Focus Statement

Students work with the substrands of the social-emotional development domain to explore recommended interactions and strategies that support social-emotional development and learning in young children.

Before You Start

There are a large number of interactions and strategies listed in Chapter 3 of the California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1 (PCF, V1) that support social-emotional development. They are presented in the strands and substrands of the social-emotional development domain. For each of the 12 substrands, there are vignettes and teachable moments followed by particular interactions and strategies that are evident in that vignette or could be applied in it. The active learning suggested in this key topic is based on focusing on these vignettes, becoming familiar with the interactions and strategies that relate to that vignette, and then asking students, where appropriate, to recognize the interactions and strategies in their current practice or courses. Following that, observations are suggested where they might see these in action or where they might see environments that would encourage these interactions and strategies. It would be helpful, but not necessary, if they have been through the active learning for the key topic of environments and materials.

For this key topic, the focus is to learn about and recognize the suggested interactions and strategies in this domain of PCF, V1 so that they can be used as resources when students are, or continue to be, active practitioners.

Students will be working within the 12 substrands of the social-emotional development domain’s three strands. Looking at the summary of strands and substrands for the social-emotional development domain on page 44 of the PCF, V1 might help you decide how to assign these to pairs or teams of students. Based on the number of students you are working with, you might assign one substrand per student or per pair or use whatever configuration will work. The number of interactions and strategies per strand and substrand are shown in Table 1.
Table 1. Total number of vignettes, interactions, and strategies for the social-emotional development domain by strand and substrand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strands and substrands</th>
<th>Number of vignettes</th>
<th>Number of interactions &amp; strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strand: Self</strong> (PCF, V1, pp. 45-61)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.0 Self-Awareness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.0 Self-Regulation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.0 Social and Emotional Understanding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Empathy and Caring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 Initiative in Learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strand: Social Interaction</strong> (PCF, V1, pp. 62-77)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.0 Interaction with Familiar Adults</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Interactions with Peers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Group Participation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Cooperation and Responsibility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strand: Relationships</strong> (PCF, V1, pp. 78-86)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.0 Attachments to Parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Close Relationships with Teachers and Caregivers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Friendships</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note to Faculty: A full list of the interactions and strategies is on pages 75-77 at the end of this key topic.
Information Delivery

The following content from the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1* (PCF, V1) is referenced in this key topic and may be delivered through lectures and/or assigned readings.

Familiarize students with the strands in this domain of the PCF, V1:

- Summary of strands and substrands (p. 44)
- Self strand (p. 45)
- Social Interaction strand (p. 62)
- Relationship strand (p. 78)

Active Learning

Getting it started

All of this segment could be done as a written assignment and brought to class for discussion.

Ask students to find the substrand(s) assigned to them. Ask them to read the vignettes and the teachable moments. Then ask them to read the interactions and strategies that follow that vignette.

As they do that, ask them to think about these questions:

- Which interactions or strategies are seen in the vignette?
- How?
- Which are not? How could they be?

Keeping it going

Label a sheet of chart paper for each substrand and tape them up around the classroom. Ask students to write out the interactions and strategies for their substrand on half-sheets of paper, using one half sheet for each of the strategies or interactions. These can be prepared prior to or during class. Then ask students to attach their half-sheets to the appropriate substrand label.

Next suggest that students take paper and pencil with them and walk around to view what is in each substrand. Ask them to note their thoughts about these questions:
• Is there anything that stands out about any of the substrands?

• Why do some substrands have more interactions and strategies than others?

• Are there some interactions and strategies that appear in more than one substrand? What are they?

After students have completed this walk-about, provide a share-back so that students can discuss their responses to the questions.

Taking it further
If students have access to early care and education programs and can obtain permission to observe through several segments of the schedule, ask them to do an observation of an early care and education setting. Doing this in pairs would maximize students' opportunities to engage in reflective dialogue with one another and compare observations. It will also add interest to the follow-up discussion if they can observe in more than one setting.

Ask students to prepare responses to the following questions as a written assignment or for class discussion or both. Here it might be a good idea to assign new substrands to students or have them observe an entire strand in pairs. In this way, they will gain broader familiarity with the interactions and strategies in the domain. Following this key topic, a handout listing the interactions and strategies is provided.

Using their assigned interactions and strategies, ask students to answer the following questions:

• What examples did you see?

• Which examples were seen that indicated intentional and planned activities or environmental arrangements?

• Which examples were seen as teachable moments—where the teacher was responding to something that a child was doing or saying or that was emerging in play or group?

Make sure that students have a chance to observe for long enough (at least an hour) and in enough areas of a classroom that they will have chances to observe a number of interactions.
and strategies. They will most likely not see everything on their list.

**Putting it together**
Set aside time for discussion when the students have completed their observations. The following questions can be addressed in small groups or with the whole class, again depending on the size of the class.

- In one word or a two-word phrase, name what kind of thoughts or feelings this observation elicited.

Note to faculty: You might need to remind students that this question is not intended to elicit criticism or judgment of what they saw but provide an opportunity to just describe how they felt.

- What were some examples that stood out for you?
- What was hard to find examples of?
- Were there some interactions and strategies that occurred frequently?
- Were there opportunities for some interactions and strategies to be used where they were not used?
- Which strategies and interactions would be hard or not possible to observe in a single observation?
- Did you see examples where a teacher tailored an interaction or strategy for a child who is an English learner?
- Were there specific strategies to support children’s cultural and language communities?

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**Reflection**
Ask students to write responses to the following questions:

- What are three main concepts that you learned from doing these exercises?
- How will these influence your work in early care and education?
- What else would you like to know about how to support children in their social-emotional development?
• What ideas do you have about where or how you might learn more about how to support children’s social-emotional development?

**Deeper Understanding**

The following exercise is a written assignment that will challenge students to think critically about the interactions and strategies that support social-emotional development that are in the PCF, V1. There are several books and/or papers available in the field that describe interactions and strategies for supporting social-emotional development. For example, *The Intentional Teacher* (Epstein 2007) has a chapter devoted to “Social Skills and Understanding.” Have students prepare responses to the following questions:

• How do the interactions and strategies in their chosen book or paper compare with the interactions and strategies suggested in the social-emotional development domain in the PCF, V1?

• Where are they similar? Different?

• Are there any differences indicated in underlying philosophy or guiding principles?
Social-Emotional Development
Interactions and Strategies

SELF
Self-Awareness
1. Designate learning areas to help children select preferred sites for exploration
2. Observe individual children attentively
3. Incorporate artwork and play materials that reflect children’s home culture
4. Describe aloud for children observations of what do and express
5. Compare aloud children’s past and present abilities
6. Give specific feedback to children about their efforts
7. Use planned activities and children’s own observations to draw attention to people’s similarities and differences, including preferences and feelings
8. Set up opportunities to practice problem solving with children who have not yet developed those skills

Self-Regulation
1. Use appropriately stimulating aesthetic elements
2. Eliminate or reduce background noise
3. Observe individual children closely
4. Model behavior and attitudes toward others
5. Maintain developmentally appropriate expectations for preschool children’s behavior
6. Guide and coach children’s behavior
7. Reinforce children’s good choices and link their actions to positive outcomes
8. Provide consistent but flexible daily routine
9. Alternate between active and quiet activities
10. Time group experiences to match children’s developing attention spans, social skills and self-control
11. Introduce children to relaxation exercises
12. Prepare ‘private’ spaces for children
13. Plan developmentally appropriate transitions
14. Play games with rules

Social and Emotional Understanding
1. Observe the levels of social and emotional understanding that children already have
2. Label the emotions people express and communicate with children about what may be provoking those feelings
3. Generalize from specific examples to broader realities
4. Discuss characteristics openly
5. Make use of the experiences and emotions of characters in stories

Empathy and Caring
1. Model behavior and attitudes toward others
2. Label children’s feelings
3. Prompt and guide desired behavior
4. Acknowledge and express appreciation for children’ empathic responses
5. Participate in and elaborate on children’s pretend play scripts that include rescue and caring themes
6. Read and tell stories that include characters in distress as well as the caring responses of others
7. Encourage empathy and caring for the natural world, including plants and animals

Initiative in Learning
1. Provide ample space, use child-sized shelves and furnishings, and adapt materials to make all learning areas and activities accessible
2. Make use of adaptive tools and play materials to help the autonomous exploration of children with special needs.
3. Observe individual children while they pursue their own activities
4. Model curiosity and enthusiasm when you learn new things
Social-Emotional Development
Interactions and Strategies (cont.)

5. Encourage children to make activity choices based on their own interests
6. Engage in play and exploration with children
7. Provide ample time for free exploration
8. Help children generate ideas for solving problems
9. Model persistence during challenging tasks
10. Document and display children’s work
11. Periodically reassess the school environment

Social Interactions
Interactions With Familiar Adults
1. Get to know each child by observing
2. Be at the child’s level as much as possible
3. Initiate conversations with children about their activities and experiences
4. Communicate observations, verbally or through other means
5. Provide specific feedback to children about their efforts
6. Show respect for cultural differences
7. Encourage children to see familiar adults as resources

Interactions With Peers
1. Observe the level of social interaction skills that each child brings to the group
2. Model effective and respectful interaction
3. Verbalize interactions
4. Incorporate play materials that promote and encourage peer play
5. Suggest extensions for children’s cooperative play
6. Coach young children, step by step, as they learn conflict resolution skills
7. Generalize from actions to principles
8. Use books, puppet stories, and group discussions
9. Plan for project work

Group Participation
1. Model cooperative behavior and attitudes
2. Plan large group gatherings with flexibility
3. Guide and coach children’s behavior
4. Comment on children’s actions
5. Rehearse and prompt desired responses
6. Acknowledge positive choices
7. Generalize from action to principle
8. Build a sense of community through planned group experiences
9. Arrange large group meeting spaces to enhance planned activities
10. Structure small group activity areas to maximize focus
11. Think through group size and composition
12. Prepare materials ahead of time
13. Incorporate non-verbal prompts
14. Use strategies and tools to address individual needs

Cooperation and Responsibility
1. Develop a warm and secure relationship with each child
2. Ensure that adult expectations for children’s behavior are developmentally appropriate
3. Move beyond rules to expectations to emphasize guiding principles or values
4. Children can participate in creating examples of school or classroom expectations
5. Focus on building a sense of classroom community
6. Refer children to each other for assistance
7. Rehearse and prompt desired actions, especially for transition times
Social-Emotional Development
Interactions and Strategies (cont.)

Relationships
Attachments to Parents
1. Establish a warm and collaborative relationship with each child’s family
2. Talk with children regularly about their families
3. Create predictable arrival and departure routines
4. Communicate frequently with family members

Close relationships with teachers and caregivers
1. Build and maintain a pattern of warm, nurturing interactions
2. Demonstrate in the child’s presence a friendly, cooperative, and respectful relationship with the child’s family
3. Encourage child-adult collaboration in learning

Friendships
1. Plan a program that encourages child choice of activities and associations
2. Use ongoing observations to inform your social structuring of experiences
3. Use books, puppet plays and group discussions to identify and reinforce friendship skills
4. Communicate with children’s families about their preschool friendships