Executive Functions
Challenging Behaviors
Essential Life Skills
Nature
Self-Regulation

Professional Development for All
November 6, 2019
Takeaway #1:

Caring and responsive relationships are support development of executive function and self-regulation

• Shaping stress-response systems
• Neural structures and networks that serve EF and SR
• Safety and security
• Scaffolding
Takeaway #2: Caring adults can scaffold attentional control

- Verbal cues to direct attention
- Re-directing attention from upsetting stimuli or feelings
- Respecting the child’s focus
- NOT being intrusive
Takeaway #3:

Executive functions take time and practice to develop and consolidate.

This requires patience and understanding of adults 😊
Takeaway #4: Play is critical!!!!

- Dramatic play
- Open-ended, unstructured play
- Games – Red light, Green light; Simon says
- Physical activity
Takeaway #5:

Understanding emotions helps children to regulate them.
- Emotion reflections
- Naming emotions
Takeaway #6:

Helping children reflect on their behavior (behavior reflections)

• Supports emerging metacognition

• Helps them to remember what worked for them and use it in the future
Takeaway #7: Context is important: Tools for tricky situations

• Alert child to what is coming next
• Use songs and dramatic play to transition
• Re-direct attention using tone of voice, songs, fingerplays, pretend
Takeaway #8: Nature supports EF & SR

• Is soothing, calming
• Improves mood
• Restores directed attention, working memory
• Looking out the window is important!!!
Takeaway #9: Stress undermines development of EF and SR, BUT

Caring, supportive relationships can buffer the effects of stress on EF and SR
Takeaway #10: Self-regulation is holistic!
You can support children’s development of Executive Function and Self-Regulation.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL SERIES

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Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska

learning community

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