

Keep Calm and Lead On

Oct 2023

For EC Leaders by EC Leaders

Coaching Early Years Educators to Raise Children's Emotional Well-being

Creating a safe, calm and conducive environment is essential for supporting young children's emotional well-being. Therefore, educators need to be aware of and manage their emotions when interacting with young children. Overwhelmed educators may provide hurried and task-oriented caregiving, which may impact children's emotional development negatively.



Through her **Inquiry-Based Action Plan (IBAP)*** Project, ECDA Fellow Ms Christine Soo (Lead Senior Lecturer, National Institute of Early Childhood Development) equipped leaders to develop their Early Years (EY) educators' competencies in creating meaningful and positive interactions with toddlers to better support their emotional well-being.

Framework

Based on the Plan-Do-Review model, leaders were guided to help EY educators design, implement, and evaluate strategies to promote children's emotional well-being whilst being more conscious of their own feelings when interacting with children.

1. Awareness

Gain awareness of their emotions and define the image of the child

5. Review

Review effectiveness of strategies to tweak and improve them

4. Implementation

Implement individualised strategies to meet the needs of each child



Plan-Do-Review Model

2. Reflection

Reflect on current practices to identify gaps

3. Brainstorm

Establish goals and co-create strategies to support children's emotional development

Case Study

Ms Melissa Loh, Executive Principal of My First Skool, shared her team's experience of co-creating and implementing strategies to manage separation anxiety for the playgroup classes.

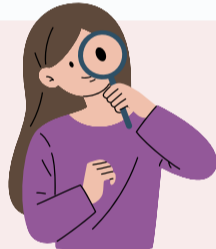
Awareness

Melissa had a session with her playgroup educators to understand their image of children and frustrating situations in managing the classes. She learnt that the educators viewed children positively and tended to be irritated with themselves rather than the children during challenging situations.



Reflection

New children joined the playgroup classes twice a month. The educators identified that the frequency of managing separation anxieties and meltdowns often took an emotional toll on them.



Brainstorm

To help her educators approach the issue more systematically, Melissa invited them to select a focus child to work with to support the child's emotional development. For example, Teacher Fiona chose to work with a toddler, Macy, with the aim of helping her regulate her emotions by articulating her needs and wants.



Implementation

Teacher Fiona gave Macy more time and space to regain her composure during arrival and used questions to prompt Macy to respond verbally. This method proved to be effective as Macy was able to settle down faster.



Review

Teacher Fiona shared her positive progress during the group coaching sessions with other educators. She also shared that she felt overwhelmed by Macy's emotions at times, during which she would inform her co-teacher and take a step back to regain her own composure. Through the discussions, Teacher Fiona refined her strategy using the 'count to ten' method to help Macy calm down within a shorter time. As Macy improved her ability to articulate her preferences and feelings, Teacher Fiona could also better understand her emotions and formulate more individualised strategies to meet her needs.



Through the process, Melissa noticed that the playgroup educators had matured emotionally. They were more mindful of their words and actions, and more conscious in providing positive reinforcement instead of finding fault in children's or their own behaviour. Melissa also recognised the benefits of group coaching sessions as educators could actively offer constructive feedback and support to one another.



Ms Melissa Loh
IBAP Participant
Executive Principal
My First Skool

Video Resources



IBAP Project Introduction
by ECDA Fellows



Click [here](#) or scan the QR code to watch the video!

*About the Inquiry-Based Action Plan (IBAP) Project

The IBAPs are evidence-based projects conducted by ECDA Fellows to guide and equip centre leaders with knowledge and skills in specific EC areas. With the Fellows' coaching, centre leaders are given opportunities to implement what they have learnt and improve practices in their centres.

