How to Build Positive Social Emotional Engagement with Early Learners

**Part 2: Creating High Quality Supportive Environments**

**Step One:**
**Teach Behavior Expectations and Rules**

**EXPECTATIONS** brand positively stated guidelines that prepare children for success in life. They will apply to all children across all settings.

1. BE RESPECTFUL
2. BE SAFE
3. BE A TEAM PLAYER

**RULES** state specific behaviors in specific settings that are observable and measurable. Rules clarify expectations for all common areas.

1. TAKE TURNS (BE RESPECTFUL)
2. SIT TO SLIDE AND SWING (BE SAFE)
3. PUT AWAY PLAY EQUIPMENT (BE A TEAM PLAYER)

**Step Two:**
**Design Environments that Promote Engagement**

**ASK YOURSELF:**

How the environment can be arranged to prevent problem behavior?

How can we minimize obstacles and other hazards?

Have we considered the needs of children with physical and sensory disabilities?

Can children use visual and environmental cues to know what to do?

- Use photos with labels
- Provide choices
- Use visuals that show children what to do
- Create clear boundaries and traffic patterns
- Consider the size and location of centers
- Use labels, color coding, verbal and visual cues
- Consider organization of materials
- Use child-size furniture that “fits”
- Use predictable seating arrangements
- Minimize large open spaces

**Step Three:**
**Plan for and Teach Transitions and Schedules**

- Develop a schedule that promotes child engagement and success
- Balance activities (active vs. quiet, small group vs. large group, adult-directed vs. child-directed)
- Structure activities so there is a clear beginning, middle and end

Strategies here provided by SW-PBIS and PW-PBIS frameworks. *Start with the Heart* represents an approach to implementing one of the critical pillars of the Get Georgia Reading Campaign: positive learning climate. To see how all four pillars help children on a path to reading proficiently by the end of third grade visit getgeorgiareading.org