Cultivating Healthy Intentional Mindful Educators (CHIME): An 8-week Program

FALL 2021 PD FOR ALL SERIES

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What led to the creation of CHIME in 2017?

- US Survey of Early Childcare Workers perceptions of working conditions and general levels of stress emerged as key predictors of teacher intentions to leave the profession (Grant et al., 2019).

- Educators’ own psychological resources also contribute to their burnout and emotional exhaustion (Cassidy et al., 2017; Corr et al., 2014; Hall-Kenyon et al., 2014; Roberts et al., 2017).
• Educator depression and perceived stress are associated with challenging or dysregulated child behavior (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2014; Neuenschwander et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2016) and to preschool expulsion rates (Gilliam et al., 2006)
Why social-emotional learning?

• Studies have also reported positive correlations between EC teachers’ socio-emotional skills and their provision of high-quality care (Jennings, 2015; Poulou, 2017; Yin et al., 2016)

• Social-emotional learning for educators:
  • Can foster and build trust and positive relationships with children
    • Consistent and predictable
    • Supports identifying needs and supports for stress management
  • Can create a space for addressing issues of equity and belonging
  • Supports educators’ efficacy (individual and collective)
How to support Social-emotional learning?

• Supported with mindfulness and reflective practice

• Facilitates healthy emotion regulation
Potential Benefits of Mindfulness and Reflective Practice for Educators

• Higher levels of mindfulness associated with fewer depressive symptoms and workplace stressors and more positive relationships with children among early childhood educators (Becker et al., 2017)

• Research suggests that mindfulness (focused on stress reduction) and facilitating reflection helps promote positive aspects of teacher well-being (Flook et al., 2013; Shapiro, Rechtschaffen, & de Sousa, 2016)
  
  • Much of the MBI’s with empirical evidence have focused on primary and secondary education settings. There is a clear gap in the availability of these interventions for early care and education settings.
Central to our delivery of CHIME –
Teaching Mindfulness ethically and responsibly

• Mindfulness is not intended to cultivate an environment of compliance, passivity, and silence

• Can be inherently supportive of practices that engage one to seek change at the individual and structural levels
Conceptual Model for CHIME

Mindfulness, Self-compassion, Social-emotional learning

ECE regulation (emotion and physiological)

ECE wellbeing (mental and occupational)

ECE Practices
- Responsivity
- Sensitivity
- Support
- Modeling and teaching of social-emotional learning

Child self-regulation and social-emotional skills

Socio-familial stressors and supports
Family socio-demographic stress
Parent sensitivity & responsiveness

Prosocial classroom, Jennings & Greenburg, 2009 & neurovisceral integration theory of emotion regulation, Thayer et al., 2000
• Begins with a 2-hour introduction to mindfulness as an ECE professional, followed by 7 sessions that are 1.5 hours long
• Each of the sessions begin with reflecting in journals and a listening to understand dyadic activity
• Then the group discusses a topic for the week (mindfulness in breathing, mindfulness in listening)
• Participates in mindfulness activity and a short guided meditation
• Put into practice activities (mindfulness and SEL activities to do with children)
• End the session with setting intentions
Infants: Mirror Breathing While Feeding a Bottle or Rocking a Baby

Time: 10-15 minutes

Instructions:
Intentionally give yourself 10-15 minutes to sit with and hold an infant. During this time, try to mirror or match your breathing to the infant’s breathing. If possible, let other caregivers know you will be focusing your attention on this infant for a brief period of time. During a bottle feeding is a wonderful time for this mindful breathing activity. As you sit holding and feeding the baby, have no other agenda than to just be, attending to baby’s slurps and breaths. Also be aware of your own breathing and notice how it aligns with the baby’s.

Now invite the children to exhale, or blow out their air as you count to four. Bring to their attention they may see the stuffed animal lowering and shrinking.

Do three to five rounds of this breathing.

When the children have practiced, ask them to reflect on their experiences.
- Ask the children, what did that feel like?
- What did they notice about the stuffed animals as they breathed in and out?

Blowing Bubbles When Child is Upset

Time: 5-10 minutes

What you need: Bubbles

Instructions for the children (done one on one with a child who is upset):
- Invite the child to go to a place where they can blow bubbles.
- As you and the child blow the bubbles, say, “goodbye sad feelings” or “float away
Highlighted Findings 2017 to Present
CHIME delivered in 2017-2018

$F(5,39) = 3.31, p = .014, \eta^2 = .29$
CHIME delivered in 2017-2018

\[ F(3,41) = 16.58, \ p < .001, \ \eta^2 = .279 \]
$F(3,41) = 3.13, p < .001, \eta^2 = .29$
“I benefited a lot from participating in this program. Because of CHIME, I am able to regulate my emotions better, and I am able to communicate better with everyone in my life, not just at work.” – Educator
Wait-listed comparison group in 2019:

Emotion Dysregulation (DERS) Total Score
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93%</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>Overall, this professional development program was beneficial for my work as an early childhood educator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97%</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>They would recommend CHIME to other early childhood educators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94%</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>They liked the activities used in the CHIME sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96%</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>CHIME was an acceptable professional development experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93%</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>Participating in CHIME supported their emotional well-being.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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CHIME Delivered During the Pandemic: Acceptability of the CHIME program delivered 2020-2021 (*n* = 56)
In the words of CHIME participants
Promising evidence that CHIME supports learning strategies to support healthy and adaptive emotion regulation and workplace well-being for early childhood educators
Next Steps
Future Directions

• Translated and now adapting CHIME for Spanish-speaking early childhood educators

• **Adapting CHIME in Brazil with a pilot study expected in 2022**

• Adapting and refining CHIME with Early Head Start and Head Start settings as part of the federal Head Start University Partnership ACF grant to support educator staff wellbeing

• **Developing practices for families to use along the educators and sustainability (e.g. FAN)**

• Growing our reach - CHIME facilitators
  • Minnesota, Colorado, Washington, Oregon
  • Expanding to Florida and South Carolina
Can always start with mindful moments

For example, staff meetings
Zero to Three Mindfulness Toolkit for ideas
Thank you to our Amazing team!

• Researchers: Drs. Carrie Clark, Gilbert Parra, Jessica Calvi, Linda Reddish

• Graduate Students: Pearl Avari, Aimee Jiang, Katie Krause, Sarah Rasby, Emily Starr

• CHIME facilitators/Nebraska Extension Educators: Jaci Foged, Lynn DeVries, Tasha Wulf, Jackie Steffen, Erin Kampbell
Thank you for all that you do!