

### Beyond the Therapy Room

Using therapeutic strategies through play to support all children



Welcome! We're so glad you're here.

In the chat, please share:

- Your name and role (teacher, coach, administrator)
- Your location
- How do you want the children in your care to **feel** while they're with you?

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### Things to Know...




Certificates



Recording



Resources



Evaluation

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### Meet the Panelists




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Becker's



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Becker's

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## Mindfulness Moment

**5-4-3-2-1**  
**Grounding Technique**

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## Learning Outcomes

- 1

 Understand the connection between our own mindset and our “big picture” purpose and how we respond to the children *in our care*.
- 2

 Recognize the importance of observing the child and observing the learning environment through a sensory lens to more fully understand children’s behaviors.
- 3

 Reflect on multimodal therapeutic practices that can be implemented through play in your unique context or setting.

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## What is your BIG PICTURE purpose?

We are committed to fostering a community where each child feels:

- ♥ **Safe** to explore, express, and make mistakes without fear.
- ♥ **Loved** just as they are, and encouraged to grow into their unique beings.
- ♥ **Trusted** and respected as capable individuals with their own perspectives and ideas.
- ♥ **Competent** in their ability to problem-solve, express themselves, and build meaningful relationships.
- ♥ **Confident** in their strengths and resilient in the face of challenges.
- ♥ **Curious** about the world around them, free to wonder, ask questions, and engage in joyful discovery.
- ♥ **A deep sense of belonging**—to their classroom, their community, and the broader world.

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## Core Commitments



**Love the child**, unconditionally.



Recognize **all behavior as communication**.

View "attention seeking behavior" as "connection seeking behavior."



Believe that **every person is doing the best they can** in any given moment with skills and resources available in that moment.



Be open to **rethinking** long-held practices or **beliefs** in order to serve the best interests of each child and the classroom community.

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## Observe & Inquire - the Child(ren)



Use a questionnaire to families to gather information about the child's routines and preferences at home.

Observe the child throughout the day to understand behavioral responses to sensory stimuli and social interactions.

Administer a Sensory Profile to gain more insight into each sensory domain.



[Sensory Profile Questionnaire](#)

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## Observe & Assess - the Environment



Observe each physical space within the learning environment and assess for sensory input needs:

- Interception/Basic Needs & Temperature
- Proprioceptive & Vestibular/Movement
- Visual/Sight
- Tactile/Touch
- Auditory/Sound
- Olfactory/Smell
- Gustatory/Taste



[Sensory Profile Questionnaire](#)

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## Design the Environment

Adjust the environment based on the results of the sensory audit.

Meet sensory needs in every part of the classroom - include materials and physical space for children to meet sensory input needs throughout the classroom's play centers.

Create a dedicated space to teach self-regulation skills through co-regulation - include visual tools and physical materials to support sensory and emotional regulation.



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## Why Play?

"Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul."

- Friedrich Froebel

"Play is our brain's favorite way of learning."

- Diane Ackerman

"When play is allowed to be child-driven, children practice decision-making skills, move at their own pace, discover their own areas of interest, and ultimately engage fully in the passions they wish to pursue."

- Sandy Kessler

"It's the things we play with and the people who help us play that make a great difference in our lives."

- Fred Rogers

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## Techniques from Play Therapy

- Be present and attuned to the child's needs
- Be near the child with an open body position
- Let the child lead the play
- Describe the child's play and label actions as a choice or decision
  - Avoid asking questions
- When a child asks questions, return responsibility
- Acknowledge effort and provide descriptive praise
- Offer just enough help to build frustration tolerance while ensuring the child successfully completes the desired task
- Set and enforce limits on un-safe behavior during play using the limit-setting process

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## Occupational Therapy Lens



**Learn about:** Sensory needs  
Sensory mismatch  
Means of escape

Provide means for safe "escape" from sensory mismatch

**"When we are [environment/activity], if [triggering sensory event that causes mismatch happens], then you can [means of escape]."**

Observe behavior through a sensory need lens

**There is a difference between a behavior that meets a sensory need, and the sensory need itself**

Provide opportunities to safely meet sensory needs across sensory domains

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## Speech & Language Therapy Lens



**Use Visuals:**

- Expectations & Routines
- Choices & Problem Solving

**Be Clear and Direct:**

- Identify something concrete you are seeing/hearing.
- Provide language and vocabulary around what your observation may indicate.
- Provide a support/tool option(s) around that specific observation.

**Model & practice** the skills, language, and vocabulary for regulation in play.

**Pause.** Leave more space for a response.

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## Adaptations to Play Centers

**Allow for more whole body movement throughout the classroom**

- In the Art Center, have a standing table where the work surface hits at or above the children's waist height (or simply remove the chairs from the art center table).
- Offer multiple opportunities for vertical play
  - Wall covered in butcher paper for painting, drawing, collaging, etc
  - A low window or glass wall, a child-height whiteboard, the back of a storage shelf covered in contact paper to be used for playdough and loose parts
  - A magnetic surface on the wall or back of shelf for magnetic building

**Provide for multi-sensory play throughout the classroom**

- Add scents to homemade playdough and sensory bases.
- Allow light to be adjusted in centers to alter the play experience
- Add options for listening to books in the library or reading nook
- Play music intentionally aligned with the mood, feeling, purpose of the moment

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## Multimodal Activities

- [Easel painting to music](#)
- [Plunger painting to drumming music](#)
- [High Energy Art for Release – Bilateral Scribbling](#)
- [Low Energy Art for Calm – Observational Drawing](#)
- [Bring the Outside Inside – Biophilia](#)
- [Sensory Bin Play](#)



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## In the Moment

"Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."



**PAUSE** and take a mindful breath.



**NOTICE** what your body sensations are telling you about what triggered you.



**CHOOSE** a mindful response that aligns with your big picture goals.

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## Recall your BIG PICTURE purpose

I am committed to fostering a community where each child feels:

- ♥ **Safe** to explore, express, and make mistakes without fear.
- ♥ **Loved** just as they are, and encouraged to grow into their unique beings.
- ♥ **Trusted** and respected as capable individuals with their own perspectives and ideas.
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## Panel Discussion Q&A

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## Resources



[Learning Environment Sensory Audit](#)



[Sensory Profile & Getting to Know You Questionnaire](#)



[Inspiration Into Action Reflection Guide](#)



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## Evaluation & Certificate


 Click on the link to answer 4 quick questions.  
 Upon completion, your certificate will be available to download.

Thank you for submitting your webinar evaluation. Click here for your certificate:  
<https://www.ahopebecker.com/may-2023-webinar-certificate>  
 Important thing you can do next

If you attend our live session, you will also receive your certificate via email.



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