

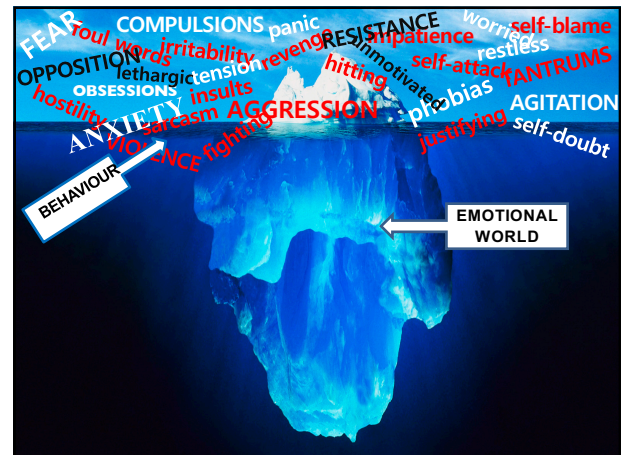


Understanding How Emotions Impact Play and How Play Can Be a Catalyst To Work Through Emotions



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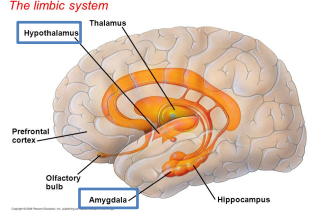
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EMOTIONS need to be EXPRESSED to preserve healthy functioning and well-being

- Emotions are supposed to rise-up and flow through our children.
- Their existence is not a problem, although the way they are expressed may be the cause of problems.
- Emotions need to flow, for children to grow.*

Where does EMOTION come from?



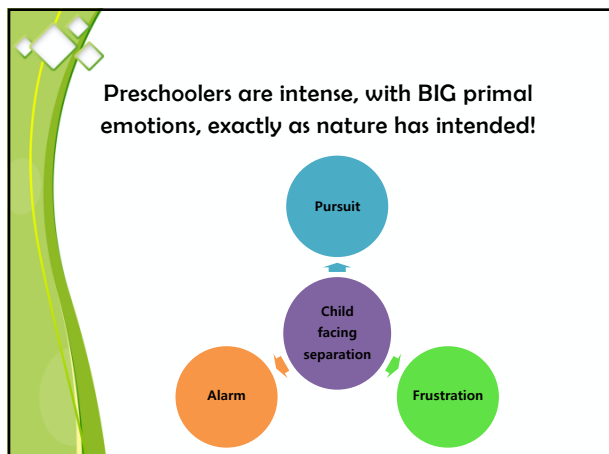
BRAIN'S ALARM SYSTEM:

Mediated by the **LIMBIC SYSTEM**

Amygdala registers the threat (like a smoke detector)

Hypothalamus orchestrates the response (it links the nervous system to the endocrine system via the pituitary gland)

Which triggers the **SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM**



BIENVENUE à la petite enfance!

On fait du bruit et des dégâts parce que nous sommes si curieux et nous prenons des risques.


Nous posons beaucoup de questions et parlons beaucoup
parce que nous sommes curieux d'apprendre.

Nous ne sommes pas faits pour rester assis
parce que nous développons notre motricité.

Nous sommes impulsifs, nos émotions changent rapidement
parce que notre cerveau en pleine maturation ne peut qu'avoir un sentiment à la fois.

Nous devons jouer
parce que le jeu nous aide à apprendre à la logique.

JOUER C'EST NOTRE FAÇON D'APPRENDRE!



WELCOME to early childhood!

We are noisy mess-makers
... because we are explorers and risk-takers.

We ask questions and talk a lot
... because we are curious about the world and acquiring new vocabulary.

We are not built for desk sitting
... because we are developing our motor skills and need to be active.

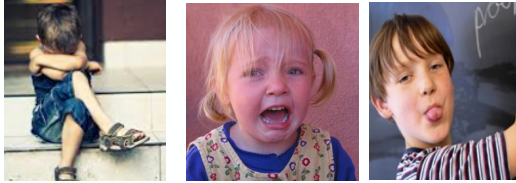
We are impulsive, our emotions shift rapidly
... because our maturing brain can only hold one thought or feeling at a time.

We need to play
... because play nurtures creativity and logic.

PLAY IS THE WAY WE LEARN!

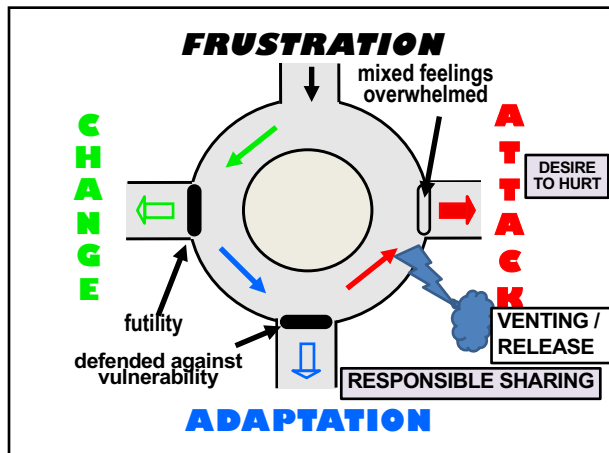


Emotions need to be expressed BUT...

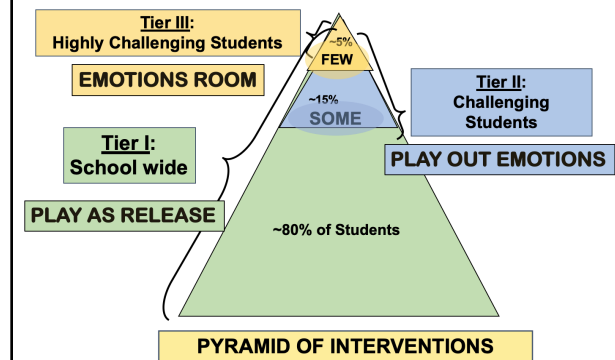


1. Expression is often MESSY & NOISY, CHAOTIC & UNACCEPTABLE, ALIENATING & WOUNDING
2. It can threaten a child's RELATIONSHIPS.
3. So, the brain can suppress or depress emotion to protect its attachments especially if emotional expression is considered to be "unacceptable".

What happens when emotions are suppressed?



How can we help children express their emotions?



Emotions at Play

Tier 1 – Group wide support	Classroom layout – clear areas that invite manipulations and moving into the 'play' mode Clear structures & routines –provides safety and consistency	Teacher leads the interventions & support staff assists the group
Tier 2 – Challenging student	Provide targeted periods of time when student is encouraged to use specific areas of the room to help release emotional energy If needed, a student can be accompanied for Brain Breaks outside the classroom	Teacher & support staff Support Staff
Tier 3 – Highly Challenging Student	Bringing student to movement station(s) around the school and/or Emotions Room to help release emotional energy	Support Staff

TIER 1 GROUP RELEASE ACTIVITIES

Providing a venue for emotional expression

Set the Stage:

- Activities can run smoothly, and students are more inclined to follow your lead if you:
 - **Collect them before beginning** the activity
 - Name the cues that will announce the **beginning and end**, as this will help them transition in and out more smoothly
 - Join in, build **a culture of enjoyment!** This will encourage them to join in and follow your lead more readily



TIER 1

FRUSTRATION MONSTER





- Remember a time when you felt really frustrated
- Imagine that your frustration was a monster
- Draw the monster...is it big? Is it bright? What color(s) is it?
- This is not meant to be a nice & neat drawing – leave room for lots of expression!

Hannah Beach

TIER 1

Drumming





- Have everyone sit in a circle and hold their drums.
- You are in the centre of the circle and are the "conductor" of the drumming experience
- You set the tempo and speed for the drumming. Slowly, quickly, very very quickly! Alternate speeds and modify the tempo up and down while your students follow you.
- Every once in a while, you can even freeze your hands so that the students know to stop drumming. ... and then start waving your hands suddenly and quickly!

Hannah Beach

TIER 1

SQUEEZE AWAY



- Free style water-color painting
- Banner paper
- Spray bottle for each student
- Paint & water
- Can be done to music
- Can be done on snow in the winter!!

Hannah Beach

Emotions Room

A PLACE TO LET IT ALL OUT UNTIL THE TEARS CAN FLOW



EMOTIONS ROOM SUPPLIES: Different kinds of expression

- Throwing:
 - Stuffed animals/puppets
 - Soft balls
 - Velcro balls
 - Magic mitt
- Kicking/stomping:
 - Gym mats
 - Bubble wrap
- Hitting:
 - Pillows
 - Pool noodles
 - Balloons
 - Punching bag
 - Exercise ball
- Other:
 - White Board for scribbling
 - Paper/thick cardboard for ripping

TO HELP THE TEARS TO FLOW

Play and emotional well-being

- When children are "stirred up" emotionally, their PLAY can reflect themes they are struggling with.
- PLAY is how they naturally make sense of all the emotions they are experiencing.
- In PLAY, pictures are drawn, structures are made, and games are engaged in to ALLOW EMOTIONS TO COME OUT in a way that feels "safer".

Taking frustration into play

Playing out the impulses to make things work



- Constructing and crafts
- Building – LEGO, blocks, mazes, etc.
- Making things perfect – puzzles
- Organizing & orchestrating

Taking frustration into play

Playing out the impulses to ATTACK or DESTROY



- Destroying and demolishing
- Hitting and throwing
- Kicking & screaming
- War games, attacking games
- Play fighting

• reduces levels of frustration
• decreases aggression and violence in real life

What about 'rough' play?

Should we allow it?



How do we keep it safe?





Are there benefits?



When do we 'put the breaks on'?



Difference between *violence* and *symbolic play*

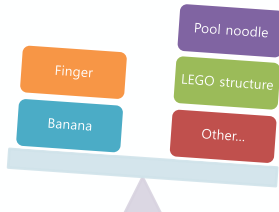



- Use of props – a character, plays a role, dress-up, change in voice & demeanor
- Start/finish to the play
 - Cue the 'play time' with music beginning, when it stops the game stops
- Make a big space available (preferably out side) for this type of physical play – removing this from the classroom helps to shift the brain from 'real and not real.'
 - Sets the parameters for 'safe' expression
- There needs to be rules – it's NOT 'free' play
- There needs to be active supervision

Guns, swords and other weapons

Developmentally, preschoolers have not yet grown the integrative capacity to form intentions with the objects they manipulate.

Items used in PLAY	vs	How these items are perceived in 'real' life
Finger		Pool noodle
Banana		LEGO structure
		Other...



Setting parameters

Phase 1 : Adult leads
Set-up for success – CLEAR, EXPLICIT, MODEL
Use targeted games to set the stage

- Red light, green light
- Simon Says

Phase 2 : Adult is scripting appropriate behaviors
Games in one direction

- Obstacle courses
- Tobogganing
- Target throwing on the wall

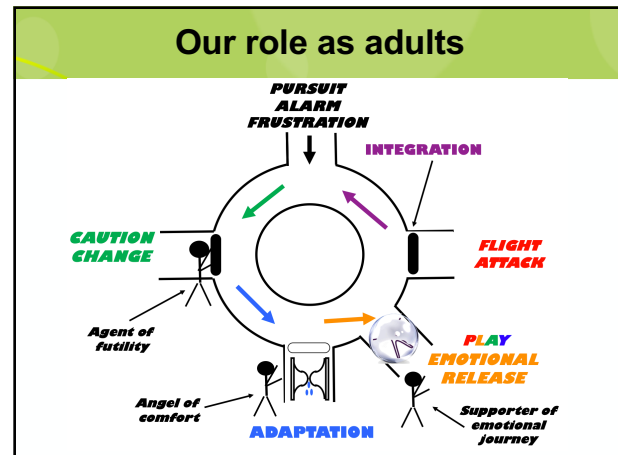
Safety is mapped out

- Turn taking
- Following cues for beginning/end of game

Phase 3: Other games are permitted when parameters are well integrated:

- Fencing with pool noodles
- Pool noodle tag
- Tag games
- Ball sharing games

NOTE: Games in the 'rough & tumble' category can be allowed when students understand and respond to the adult cues for beginning & stopping a game. A clear signal needs to be provided to maintain safety, ex. Double-whistle blow.



Information to relay to parents

- Inform parents of the rules and parameters being taught and coached with the students.
- School is a 'terrain' to practice and learn 'hands on' whether they are doing crafts, building structures or playing out their emotions.
- Children can get hurt doing all kinds of things....not necessarily because of 'rough play.'
- Help parents understand that 'rough' symbolic play, when well orchestrated and supervised is not violence.

