Promoting Self-Control in Children

in Children Age 0-8 Years

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Objectives:
- List a strategy that promotes the ability to control impulses

Main Points:
- Focus and self-control are critical for succeeding in school and life.
- What you do matters!
- What the child’s experiences matters!
- Adults can promote young children’s ability to build these skills.
- These skills are best promoted in age-appropriate, fun, and active ways.

Overview of Executive Functions
- The manager of the brain – Helps us reflect, analyze, plan, and evaluate
  - Helps us manage our behavior to reach our goals
  - Impacted by development and temperament
  - Shift and change with life
  - Similar to muscles—the more we work them, the stronger they become

Inhibitory Control

“The ability to resist a strong inclination to do one thing and instead do what is most appropriate.”

Adele Diamond

*Inhibitory control shifts and changes with life (medical, sleep, development, temperament, environment, stress and more)
- Development of self regulation is NOT doing what someone else tells you to do without questioning it
- Sometimes, self-control is about resisting those pushing you to do something
- Our ability increases when we buy into why something is important and to embrace the goal

Good news!
- We can (and should) promote these skills!
- These skills are like muscles—the more we work them, the stronger they become
- We need to build the brain pathways and scaffold the skills over time

Problem Solve Challenge:
1. What is the challenge?
2. What are all the strategies you could use?
Top Tips for Promoting Inhibitory Control

*Build the skills by building the brain pathway and strengthening the MUSCLE!
In practice: Interrupting
In practice: The line
In practice: Waiting

- Let children have many experiences where they need to wait
  - “Just a minute” – growing with child’s ability
  - Use a sand timer to show the passage of time
  - Give body choices (wiggle toes, touch your arm, hold fidget, etc.)

- Validate - Redirect
  - Your body is saying, “I need to mooooove!” “You are feeling so antsy right now!”
  - Toddlers – Help them get moving
  - Preschoolers – Prompt: Do you need to wiggle your toes in your shoes?
  - Older – Question: What can you do when you are feeling antsy?

- Teach about the waiting muscle
- Play waiting games

*Use fun activities and games to teach the skills!
Stop-Go Activity
Fun media: “Me want it but me wait!”
Bubbles
Games

- Red light, green light (then do the opposite)
- Auto-response over-ride games
  - Day-Night task
  - Toe tapping game
  - Simon says – and then do the opposite.

*Noisy vs. quiet  *Right vs. left hand  *Sit vs. stand
- Word plays

- Others?

Goals:
One thing I can do to promote self-control:

One step I will take this week: