Mindfulness Games: Tools for Emotional Regulation and Self Care &
Calming Strategies for Young Children

Priscilla Boyd, LCSW, M.Ed and Marissa Connolly
Hours: 2.0

Objectives: 1. Understand the science and power of teaching mindfulness to children.
2. Learn and practice a multitude of activities that increase concentration, assist in self
regulation and promote social emotional competence.

Objectives: 1. Educators will learn techniques for calming young children to better regulate their
emotions.

Presenters:

Priscilla Boyd is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with 25+ year’s experience. She has worked 15 years
as a social worker at Braun Education Center and is currently the PBIS Coordinator for the Southwest
Cooperative for Special Education. She has an instructor certification through Mindful Schools. She
has been in private practice and led workshops and retreats in areas of stress management,
spirituality, self discovery and personal relationships.

Mari Connolly is a social worker at Braun Educational Center. She works with students age 4-8, as
well as sophomores and juniors in high school. Mari chose the social work profession so she could
help students overcome obstacles while keeping in mind the importance of social justice and mental
health awareness.

Descriptions:

Mindfulness Games: Tools for Emotional Regulation and Self Care
This session will go over the purpose of the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale, and explain
how the assessment tool can help guide instructional and environmental best practices in the Early
Childhood classroom. Participants will gain a better understanding of how ECERS plays an important
role in planning and instruction throughout the school year and will learn strategies to implement
these practices on a daily basis with their students.

Calming Strategies for Young Children
We will explore various modalities for calming and coping with emotional stressors for the early
childhood student.
**ECERS: Beyond the Monitoring Visit**  
Adelicia Brienzo and Jennifer Kohler  
Hours: 2.0

Objectives:  
1. Participants will take away a better understanding of the “why” behind ECERS.  
2. Participants will learn strategies for implementing best practices throughout the school year, that align with ECERS requirements.

Presenters:  

Adelicia Brienzo is a parent coordinator for the CCSD #146 Early Learning program, serving the Tinley Park, Orland Park and Oak Forest communities. With experience as a home visitor, Early Childhood/Prekindergarten teacher and program coordinator, she has supported children and their families for over 12 years. Adelicia has been through three monitoring visits within her Early Childhood career and the programs she has worked with have been awarded the Gold Circle of Quality.

Jennifer Kohler is an Early Learning Teacher for the CCSD #146 Early Learning program. The school district is comprised of students from the Tinley Park, Orland Park and Oak Forest areas. Jennifer has been teaching in an Early Childhood/Prekindergarten setting for the past 6 years. During this time, she has worked with families and students in both the self contained and blended classroom settings, as well as with students and families who are English language learners.

**Helping Those You Lead - Navigating Challenging Behavior During Transition Times**  
Robyn DiPetro Wells and Misty Krippel  
Hours: 2.0  
Early Intervention: 2.0 WWF

Objectives:  
1. Participants will learn to identify transitions that are most likely to result in challenging behavior.  
2. Participants will learn strategies to assist families/others in managing difficult transitions.

Presenters:  

Robyn DiPietro-Wells is a media and webinar coordination specialist for the Military Families Learning Network (MFLN). She designs and produces professional development through various forms of online media for the Family Development Early Intervention concentration area of the MFLN. She is passionate about empowering parents to be advocates for their children, educating individuals on the unique needs of diverse families and children and ensuring that families are aware of the resources and opportunities available to them and their children whether they are typical development or experiencing developmental delays. Ms. DiPietro-Wells is currently pursuing her Master’s degree in human resources and development.

Misty Krippel is a Graduate student at the University of Illinois, studying Early Childhood and Special Education. She currently works with the Military Families Learning Network (MFLN) Early Intervention concentration area through the University of Illinois Traineeship program. She also works at the
Urbana School District with the CU Early Program with pregnant and parenting teens, focusing on prenatal health and child development. She is passionate about empowering parents and families to have purposeful play and to have fun, to know and understand the community resources and to be confident parents.

Description:

Early childhood professionals are in leadership roles on a regular basis. Whether in their classroom, working with teams, or guiding families and volunteers, these professionals provide leadership and share expertise to benefit the young children they serve. Transitions can be particularly difficult for parents as they go into the community with their young children, drop them off and pick them up in early childhood settings or move between activities at home. Early childhood professionals can share strategies on difficult daily transitions with families and team members, with the hope of preventing challenging behavior.

Engaging Caregivers In Play
Robyn DiPetro Wells and Misty Krippel
Hours: 2.0
Early Intervention: 1.0 INT, 1.0 WWF

Objectives: 1. Participants will recognize potential limitations of parents/caregivers with regards to play.
2. Participants will develop ideas/recommendations for parents/caregivers related to play.

Presenters:

Robyn DiPetro-Wells is a media and webinar coordination specialist for the Military Families Learning Network (MFLN). She designs and produces professional development through various forms of online media for the Family Development Early Intervention concentration area of the MFLN. She is passionate about empowering parents to be advocates for their children, educating individuals on the unique needs of diverse families and children and ensuring that families are aware of the resources and opportunities available to them and their children whether they are typical development or experiencing developmental delays. Ms. DiPietro-Wells is currently pursuing her Master’s degree in human resources and development.

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Description:

Parents and other caregivers sometimes struggle to play with their children. Play can be perceived as something that adults feel they cannot do. Some adults are unsure how to play, while others are unable to play due to their own limitations (i.e., mental health issues). However, all parents/caregivers can learn ways in which they can comfortably engage in play with their children to promote social-emotional and skill development within their children.

Playing With Paint
Melissa Ferriter, M.S., ATR
Hours: 2.0
Early Intervention: 2.0 INT

Objectives: 1. Participants will gain an understanding of the differences between art education and art therapy.
2. Participants will explore the differences of Process versus Product art making and identify how these approaches can benefit the sensory exploration of different level learners.
3. Participants will experience play and exploration with multiple art media.

Presenter:

Melissa is a registered art therapist who obtained her Master’s degree from Mount Mary University. She currently works for the Southwest Cooperative for Special Education serving students who have emotional and behavioral disorders, learning communication processing disorders, emotional and sensory regulation needs.

Description:

The fearless child artist is one of my most treasured archetypes. As educators, we possess the ability to embolden and embrace the child’s creative spirit or extinguish it. Offering opportunities to explore creative play is easily achieved with the use of art media. The necessary learning opportunities that art materials provide help students expand thinking, experience controlled failures, test limits safely, connect with the world through multiple senses and communicate emotions when language is yet to be developed. This session will bring a therapeutic perspective to the use of art materials in the classroom focusing on process oriented art experientials. We will discuss how developing time and space for creative exploration can keep the flame ignited in your young learner to best prepare them to engage in the future learning opportunities ahead of them.
Practices That Support High Quality Inclusion
Ann Kremer and Emily Ropars

Hours: 2.0

Objectives: 1. Participants will have an understanding of high quality inclusion.
2. Participants will learn about specific practices that support inclusion in early childhood programs.

Presenters:

Emily Ropars has worked in the field of early childhood education for 20 years. She worked as a developmental therapist and holds a type 04 with a special education endorsement. Emily has worked in all early childhood environments as a teacher, coach and administrator: lab preschool, child care, Head Start, and private schools. She currently is LRE Specialist for Early Choices.

Ann Kremer is the Project Director for Early CHOICES, whose mission is to increase high quality inclusive opportunities for young children. She has been working towards inclusive education her entire career as both a consultant and as a leader. Ann is committed to this work as a professional and also as a parent of a young man with Down Syndrome who experienced inclusive education and continues to be an active participant in his community.

Description:

High quality inclusion leads to high quality programs overall. Utilizing current research and best practices, we review the definition of inclusion and quality indicators from the Inclusive Classroom Profile to better understand what high quality inclusion looks like. Resource tools and strategies that support including children in all early childhood settings will be shared.

Implicit Bias: Stealing Our Senses
Benton Johnson, Ph.D.

Hours: 2.0
Early Intervention: 1.0 WWF, 1.0 INT

Objectives: 1. Participants will identify characteristics and implications of implicit bias.
2. Participants will recognize ways to stop bias and promote progress in their work with families.

Presenter:

Dr. Benton Johnson, II is a trainer for the Illinois Early Intervention Training Program and is founder of Ephphatha Consulting Services, Inc. which is an agency dedicated to clinical therapy, clinical consulting and training. He has a Counselor Education and Supervision Ph.D. from Regent University and he is dually licensed in Illinois and Iowa as a clinical counselor. While the majority of his clients are in early childhood, Dr. Johnson has worked with various early childhood disorders as well as adolescent and adult mental health concerns. He is an international, state, regional and local presenter and has a particular passion regarding reducing the impact of poverty in children and society at large.
Description:

Work with families is both challenging and rewarding. Professionals know about the rewards of a job well done because we get feedback from children and families. Professionals also know about cultural competency and diversity as it has been in educational curriculums for years. So, as professionals consider total inclusion and equity, they must be aware of one nuanced thief of progress i.e. implicit bias. This presentation will interactively explore these concepts through humorous video, personal participant experiences, small/large group discussion and self-reflection. At the end of the presentation, participants will be able to identify implicit bias, how it impacts work with children and families, and what can be done to stop the thief of progress.

Unlocking the Autism Puzzle
Brendan McCormick
Hours: 2.0
Early Intervention: 1.0 ATY, 1.0 INT

Objectives: 1. To teach the intended audience the specifics of autism spectrum characteristics so they gain a better understanding of the issues involved.
2. To provide tips and skills that best addresses the needs of those on the autism spectrum to enable them to lead exceptional lives.

Presenter:
Brendan McCormick, BS Applied Psychology, Executive Director at Good Shepherd Center; has worked in the field of Social Services with an emphasis on developmental disabilities for the past 33 years. During this time he worked with adults with special needs in residential settings and workshops for 16 years. For the past 17 years he has served children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

To best serve the needs of young children and their families he completed extensive research on Autism Spectrum disorders as it has become the fastest growing disability at this time. By working with the many therapists at his agency and by investigating as many information resources as possible to assist others come to a better understanding of this complex condition he has become a speaker for families and caregivers with the hopes of making their work with children in the Spectrum a bit more manageable.

Description:

This session serves as an introduction to Autism to assist parents, and educators to better understand the disorder to support families in promoting their child’s optimal development and to facilitate the child’s participation in family and community activities. Children with Autism are not able to understand the intricacies of the people or world around them nor can they fully explain themselves to the rest of the world. Individuals without Autism also have difficulty understanding those that are in the Spectrum. This is why the symbol most commonly associated with Autism Spectrum disorders is the puzzle piece. We will attempt to bridge the gap in understanding each other.
Your Legacy: How Will Families Remember You?
Susan Nevin, M.Ed.
Hours:  2.0
Early Intervention:  2.0 WWF

Objectives:  1. Examine parent experiences in Early Childhood and Early Intervention.
2. Recognize meaningful interactions that impact our relationships in working with and supporting families of children with special needs.

Presenter:

Susan Nevin, M.Ed. is a Child Development Specialist and a Professional Development Specialist who earned a Masters Degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in Early Childhood Special Education with a focus on the Birth-3 population. At the same university, she earned her undergraduate degree in Child Development and Family Studies. Susan is presently a Professional Development Specialist for the Illinois Early Intervention Training Program (EITP), traveling throughout the state to provide training to EI providers. Susan has presented at numerous local, state and national conferences. She proudly sits on the board of the Illinois Developmental Therapy Association and she serves as a developmental pediatric consultant to one of the Child and Family Connections offices in the state. Susan teaches courses at DePaul University in Chicago to prepare Early Childhood Education students for careers in Early Intervention. Susan is dedicated to her roles in the field of Early Intervention and is proud to be included in the journey of so many providers and families.

Description

Parent perspective -- professionals often talk about this in the world of early intervention and early childhood, but do we know what families really want to convey? Participants should take advantage of this great opportunity to hear from the families themselves! This session will highlight various virtual stories of several families as they share their most memorable experiences with early childhood professionals and programs.

Lesson Planning: Using Developmentally Appropriate Practices to Individualize
Emily Reilly
Hours:  2.0
Early Intervention:  2.0 INT

Objectives:  1. Develop lesson plans that align with developmentally appropriate practice and Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards.
2. Use ongoing observation and assessment data to individualize lesson plans.

Presenter:

Emily Reilly, Early Childhood Resource Specialist with STAR NET Regions I and III, is a proven leader with 15 years of experience in early care and education. Emily has served in a variety of leadership roles including Master Teacher, Associate Director, College Instructor, Trainer, Vice President of the Northern Region with Illinois Association of the Education for Young Children and Co-Chair of Illinois Division of Early Childhood’s Sharing A Vision Conference. Her expertise lies in supporting adults with the implementation of high quality practices and utilizing emergent curriculum. She is also the
Executive Producer for STAR NET’s Apples Video Magazines. She holds a Master’s degree in Applied Family and Children Studies, a Graduate Certificate in Public Management, and a level six Training and Technical Assistance Credential. In her spare time, she enjoys running, yoga, baking, and hanging out with her family.

Description:

Lesson Planning: Using Developmentally Appropriate Practices to Individualize is an introductory training that focuses on the inter-relatedness of observation, assessment and curriculum in order to plan meaningful group and individual experiences for children. A step-by-step process with guiding questions will be modeled, so participants will have the tools they need to individualize lesson plans. Lesson planning requirements for Preschool for All and Preschool for All Expansion programs will be covered. Examples will be discussed and you will leave this session with your personal plan of action. One size does not fit all!

Trauma Informed Programming
Julie Shellberg
Hours: 2.0
Early Intervention: 1.0 ATY, 1.0 WWF

Objectives: 1. Attendees will understand ACE research.
2. Attendees will understand how toxic stress and trauma can impact learning health and development.

Presenter:

Julie Shellberg currently serves as the Superintendent in Ridgeland School District 122; serves 240 students in a blended preschool model. Julie has also worked as a special education administrator. She currently serves as an Executive Board Member on the Partnership for Resilience.

Description:

This session will introduce Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) research and include how toxic stress impacts learning. It will also include Ridgeland School District 122’s journey to becoming a trauma informed system.

Hands-on STEAM for Pre-School
Erin Wiese-Reichert
Hours: 2.0
Early Intervention: 2.0 INT

Objectives: 1. Workshop attendees will learn about what STEAM really means at the pre-school level.
2. Workshop attendees will learn about lesson plans and activities that incorporate hands-on STEAM based learning for their classroom.
Presenter:

Erin Wiese-Reichert graduated from Illinois State University in 2005 with a degree in elementary Education. She has been an Early Childhood Educator with the Children’s Discovery Museum since 2006.

Description:

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) activities are becoming increasingly important to the early learner! Come join us for this session that will include discussion on the importance of STEAM based learning for the young child, demonstrations of hands-on activities and try out a few hands-on activities for yourself! You will leave this session with lots of ideas on how to easily incorporate STEAM based learning in your classroom!