



The Stress Test: Expand Your Pedagogical Leadership with Specific Strategies to Support Adult Capabilities and Children's Emotional and Social Development

Master List of Administrator and Leaders Strategies to Support Adult Capabilities and Children's Emotional and Social Development

Adult Capabilities: Planning, Focus, Self-Control, Awareness, and Flexibility

Strategy 1: Create Predictable Environments

For Children

- Create a predictable environment for children (*planning*)
- Modify schedules, staffing, and the physical environment as needed for children who are experiencing stress (*flexibility*).
- Monitor the emotional tone of classrooms (*awareness, focus*).
- Assess predictability of children's daily schedules, teacher staffing, and the physical environment (*planning, awareness*)

For Teachers and Staff

- Assess the predictability of children's schedule; modify as needed.
- Focus your availability and additional staffing on arrival and/or departure (*planning*).
- Create reliable systems of communication between staff (*awareness*).
- Assess predictability of teachers and staff environments.
- Implement predictable systems for professional development and for providing feedback that is responsive to individual need and unexpected challenges (*awareness, flexibility*).

For Families

- Make your own availability clear.
- Create reliable systems of communication between teachers, staff, and families.
- Focus your availability and additional staffing on stressful times during the day such as arrival and/or departure times (*focus, planning, flexibility, and self-control*)

For Administrators and Leaders

- Maintain a comfortable, predictable space, with a door that closes, that allow you to work and talk privately with teachers, staff, and families, and to find a quiet moment when you need one (*planning, awareness*).
- Make your own availability clear.
- Assess predictability of teacher and staff physical environments.
- Develop systems for managing unexpected challenges, such as absenteeism and emergencies.
- Develop or strengthen plans to accommodate children who are experiencing stress (*flexibility, awareness*)
- **Remember that when leaders take care of themselves, they set the tone for the organization. Your self-care gives implicit permission for others to take care of themselves** (*focus*).

Strategy 2: Respond Promptly to Signs of Stress

In Children

- Support staff so that they can provide an immediate response to distress.
- Provide professional development to help teachers and staff cope with normal and challenging behaviors.
- Develop or strengthen program level policies and procedures to guide responses to children stress (*planning, focus*).



In Families

- Design and implement reliable two-way communication strategies between families and your program.
- Develop program-level policies and procedures that help teachers and staff support families when stressful situations arise.
- Build connections with community resources so you can provide referrals to needed services (*planning, focus, self-control*).

In Teachers

- Use emotional language with and around staff and teachers to build their emotions language vocabulary (*awareness*).
- Build flexibility into your policies that allow you to individualize responses to individual teachers.
- Assess staffing resources to make sure teachers and other staff are adequately supported.
- Provide professional development to help teachers build their own skills in managing stress (*planning, focus*).

In Administrators and Leaders

- Be aware of your own emotional health.
- Lean on your routine—plan time and save energy for the most challenging parts of your day.
- Schedule time for your own stress management and reduction (*awareness, planning, focus, flexibility*).

Strategy 3: Spend your time supporting relationship-building.

For Children

- Add relationship-building time to your classroom schedule and embed emotional and social skills practice in curriculum plans.
- Consider using Social Emotional Tool Time (SET) Time) as a regular strategy (*planning, focus*).
- Make focusing on relationships the FIRST intervention when challenging behaviors arise (*awareness*).

For Families

- Provide opportunities for families and teachers to get to know each other (*awareness, focus, planning*).
- Provide opportunities for staff, families, and teachers to get together.
- Resource families by sharing information related to child growth and development and how children learn (*planning*).

For Teachers and Staff

- Be mindful when you are with teachers – give them your full attention. (*focus, self-control*)
- Provide opportunities for teachers and staff to collaborate with each other and support each other's work (*awareness, planning*).
- Offer opportunities to coach each other and practice new skills (*planning, focus, awareness, flexibility*).

For Administrators and Leaders

- Be fully present and mindful when you are with children, families, teachers, and other staff (*self-control*).
- Spend time observing in classroom outside of evaluation observations,
- Consider what relationships in your life are sustaining and put time and energy into the ones who fill your cup! (*awareness*)

Reference: *Building Core Capabilities*
from The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard

