

CLAY

A Peaceful Teaching Approach: Promoting Positive Behaviors in Early Childhood Settings

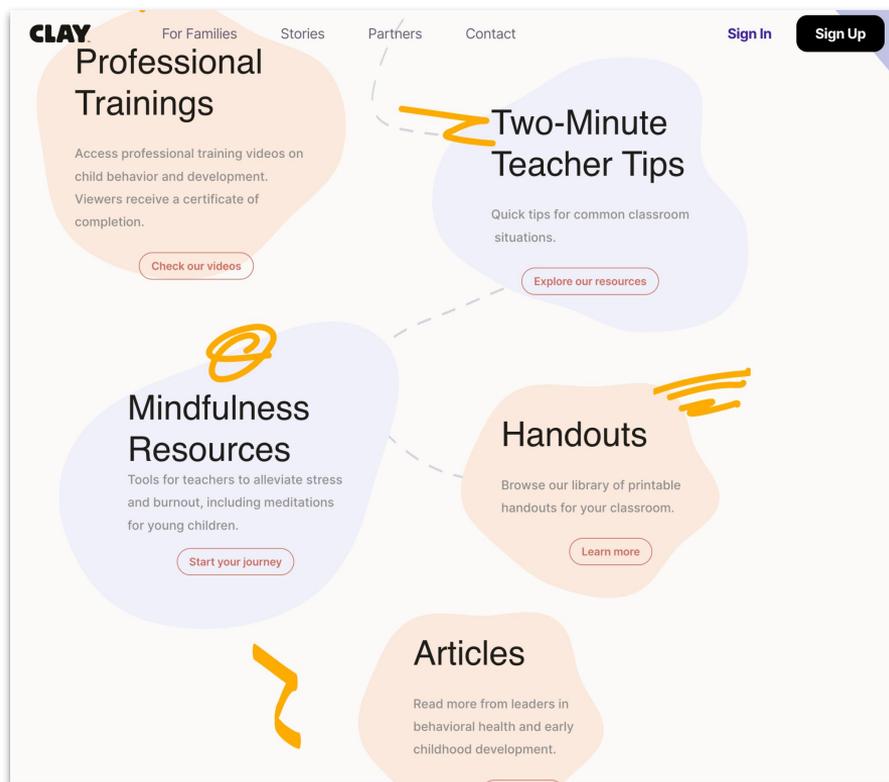
Jennifer Gillette, MA | Child Development & Behavior Specialist
Chief of Child Development & Behavior at Clay

Walking the Talk



Jennifer Gillette, MA | Child Development & Behavior Specialist
Chief of Child Development & Behavior at Clay
www.carebyclay.com

CLAY



WWW.CAREBYCLAY.COM

HELLO@CAREBYCLAY.COM

Agenda & Objectives:

1. Tuning into Temperament
2. The Up & Downstairs Brain
3. Behavior is Communication
4. The Three Components of Peaceful Teaching
5. Putting Peaceful Teaching into Practice
6. Q & A



What is Temperament?

Temperament describes an innate way in which we **approach** and **react** to the world. Temperament is our **personal style**, it influences our **behavior**, and the way we **interact** with others.



9 Traits of Temperament

1 Sensitivity

4 Intensity

7 Persistence

2 Regularity

**5 Approach/
Withdrawal**

8 Distractibility

3 Activity

6 Adaptability

9 Mood

Why should we understand temperament?

1. To respect individual differences
2. To understand Goodness-of-Fit
3. To anticipate, to prepare, & to best support children

CLAY

TUNING INTO TEMPERAMENT

Every child is born with an innate personal style. Temperament describes the way we experience the world and interact with others. Tuning into our children's and our own temperament can help us understand and problem solve how best to support our family members. Please mark with your child's initials where you think they fall on each scale, and do the same with your initials.

TEMPERAMENT TRAITS

01. Activity level

Does your child have a lot of energy and always seem to be moving or does your child prefer sedentary activities and is more often in an observant and relaxed state?

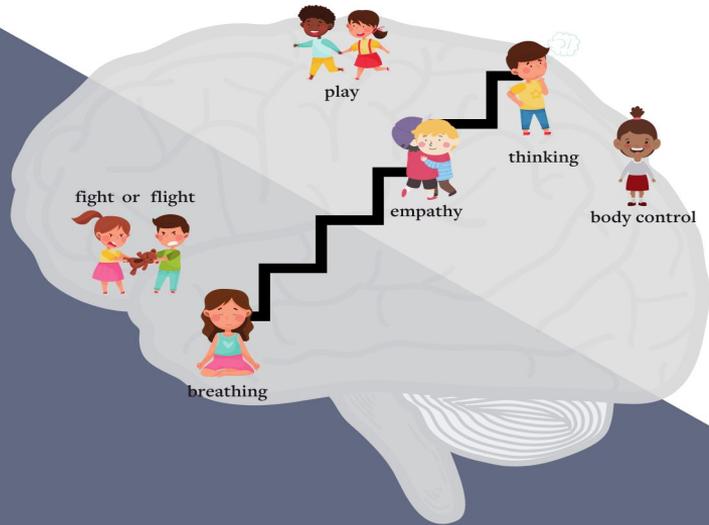
very active ————— moderately active ————— not very active

02. Regularity

Does your child have regular eating, sleeping and elimination habits or are your child's habits somewhat unpredictable?

regular habits ————— semi-regular habits ————— unpredictable

UPSTAIRS / DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN



CLAY.

The Whole Brain Child
Dr. Daniel Siegel

BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION ICEBERG

All children's behaviors have meaning. The behavior we see is a form of communication letting us know what the child may be actually experiencing and/or feeling underneath the surface.



WHAT YOU SEE

- Crying
- Aggressive behavior
- Tantrums
- Withdrawl
- Not listening
- Sleep issues
- Inflexible
- Few friends
- Rigid play
- Whining
- Body Complaints
- Fidgety/Hyperactive

WHAT MAY BE CAUSING IT

- Tired/Hungry
- Social Anxiety
- Overstimulated
- Stressors at home
- Trauma
- Need for connection
- Overscheduled
- Separation Anxiety
- Developmental milestone delay
- Lack ability to express big feelings
- Learning differences
- Lack of self-regulation skills



“Kids do well when they can.”*

– Dr. Ross Greene, “*The Explosive Child*”



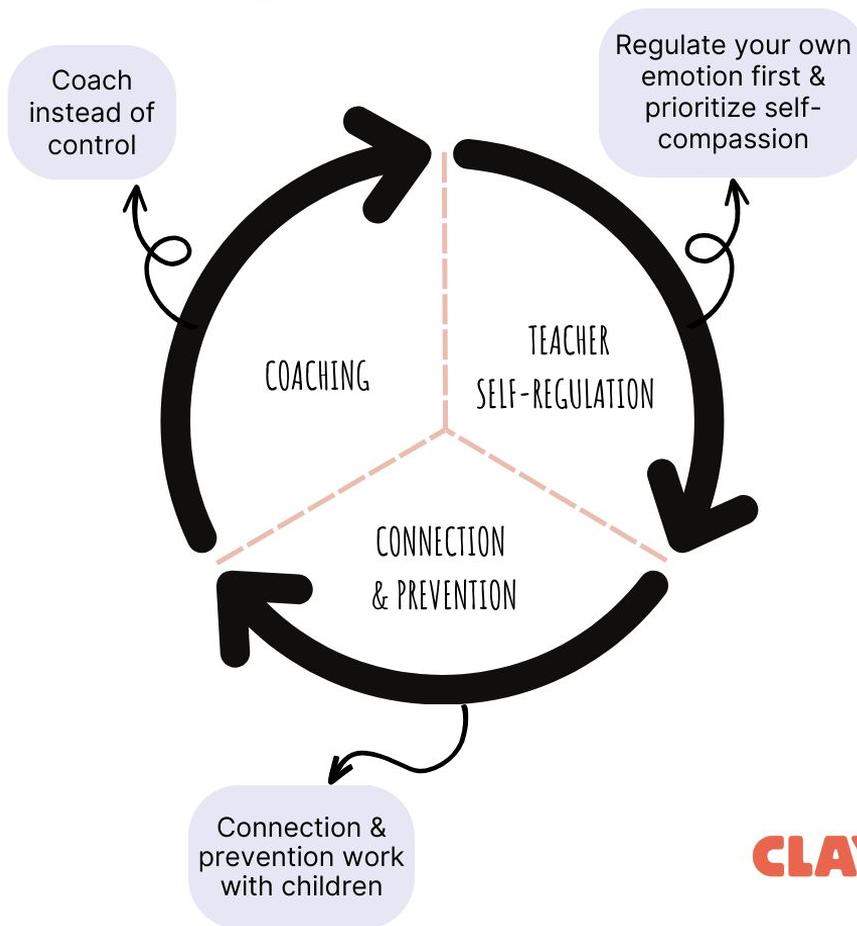
When children are NOT doing well (exhibiting challenging behaviors) they are:

1. **lacking developmental skills and/or**
2. **coping mechanisms**

NOT:** *Children do well when they **want to.

**“The child is not giving me a hard time;
they are having a hard time.”**

Three Components of Peaceful Teaching:



CLAY

#1 Self-Regulation & Self-Compassion

1. Recognize your Triggers
2. Self-care Practices
3. Square Breathing
4. The Pause Button



Recognize your triggers

Hunger

**Lack of
Exercise**

**Endless
Chores**

**Social Media
Notifications**

**Lack of
Sleep**

Clutter

Self-Care Practices

**Prioritize
Sleep**

Single Task

**Self-
Compassion**

**Move my
Body**

Seek Silence

**Practice
Gratitude**

**Square
Breathing**

Ask for Help

Square Breathing

INHALE 1 2 3 4

HOLD 1 2 3 4

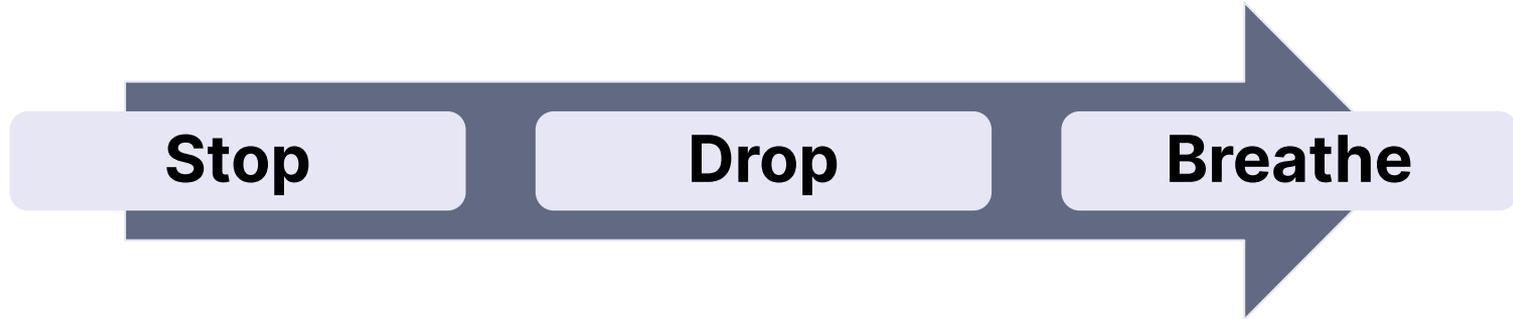


HOLD 1 2 3 4

EXHALE 1 2 3 4

CLAY

In the moment: press the PAUSE button



#2 Prevention & Connection

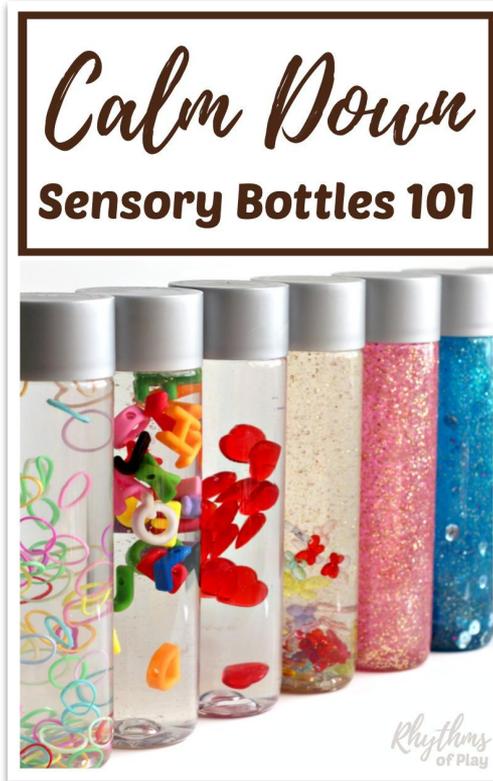
- ❑ **Feeding-the-Meter**
- ❑ **Provide TWO Choices**
- ❑ **Catch GOOD Behavior 5 -1**
- ❑ Time-in Space
- ❑ Cool-down Kit
- ❑ Magic Breathing & Mindfulness
- ❑ Visuals: Feelings, Routine & Rule Charts
- ❑ Ticking Timer
- ❑ Clay Behavior Log
- ❑ Play-It-Out
- ❑ Books on BIG Feelings



Time-In Space



Cool-down Kit



 **CALM DOWN BAGS** 

Calm down bags are small bags or boxes filled with items that can be used to help children calm down and regulate their emotions. They are used by young children who may not have the verbal skills or self-regulation abilities to manage their emotions in a healthy way.

- ♥ **Pick a small bag** or container that the child can easily carry or keep close by.
- ♥ **Fill the bag** with a variety of items that can be used to engage your child's senses.
- ♥ **Encourage the child** to use the items in the bag when they are feeling overwhelmed or worried.
- ♥ **A picture of the child's family** for them to look at when they are feeling overwhelmed
- ♥ **A lovely and/or weighted blanket:** These can provide comfort and a sense of security.
- ♥ **A small mirror:** This can help toddlers learn to recognize and understand their own emotions.
- ♥ **A small toy:** Fidget toys, such as a stress ball, mouthing object, or a fidget spinner can provide a calming outlet for excess energy.
- ♥ **Play-dough or clay:** Squeezing and manipulating play-dough or clay can be a calming and therapeutic activity.

Calm down bags can be a helpful tool for young children to use when they are feeling anxious or overwhelmed as they can provide a sense of control and a way to cope with their big feelings.



Magic Breathing & Mindfulness: Self-Regulation Tools

ROLLER COASTER BREATHING

Deep breathing helps a child regulate and calm down their brain. First practice this exercise with the child during calm and connected moments, then it can be used during times of dysregulation.

In this exercise your pointer finger is a rollercoaster riding up and down the tracks around your other hand!

Breathe in as the coaster rides up each finger.

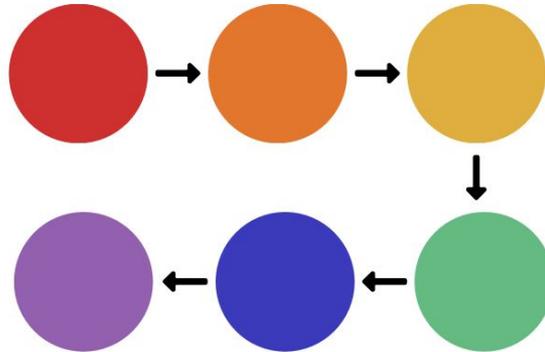
Breathe out as you ride down each finger.



CLAY



Look around you and try to find the colors of the rainbow in order.



SENSORY GROUNDING EXERCISE

When a child is overwhelmed by big feelings this sensory grounding exercise can be used to help them regulate. Help the child name each of the below.

5 THINGS YOU CAN SEE 

4 THINGS YOU CAN FEEL 

3 THINGS YOU CAN HEAR 

2 THINGS YOU CAN SMELL 

1 THING YOU CAN TASTE 

Feelings Charts

CLAY

TODAY I FEEL

This chart helps children recognize, label, and regulate BIG feelings. Please post this on the wall at home as a reminder for everyone to describe how they are feeling throughout the day. Of course, this takes time, practice, and consistency. The long-term goal is for your child to feel confident naming and regulating their emotions.

www.careyclay.com



happy



excited



silly



surprised



shy



embarrassed



sad



worried



angry

Inspired by www.TheLovedChild.net

CLAY

TODAY I FEEL

This feelings chart supports social-emotional learning in young children. Display it in an accessible place either at home or in the classroom. Throughout the day, schedule predictable check-in times to help children learn how to identify, understand, and regulate feelings.



happy



excited



silly



surprised



shy



embarrassed



sad



worried



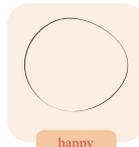
angry

www.careyclay.com

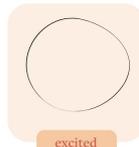
CLAY

TODAY I FEEL

This feelings chart supports social-emotional learning in young children. Together with your child, encourage them to draw faces to match each feeling below. Take turns sharing when and why you experienced each feeling. This fun activity will help your child recognize, label, and regulate big feelings!



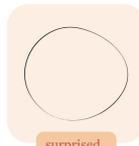
happy



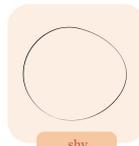
excited



silly



surprised



shy



embarrassed



sad



worried



angry

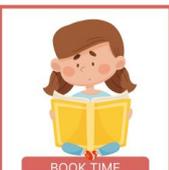
www.careyclay.com

CLAY

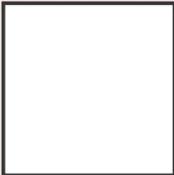
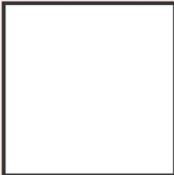
Structure: Routine Charts

CLAY
Daily Routine Chart: Cut-Out Cards

Cut out each box to use on Daily Routine template and attach with double-sided tape.
For extra durability, either laminate or use clear contact paper to protect all pages. Velcro squares may be attached for ease of use.
We encourage you to cut all cards out in advance and save them in a folder or envelope.

 OUTSIDE TIME	 EAT DINNER	 BATH TIME
 CLEAN-UP TIME	 PAJAMA TIME	 BRUSH TEETH
 POTTY TIME	 BOOK TIME	 BED TIME

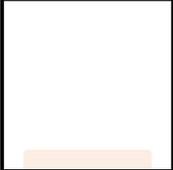
MORNING TIME FOR

CLAY

CLAY Daily Routine Chart: Task Cards www.carebyclay.com

Predictable daily routines provide structure and consistency for young children, supporting healthy social and emotional development. Safely cut out each task card below (or draw your own on empty squares provided). Together with your child, attach the cards to the Morning, Day, or Nighttime Routine sheets! Use laminate, clear contact paper, or velcro stickers for extra durability.

Daily Schedules



Morning Routine Chart

CLAY

_____ 'S MORNING CHECKLIST



Get dressed



Eat breakfast



Brush teeth



Use potty



Put on shoes



Get backpack



Morning Routine Chart

CLAY

_____ 'S MORNING CHECKLIST















Classroom Rule Chart

CLAY
CLASSROOM RULES

Looking Eyes 

 **Listening Ears**

Quite Voices 

 **Helping Hands**

Walking Feet 

Social Scripts

I AM READY TO START SCHOOL!

Social scripts are a great tool to prepare children for an upcoming transition (starting a new school), to explain a sequence of steps in a routine (brushing teeth), and/or to describe how to behave in different social scenarios (sharing toys, asking for help). Together with your child, create your own social script by inserting visuals and simple sentences from the child's point of view.

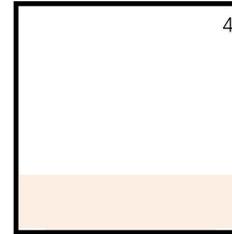
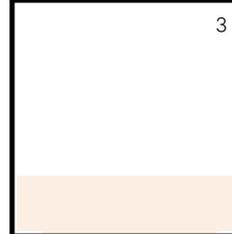
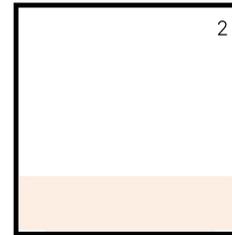
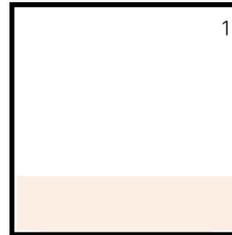


CLAY

www.carebyclay.com

SOCIAL STORY: CREATE YOUR OWN

Social scripts are a great tool to prepare children for an upcoming transition (starting a new school), to explain a sequence of steps in a routine (brushing teeth), and/or to describe how to behave in different social scenarios (sharing toys, asking for help). Together with your child, create your own social script by inserting visuals and simple sentences from the child's point of view.



CLAY

www.carebyclay.com

CLAY

First-Then

First-Then Chart

Young children often find transitions challenging. Our **First-Then Chart** can be very helpful when preparing children for an upcoming transition such as getting off screens, leaving for school, visiting the bathroom, and/or going to bed. Before an upcoming transition, share this handout with your child so they can clearly understand what event will be happening first and then next in their day.

Safely cut out the task cards included in the **Clay Routine Chart** and attach them to the vacant boxes on the following page. Use the example below for reference, and consider laminate, clear contact paper, or velcro stickers for extra durability.



CLAY

First-Then Chart

1

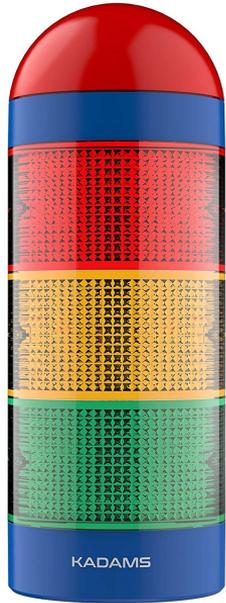
Paste Card Here

2

Paste Card Here

CLAY

Timers



Clay Behavior Log

CLAY™

BEHAVIOR LOG

Behavior to observe: Biting

When did it happen? <small>(at bedtime, lunch)</small>	Where? <small>(school, home)</small>	What was s/he doing before the behavior?	Describe the behavior <small>(had a tantrum, hit etc.)</small>	What did you (or other adult) do next? <small>(yelled, comforted them)</small>	What did child do next? <small>(calmed down, continued to tantrum etc.)</small>
Free play	school	playing w blocks	bit peer	provided words	calmed down

CLAY

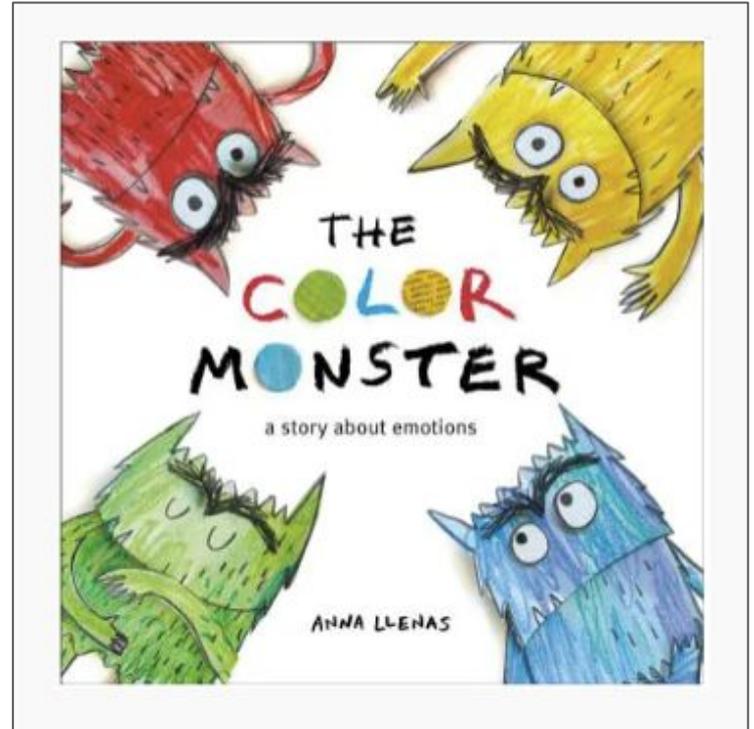
Exploring Books: Big Feelings

CLAY For Families Partners Stories About

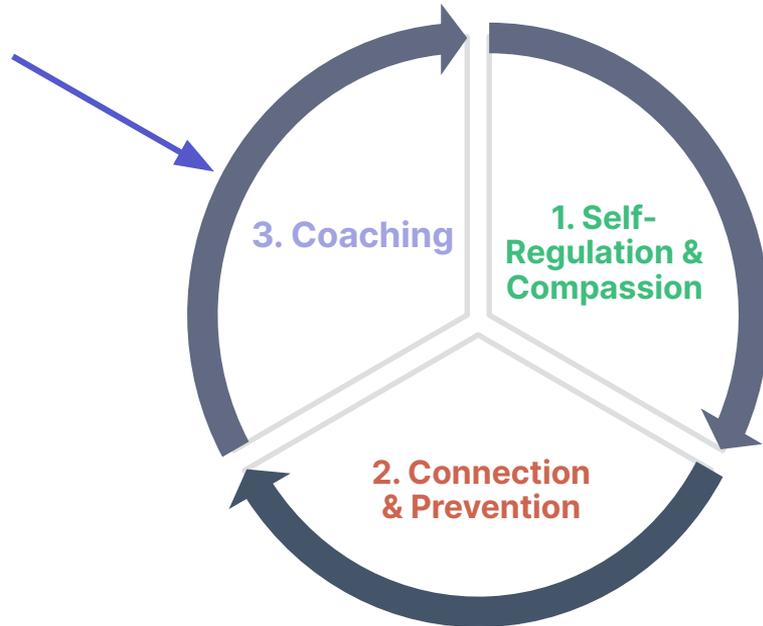
Clay's Recommended Books

Clay's team of expert therapists, coaches, and clinicians share their favorite books to read with your children!

- ▼ Books about Big Feelings/Worries
- ▼ Books about Separation Anxiety
- ▼ Books about New Sibling
- ▼ Books about Nightmares
- ▼ Books about Soothing Sleep
- ▼ Books about Friendship
- ▼ Books about Grief and Loss
- ▼ Books about Pregnancy Loss (for kids)
- ▼ Books about Parenting
- ▼ Wordless Books
- ▼ Mindfulness Books
- ▼ Parenting Books for Anxious Children



Peaceful Teaching in Practice



Coaching: 3-Step Plan

1. Pause
2. Label BIG feelings (close proximity at eye level)
3. Set a CALM clear limit: *NO* & *YES*

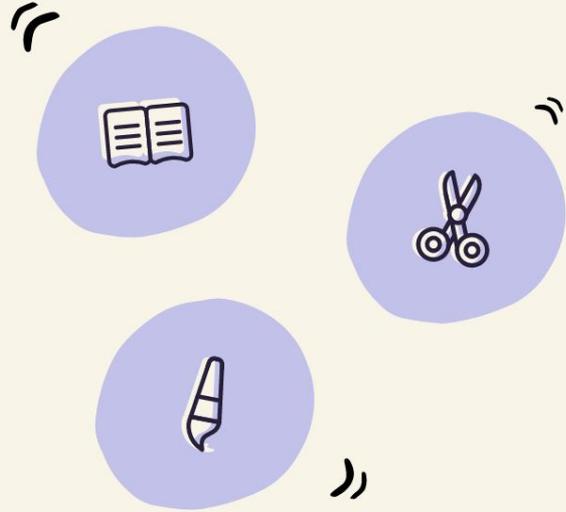


CLAY

TANTRUMS

WHY?

Young children have tantrums or meltdowns because they are still learning how to communicate and regulate their big feelings.



WHAT TO SAY & DO DURING THE TANTRUM:



1

PAUSE:

Take a deep belly breath to calm yourself before helping the child.

2

LABEL THE FEELING:

Get at the child's eye level and say, "You feel really angry right now. I get it. And, I'm here for you."

3

QUIETLY REMAIN CLOSE BY:

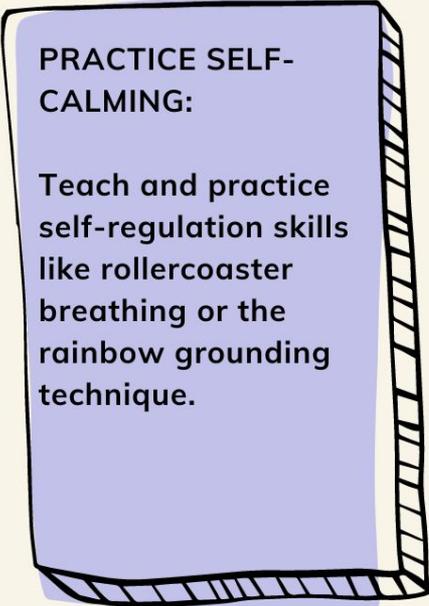
During the tantrum refrain from problem solving.

WHAT TO SAY & DO AFTER THE TANTRUM:



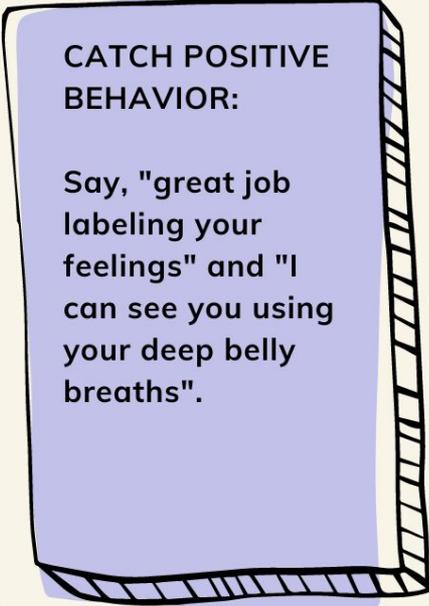
PRACTICE
RECOGNIZING
FEELINGS:

Explore picture books about big feelings and play-it-out with puppets or stuffed animals.



PRACTICE SELF-
CALMING:

Teach and practice self-regulation skills like rollercoaster breathing or the rainbow grounding technique.



CATCH POSITIVE
BEHAVIOR:

Say, "great job labeling your feelings" and "I can see you using your deep belly breaths".

CLAY

FEELINGS CHECK-IN

Throughout the day schedule predictable check-in times to practice identifying feelings and self-regulation tools.



CALM DOWN SPACE

Create a cozy place with pillows, sensory toys, and board books where little ones can go initially with a teacher to calm down.



FOLLOW-UP

1

CONNECT WITH
YOUR DIRECTOR

2

USE A BEHAVIOR LOG
TO EXAMINE
TRIGGERS & HELPFUL
SOLUTIONS

3

SHARE
RECOMMENDATIONS
WITH PARENTS

hello@carebyclay.com

CLAY

Clay Cheat Sheets

CLAY

BITING: WHAT TO DO & WHAT TO SAY

Young children often bite when they feel overwhelmed and do not yet have the skills to express their big feelings like frustration and anger.

- ♡ **Pause:** Take a few deep belly breaths to calm yourself before helping the children.
- ♡ **Safety comes first.** Separate the kids. Keep the child who bit away from the child who was bitten.
- ♡ **Check-in** first with the child who was bitten and model compassionate language: Get down at eye level and say, "Are you okay? Biting hurts! It isn't okay your friend hurt you. Remember, you can say STOP!"
- ♡ **Now talk to the child** who bit, label their feelings, and set a clear limit with a *no* and a *yes* - the behavior you want to see: Get down on eye level and say, "Wow, you were angry! Biting hurts and it isn't okay to hurt our friends. What you can do when you feel angry is say, "I'm angry!"
- ♡ **Offer mouthing toys:** Have a basket of mouthing toys accessible for children who tend to bite. When setting a limit, offer a mouthing toy in place of biting. Say, "it's not okay to bite friends but you can bite your biter necklace.
- ♡ **Screen for developmental delays:** Children with developmental concerns such as a language delays are more likely to use their bodies to communicate their big feelings.

Share these recommendations with parents so they do and say the same thing at home.

CLAY

HURTING BEHAVIORS WHAT TO DO & WHAT TO SAY

Hurting behaviors such as hitting, pushing, kicking, biting, and tackling are common challenging behaviors. Young children don't yet have the self-control or communication skills to express their big feelings and needs.

- ♡ **First,** pause and take a deep belly breath to self calm.
- ♡ **Get at eye level,** with a gentle hand on the child's body, label their BIG feelings, and then set a limit calmly with a "NO" and a "YES" (the behavior you want to see).
- ♡ **Repeat this response consistently.** It could be helpful to add a statement such as "I will not let you hurt your friend - I need to help your body - my job is to keep everyone safe."
- ♡ **During your daily one-on-one special time,** through play with stuffed animals or exploring picture books, revisit past challenging moments. Practice using words to express BIG feelings and self-calming tools like rollercoaster breathing.
- ♡ **Post a Feeling Chart** and schedule predictable times to check-in to help children learn how to recognize, label, and regulate feelings.
- ♡ **Be sure to catch positive behaviors!** Praise positive behavior with a whisper in the ear, wink, gentle touch, or big thumbs up.

Share these recommendations with parents so they do and say the same thing at home.

Partnering with Parents

- ❑ Prepare in advance: Clay screening tools & behavior log
- ❑ Choose a mutually convenient time
- ❑ Start with strengths
- ❑ Describe specific behaviors
- ❑ Seek parents' input
- ❑ Listen actively without interrupting
- ❑ Provide resources
- ❑ Schedule follow-up meeting
- ❑ Celebrate successes



Clay Teacher Tool Box

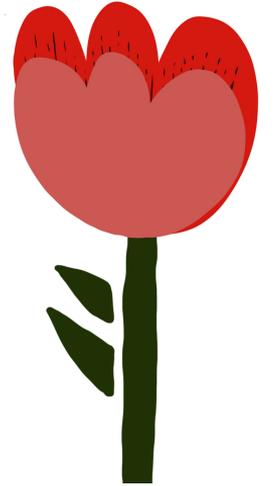


- Tuning into Temperament
 - Up & Downstairs Brain
 - Behavior is Communication
 - “Children Do Well When They Can”
 - Three Components of Peaceful Teaching:
 1. Self-Compassion & Regulation
 2. Preventive Measures & Creating Connections
 3. Coaching
- ❑ Behavior Log
 - ❑ Catch Good Behavior 5-1
 - ❑ Creating together & posting visuals (Feelings)
 - ❑ Transitions with a Timer
 - ❑ Magic Breathing & Mindfulness
 - ❑ Time-In Space
 - ❑ Calm Down Box
 - ❑ Play-it-Out
 - ❑ Exploring BIG Feeling Books
 - ❑ 2 Choices
 - ❑ Proximity & Eye level
 - ❑ Acknowledge big feelings while setting limits
 - ❑ “Yes” with a “No”

THANK YOU!

Resources
+
Questions

hello@carebyclay.com



CLAY