

Supporting Children's Social-Emotional Learning Through Play



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

In the chat, please share:

- Your name and role (teacher, coach, administrator)
- Your location
- Why is it important, now more than ever, that we focus on the power of play?

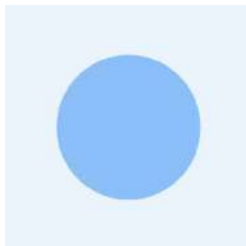
BECKER'S

Mindfulness Moment

The "perfect" breath...

5.5 second inhale
+
5.5 second exhale
=
5.5 breaths per minute

James Nestor, *Breathe: The New Science of a Lost Art*



BECKER'S

Today's Guest ...



Christian Bellissimo,
MSW, LCSW, RPT

Christian has maintained a private practice for more than 24 years, where he specializes in treating the early childhood population. He was contracted with New Jersey's Child Protective Services for 20 years, for whom he worked with the youngest survivors of trauma, abuse, and neglect while specializing in parent-child reunification cases.

Christian served as a preschool intervention specialist for a public school district in New Jersey for more than 17 years, where he provided in-class support to children experiencing social, emotional, and behavioral challenges in the classroom. Christian is committed to sharing the same skills he utilizes as a play therapist with early childhood educators and caregivers through professional development, consulting, coaching, and his online course, "Play to Grow."

BECKER'S

Supporting Children's Social-Emotional Learning Through Play

Christian Bellissimo, Play Therapist

www.christianbellissimo.com



Why Play?

- Most natural means for expression and social-emotional learning
- Rapport and Relationship
- Skills acquired through natural, unscripted interactions



Play Supercharges Learning!

Children acquire new skills *fastest* through PLAY, especially through engagement with a nurturing, supportive, attuned adult.

"The most important interactions happen through play. Building strong neural connections are the foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health."

www.developingchild.harvard.edu









90% of children's brain development occurs before age 5



Sensitive Period: developmental time periods where individuals are *especially* sensitive to, and influenced by, environmental input

"You don't need to be a therapist to be therapeutic."

Neil Horan, PhD
Center for Child Development, Georgetown University



Christian

Parent



Teacher Coaching

In a review of 93 studies conducted between 1953-2000:

"Utilizing parents (and teachers) produced larger overall treatment effects than individual play therapy conducted by a professional."

www.aapt.org

Support children's social-emotional learning through PLAY in the classroom!



Strategies Align with Social-Emotional Domains...

- ✓ CLASS PRE-K
- ✓ ICP
- ✓ ECERS
- ✓ PBS/TPOT
- ✓ Conscious Discipline



Guidance In the classroom



Indoor Play

Staff enter and exit play
interactions with discretion

Individual or small groups

Can be generalized

How Long?



"Long term and
enduring changes to
neural networks can
be created by an
intense period of
stimulation that lasts
less than a minute."

Bruce Perry, MD

Describe Play (and Frame as a Choice)

How?

Describe play while framing play as a choice or decision while avoiding questions



Why?

Attunement
Speech and language modeling
Extends play
Internalize choices
Learning

Practice Co-Regulation

How?

Name the child's feeling by describing:
Facial Expression
Body Language
Tone of Voice



Why?

Developing brain unable to self-regulate independently



"ATTUNEMENT"

"When a child's feelings are acknowledged and accepted by a supportive adult, they are experienced with less intensity by the child."

Garry Landreth



Facilitate interactions and teach new skills!



Teach Problem Solving

- Name Feeling
- State the Problem
- Identify a Solution
- Support a New Skill
- Praise Success



Build Resilience and Support Self-Regulation Through Play





**SELF-REGULATION
in early childhood
is a predictor of
later academic success**

Rohlfson DA, Allen MS, Howard SI. Self-regulation in childhood as a predictor of later outcomes: A meta-analytic review. *Psychol Bull.* 2020 Apr;146(4):524-544. doi: 10.1037/bul0000227. Epub 2020 Jan 6. PMID: 31904248.



**Build Self-Regulation
Through Play**

How?

Through attunement,
respond in a manner that
ensures success with the
least amount of support

Why?

Supports the development
of self-regulation, self-
confidence, independence



**"Stress in Tolerable
Doses Builds
Resilience."**

Bruce Perry, MD

Limit Setting



What?

Behavior management strategy that utilizes choices and natural consequences

Why?

Developmentally appropriate

Acquire new skills

Self-correction and control

Setting Limits through Play: Key Points

Child is more regulated

Has internalized choices

Motivated to continue activity

Natural consequences are intuitive



What behaviors warrant Limit Setting?

Aggression

Potential Danger

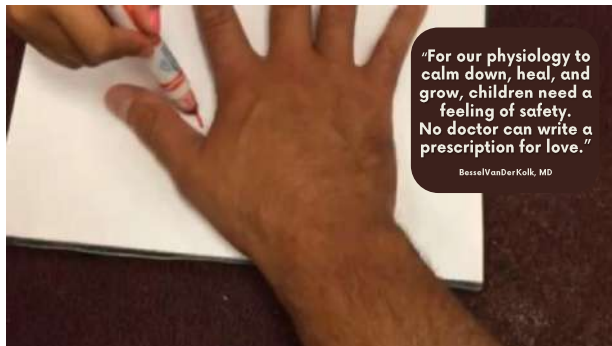
Rough Use of Toys

Prohibited behaviors during play!

















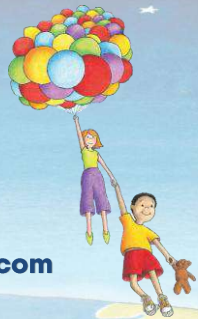
*"Use your
personality, your
smile, your voice,
your touch. The
teacher is the
most powerful
learning tool."*

Bruce Perry, MD

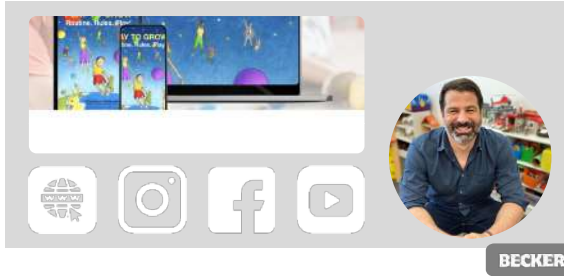
Thank You!

Keep in touch!

www.christianbellissimo.com



Where can we find Christian?



Resources



7 Steps for Setting Limits During Play



Therapeutic Strategies for Educational Settings: Reflection Guide



Inspiration into Action Reflection Guide

BECKER'S

Evaluation & Certificate



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



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

BECKER'S
