



Ready, Set, Go
Success for All

A news brief linking people and resources to support quality practices in the education of all students



HLPs in Action: Building a Strong Sensory Foundation to Create a Supportive Learning Environment

Early childhood educators understand the impact of social emotional development on future learning. In fact, research tells us that a direct correlation exists between social emotional development and academic success as well as social emotional delays and learning challenges (Baum, Schnake, & Stegelin, 2020). To best continue to support young children and their families, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, early childhood providers must focus on building the sensory foundation needed for young children's social and emotional development.

In her book entitled, *Improving Sensory Processing in Traumatized Children*, Sarah Lloyd discusses the importance of early movement opportunities and sensory experiences in her work with children in foster and adoption situations. Lloyd states, "by combining sensory integration theory and a neurosequential understanding of trauma, we were able to understand the importance of movement in forming a 'foundation layer' for social and emotional development" (Lloyd, 2016). To continue to build young children's sensory foundations and to promote their social emotional development, it becomes even more crucial for adults to create supportive learning environments in which children are given opportunities

to engage in movement and tactile experiences. Cultivating a supportive and predictable learning environment is the hallmark of [High-Leverage Practice](#) (HLP) #7 as identified by the Council for Exceptional Children and in partnership with the CEDAR Center (2019).

Get Ready to create supportive learning environments through meaningful interactions with a focus on building a strong sensory foundation and fostering social emotional development. As Angie Voss shares in her book, *Understanding Your Child's Sensory Signals*, the “power sensations” of tactile, vestibular, and proprioceptive are the foundation for all learning, including social emotional development (Voss, 2015). To effectively guide children’s learning, including social skills & behavior, an emphasis must be put on the “power sensations.” Voss’ tree diagram, [The Power Sensations...Your Sensory Foundation - A Sensory Life!](#) beautifully depicts the importance of “feeding the roots (power sensations)” to promote all other areas of learning & development in young children.

- [Teachstone's Strategies for Effective Interactions Among Adults Supporting Students with Learning Differences](#) webinar recording
- [Social and Emotional Development | NAEYC](#) website
- [A Sensory Life](#) website
- [Why Kids Need Recess](#) article by Rae Pica

Get Set to coach families on how to engage in meaningful interactions and how to embed social-emotional learning, specifically sensory activities focusing on the power sensations (tactile, vestibular, proprioceptive), into everyday routines.

- [Teachstone's Strategies for Teachers to Support Parent/Child Interactions at Home](#) webinar recording
- [Family Guided Routines Based Intervention](#)
- [How To: Incorporate Sensory Play into Your Child's Every Day](#) article by Aseye Allah

Go explore the following additional activities to promote sensory development across settings! As you incorporate sensory foundation building into family coaching sessions or within your educational environment, think about how you can invite children into nature-based experiences as often as possible. In her book, *Barefoot & Balanced*, Angela Hanscom describes nature as a “calm, sensory rich, but not sensory overloading environment” (pg. 58). Natural play settings allow children the opportunity to engage in higher-level social-emotional learning without being overstimulated, which inevitably builds their confidence and resiliency (Hanscom, 2016).

- [150 Sensory Learning Idea- Special Education and Inclusive Learning](#)
- [Vermont Early Learning Standards Module 2, Activity 1: Sensory Adventure: Outside](#)

Exploration!

- [In Sync Activity Cards: Simple, New Activities to Develop, Learn, & Grow!](#)

References

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This news brief is a collaborative effort of the Virginia Department of Education Training and Technical Assistance Centers at George Mason University and James Madison University. This issue was prepared by the staff at the VDOE TTAC at George Mason University. For questions about content, please contact Amber Gant (agant4@gmu.edu).

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