

# Preschool Special Education

March 2024

Issue 7

## What We Worked On in February

### CALMING STRATEGY: HOT COCOA BREATHING



1. Pretend to hold a hot cup of cocoa in your hands
2. Inhale to smell the rich chocolate
3. Blow slowly to cool it down
4. Repeat as many times as desired
5. “drink” your cocoa, imagining the warmth spreading from your throat to your belly
6. hum “mmmm” in satisfaction (humming activates vagus nerve)

## Coming Up...

**March 25—29:** Parent-Teacher Conferences, no school/sessions for preschoolers. If your child is NOT in ECEAP in the Everett School district, use [this link](#) to sign up for a session. If we have or will have an IEP meeting within a month, no conference is required.

**April 1—5:** Spring Break, no school

**May 27—**Memorial Day, no school

## Executive Function

Emotional control is the ability to manage emotions in a healthy way and control our emotions in order to achieve a goal or complete a task. Some activities that you can do with your child or student that can help develop this skill include practicing deep breathing exercises, Naming and recognizing how different emotions feel in the body, and creating/gathering tools such as sensory bottles and weighted blankets to use when a child is experiencing heightened or unpleasant emotions. These tools can be individualized to each child. For example, one child may like to do a puzzle to self regulate after a heightened emotion while another student may become frustrated by the mental load of such an activity and may prefer another tool such as coloring or squeezing something soft.

## Social Emotional Development

In Mona Delahooke’s book Brain-Body Parenting, she gives sound advice when supporting our children’s social and emotional needs during difficult moments. She says, “If you are having a difficult parenting moment, pause before you make a decision about what to do next. When we stop and observe, it allows us time to consider what might be underlying what we see. For example is your child in a developmental stage, such as toddlers being little scientists who are still learning how to shift away from a self-directed activity? After you Stop and Observe, figure out if your child is having a stress reaction or if they are pushing limits. If it’s a stress reaction, go to comfort and warmth while maintaining your parental role, values and limit-setting. Remember that their body is in a bottom-up stress response and it’s not a good time to teach or punish. It’s a time to stabilize their body’s budget through your interactions first. If they’re not in a stress reaction, then calmly and lovingly set the boundary, or teach the lesson you want to impart.

Remember, we can be in charge but still warmly connected and attuned at the same time.”

## Special Education: Inclusion in Preschool—How to Advocate

During IEP meetings, you play an essential role as a team member to make decisions for your child, including the setting where special education services are provided. During that time, if you feel that your child needs to be in a classroom with typically developing peers, make that known repeatedly and clearly. If there is no resolution at the close of the IEP meeting, you can schedule another meeting and request a director of special services to attend. You can write a letter to the district director of special services, the superintendent and you can even file a community complaint to the state if the district fails to provide the services in the “least restrictive environment”. Here is a link to the [site to file a community complaint](#) and a link to the [US Dept of Education policy on inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs](#).