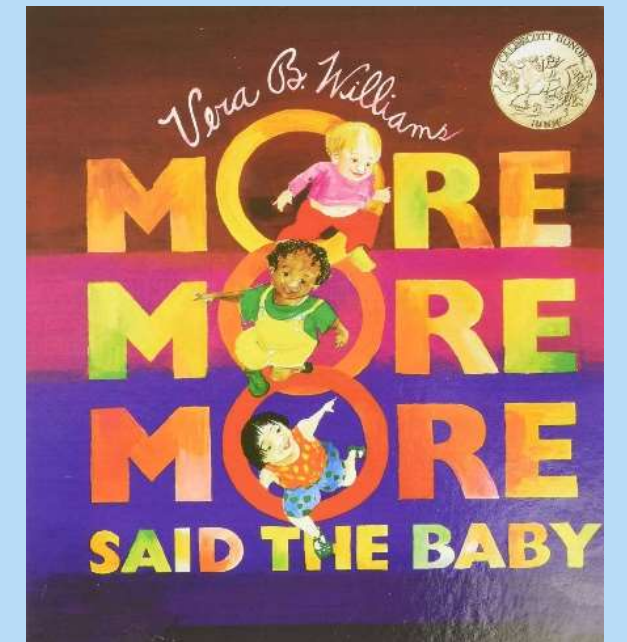
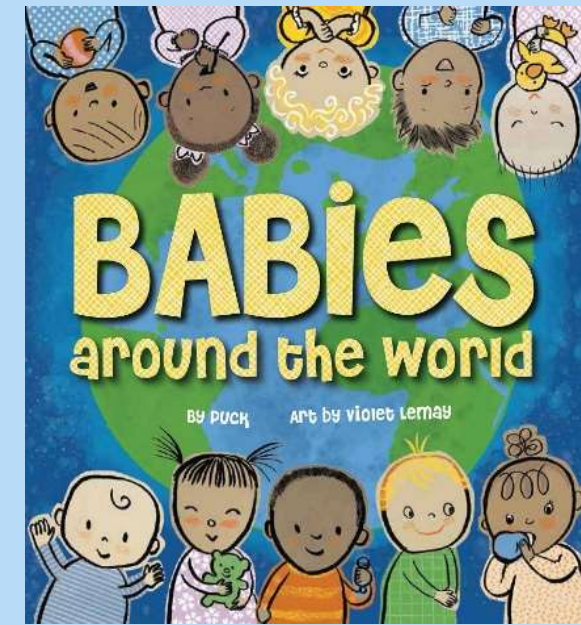
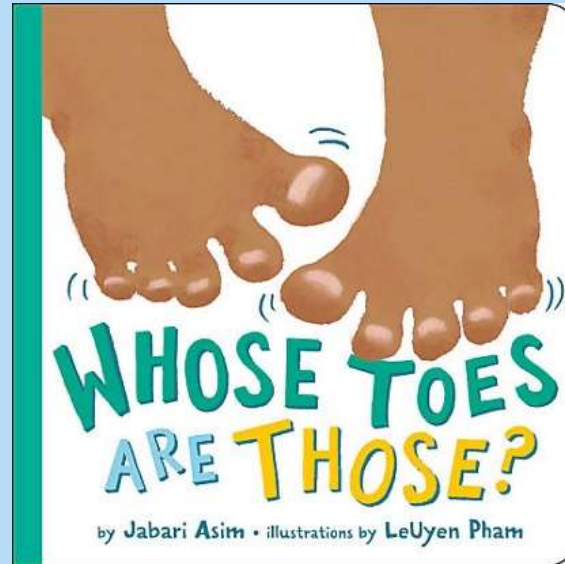
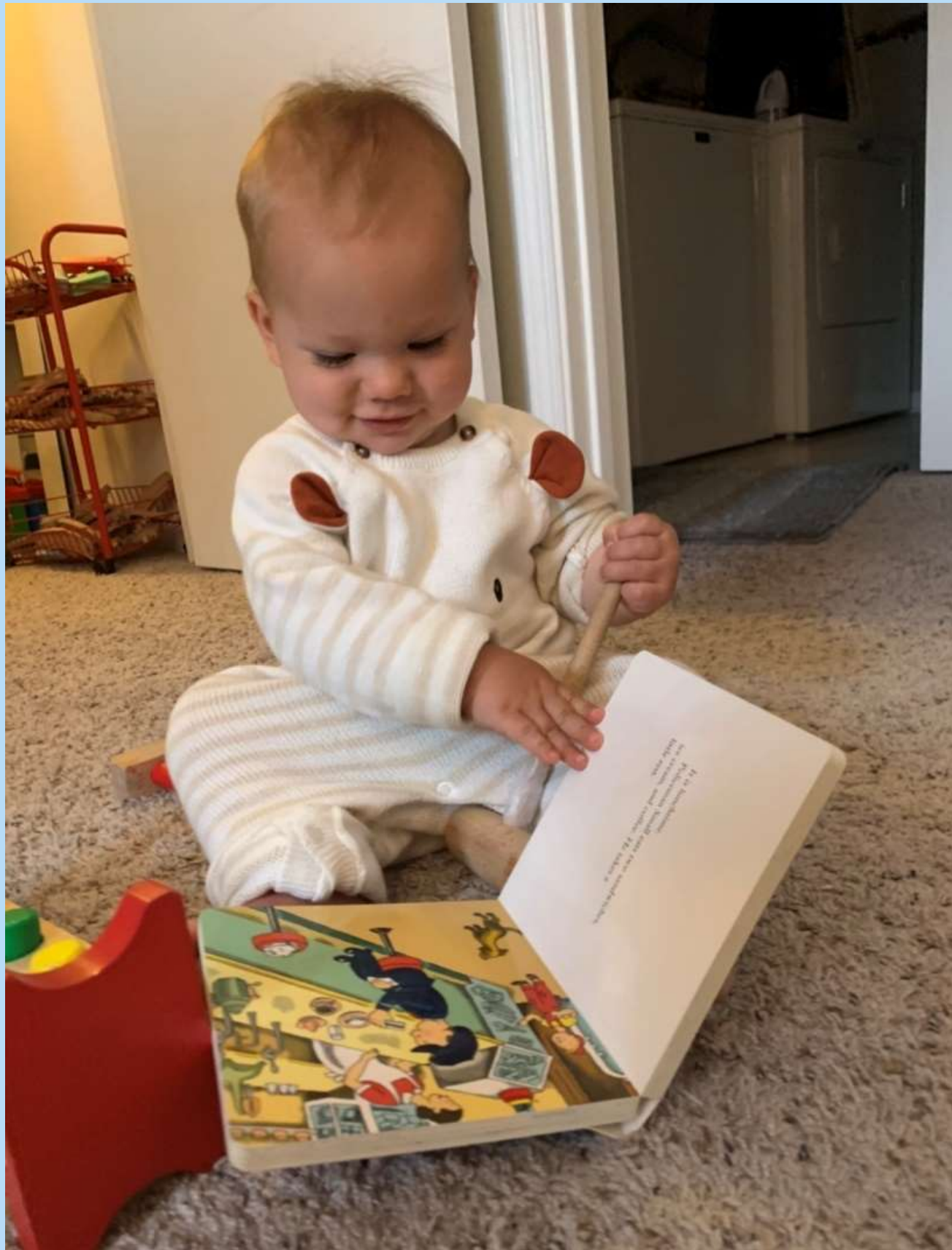


“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

3. Purposeful Play - High Impact

- Nationally, only 37.4 percent of babies are read to daily. Do teachers read daily to infants in group settings?
- About 58.1 percent of families sing and tell stories to their infants or toddlers daily. However, for families facing low-income this is 25% less (49.9% vs. 63%).





Books for BABIES must be for infants – and books for Toddlers must be for toddlers – not for Pre-K. Babies read to will reach for books on their own!!



What activities sustain
ENGAGEMENT and **INTEREST**?





Purposeful Play – Where Children Reenact their Lives

- Cultural and local tradition play
- Helping activities
- Science and nature play
- Prop boxes (Winter Fun, Beach Day, Cars, Boats, Castles, Pet Care, Shopping)
- Creative art & music play (streamers, drums, rhythm instruments, mirrors, costumes)
- Block play – Space and accessories
- Fine motor play

Identifying emerging skills and planning specific activities for each child that are support those emerging skills.

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

3. Purposeful Play

Talking During Play and Caring Routines

□ Replace pronouns with specific words.

Typical response:

- “Put that over there.”
- “Put them in there.”
- “Please put it down.”
- “Let’s do it.”
- “Here you go.”

Much better:

- “Put the red truck on the box.”
- “Put the red shapes into the sorter box.”
- “Please put the ball in the basket.”
- “Roll the ball to me. I will catch it in my hands.”
- “We have beans, potatoes, and chicken for lunch.”

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

3. Purposeful Play

Talking During Play and Caring Routines

□ **Add meaningful information to what children say (extension).**

■ Child: “I got a big piece.”

Typical response: “Yummy, yummy!”

Much better: “Yes, you have a big square of graham cracker. It sounds crunchy. Do you hear the cracker crunch when you bite it?”



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

3. Purposeful Play

What do we need to know?

- **The primary benefit of play is that children interact with others, test skills, and demonstrate self-agency (confident choice).**
- Children skills and demonstrate self-agency.
- Play goals match emerging skills



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

4. Caring Routines

One size does not fit all. Children may come to your program having never slept in a crib or fed themselves independently. Your idea for diapering may be much different than those used at home.



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

4. Caring Routines

Tips

- Use a white board to record schedule and tasks.
- Talk with children to encourage and connect.
- Prepare snacks and food ahead and create family time.
- Give reassurance. “You can do it.” You are making progress.”
- How does the family do it? What makes each child feel safe?
- Always be within arms reach of children!

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

4. Caring Routines

What do we need to know?

- Invite families to *SHOW* and *TELL*. Families should discuss and model their practices.
- Teachers should align practices in the program with those at home.
- Children are vulnerable and develop their sense of self and worth – based on how they are treated.



Let's Take Action!



- What are some caring routines or practices you have observed that were new to you?
- What practices are non-negotiable and which can be accommodated?



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

5. Behavior Guidance.

- The definition of behavior guidance is strengthening and supporting emerging skills through assisted regulation.
- Assisted regulation is a caring, gentle, encouraging partnership.



***Caution: What do we see?**

- ✓ Stopping behavior. Frustration about repetitive behavior.
- ✓ Misunderstanding about children’s capability to self-regulate.
- ✓ Waiting for a child to self-correct.

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

5. Behavior Guidance.

First, set up for success:

- 1. Model the behaviors you want children to use.** Use a reassuring, gentle tone and actions. Spend time with undivided focus on the child’s eye-level.
- 2. Respect boundaries.** Respect boundaries. When a child says, “no,” honor “no.” For example, if a child says, “My shirt itches,” find something else that feels more comfortable.
- 3. Remove power struggles.** When you make demands or threats, children may appear to be compliant, but they are simply dependent on you to make the behavior happen.

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

5. Behavior Guidance.

First, set up for success:

- 4. Be prepared.** Planning ahead allows you to be physically and emotionally present for supervision, play, and caring.
- 5. Stay in close proximity.** Step in and assist before frustrations escalates, as well as to problem solve and assist.
- 6. Maintain consistent rituals, self-care routines, and schedules.** Consistency is the greatest teaching tool. Children learn to trust what will happen in the moment and what will happen next.
- 7. Prepare children for what is coming next.** Only say what you plan to do.

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

5. Behavior Guidance.

Second, keep it simple.

- **Notice and narrate what works.** “You are a good problem solver. You found another ball for Jack.”
- **Keep instructions simple.** “Naptime. I will pat your back.” “Book on lap. Let’s read together.”
- **Ask instead of tell.** “Where are your feet?” “Where does the wastepaper go?”
- **Model self-talk.** “Tell your hands to be gentle.” “Tell your brain, ‘I can stop myself.’”
- **Use effective redirection.** “You can throw the balls into the basket.” Offer the basket.
- **Offer choices.** “Do you want to pick up the cars or bears?”
- **Ask the children.** “What do you think we can do?” “How can we fix it?”

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

5. Behavior Guidance

What do we need to know?

- The goals of behavior guidance is to strengthen and support emerging skills through assisted regulation.
- Infants and toddlers are not able to manage behavior and emotions independently.



Let's Take Action!



- What are the struggles you see most with behavior?
- What is one new skill you can use that will make a positive difference with your behavior challenges?



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

6. Trauma-Informed Teaching

The Goal: Trauma-informed teaching practices are healing, warm, and welcoming and help children feel safe and secure (Child Care State Capacity Building Center, 2022).



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

6. Trauma-Informed Teaching

Tips for getting started:

- Work with families and other professionals to help children manage stress, handle emotional reactions, and feel secure.
- Provide a network of support, including connecting families to professional and therapeutic resources in the community.
- Create safe learning environments, calm, predictable transitions.
- Be sensitive to emotional changes with comfort and soothing.
- Use predictable and calming routines.
- Start with yourself!!

Monitor Bias!

Quiet children are not “okay.” Reach out.

Active children are not misbehaving.

Crying children are not misbehaving!

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

6. Trauma-Informed Teaching

Key consideration: What do infants and toddlers need to grow and thrive? Nutrition, active play, outdoor play, protection from and mediation for stress.

- ✓ Toddlers need 3 hours of active play: Running, jumping, climbing, twirling, moving fast!
- ✓ Infants and toddlers need time outdoors daily – and experiences with nature.

“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

7. Professionalism for Self-Agency, Leadership, and Advocacy

- Use reflective practice.** Talk with colleagues about what’s working well and new steps you want to take.
- Start a community of practice at your program.**
Read a book. Identify new areas for growth.
Try new strategies. Grow together.



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

Set goals for your professional journey!

- Find a mentor and be a mentor.
- Stay connected to updates, trends, and research.
- Apply for scholarships to support additional training.
- Share your story and impact with others.
- Connect through community, state, and national organizations.
- Learn about policy and legislation.
- Write a letter. Call a congress person. Sign a petition.
- Manage your health and well-being.
- Keep growing!



“Pick Me Up!” Strategies to Elevate Your Impact

What are relationship models of care?

- We know authentic relationships matter.
- Families often do not speak up due to fear of retaliation.
 - ✓ Teachers may not identify hidden issues.
 - ✓ Teachers should actively talk with families about norms and practices both at home and in the program.



Let's Take Action!



- How do you see stress and trauma in the children and families you serve?
- What steps are you taking to protect your own well-being and monitor stress?
- What is one strategy you use during play, routines, or guidance to mediate stress?

Assessment to Earn CEUs

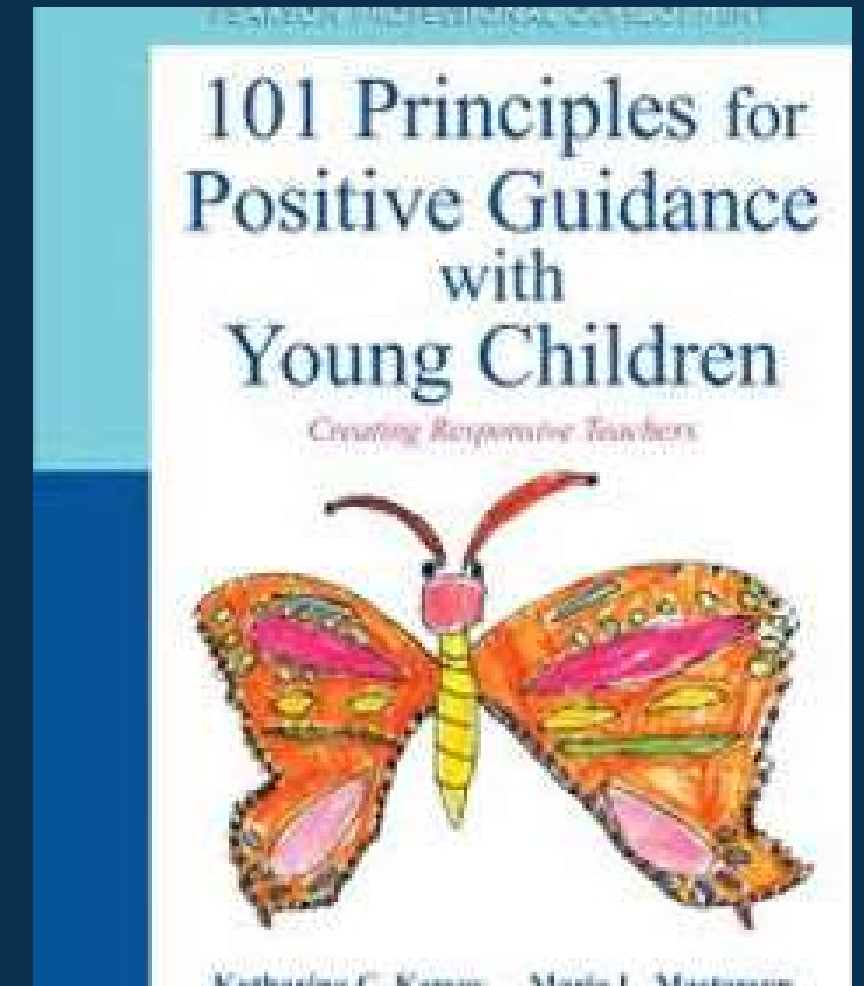
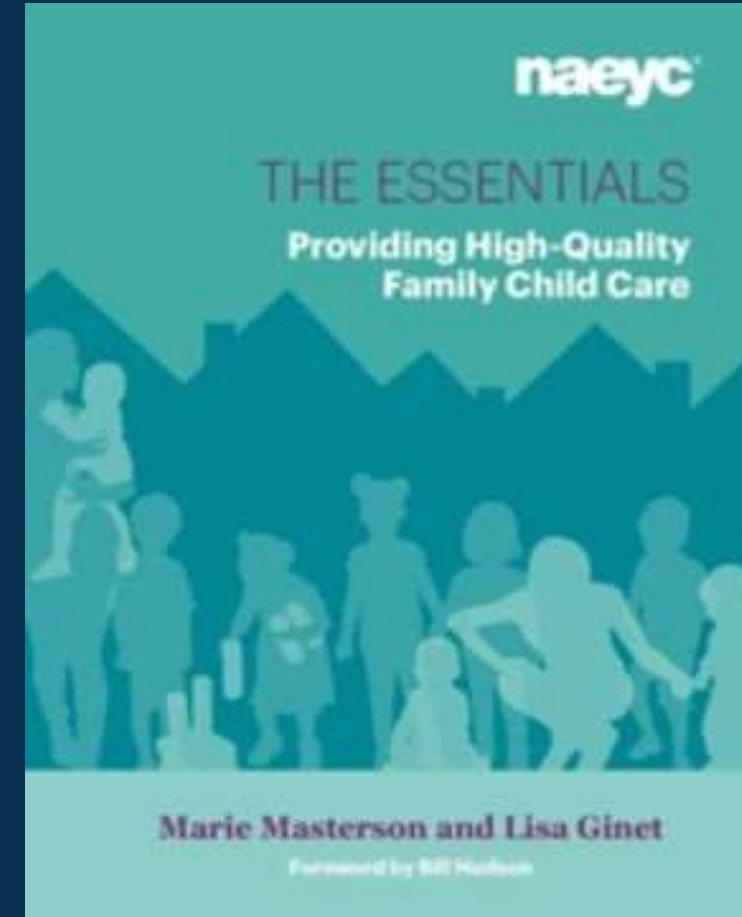
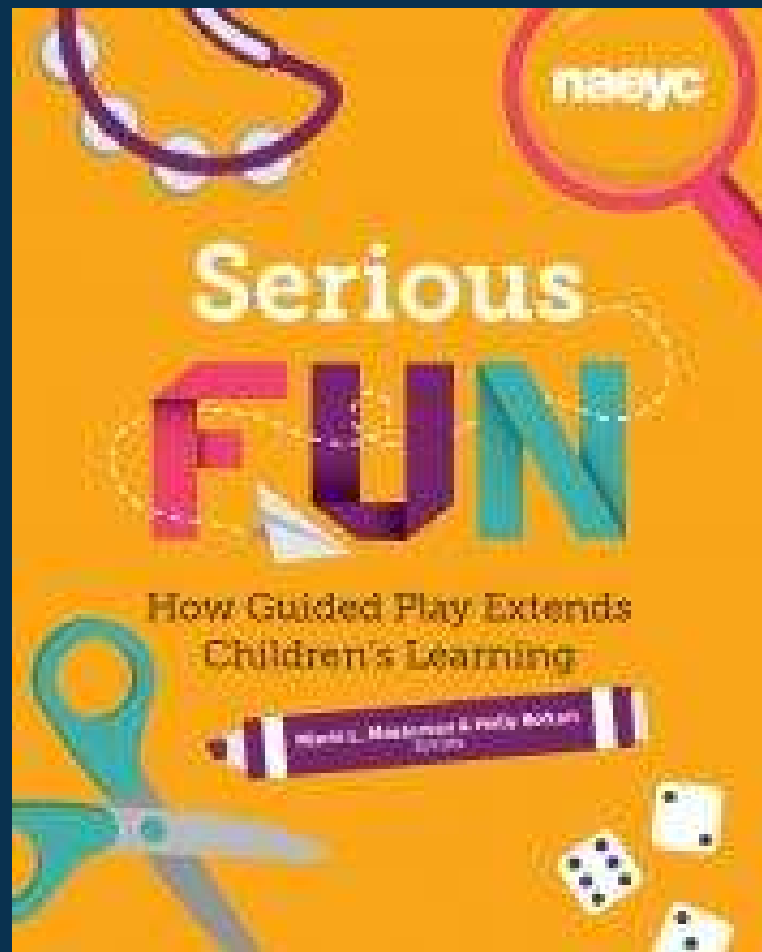
Use this code to access and complete an assessment in *NAEYC Learning Lab*.

You have until **48 hours** after the conclusion of the conference to access and complete the assessment.

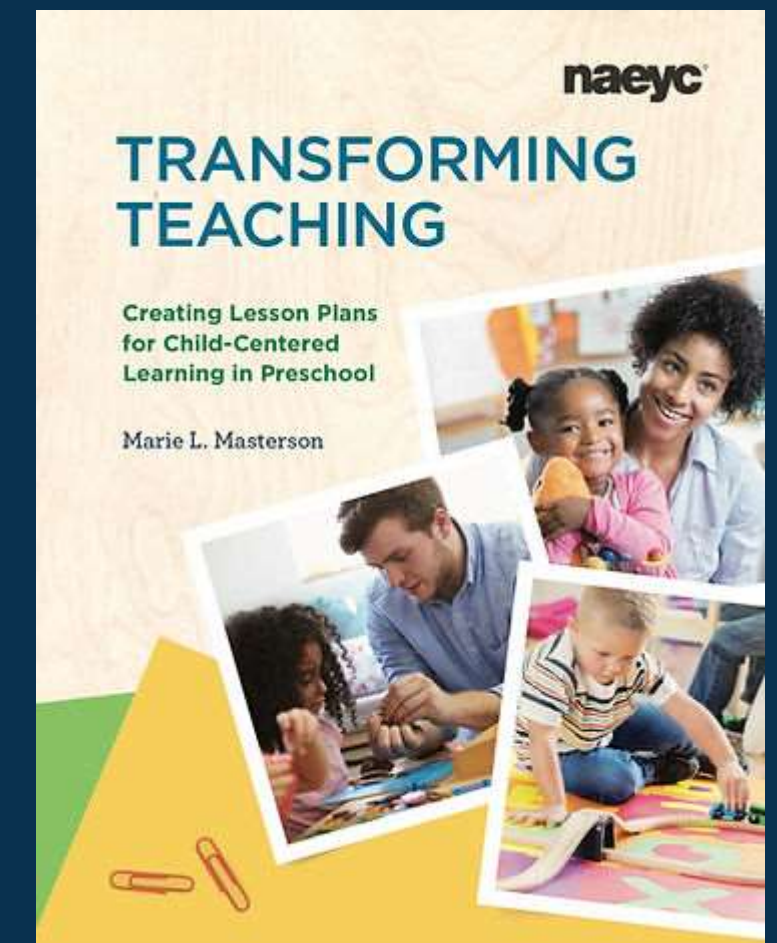
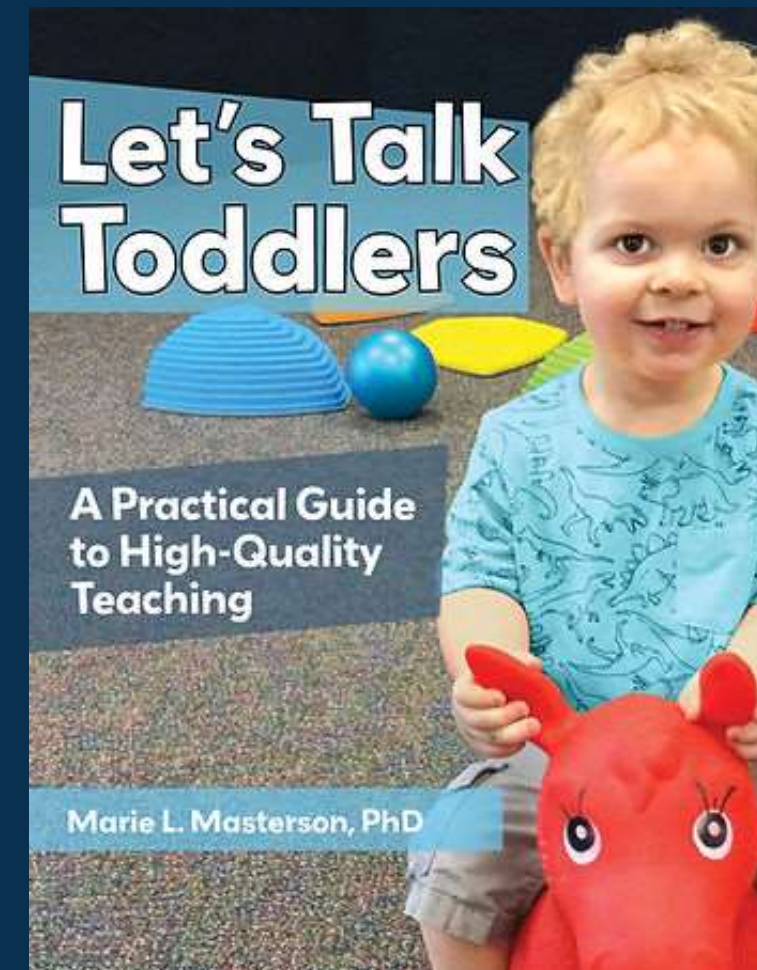
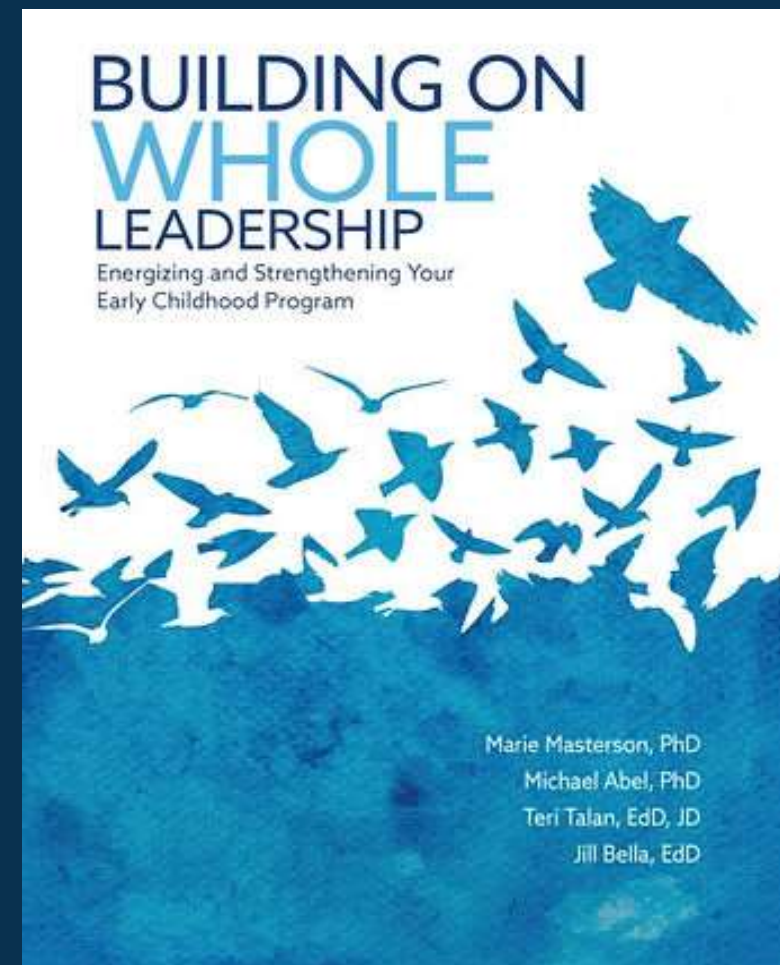
Note: CEUs not issued after the assessment is closed.

Access Code:

XXXXXX



Culturally Responsive Teaching for Infants and Toddlers: Strategies to Strengthen Development and Learning



QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS?





Handouts and contact:

Marie Masterson, Ph.D.

www.mariemasterson.com