PUPPETS AS TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN’S LEARNING

GOALS FOR TODAY
To learn specific ideas and strategies for using “child” puppets as routine role-play partners for allowing children to solve social dilemmas.

- Should we use child puppets?
  - Is using child puppets evidence-based?
  - What outcomes do we hope to achieve?
- Using child puppets: How to put into practice
  - Before the puppet lesson
  - During the lesson
  - After the lesson

EXPERIENCE/KNOWLEDGE SUPPORT
- Young children do not always readily understand others perspectives (J. Piaget)
- Children prefer to learn about content that directly affects them (J. Piaget)
- Children learn from peer interactions (Vygotsky)
- Children learn better when actively engaged (R. A. McWilliams)
- An effective strategy for recruiting children’s active engagement is to follow their lead (S. F. Warren)

RESEARCH EVIDENCE FOR PUPPETS
- Puppets as instructional tool have been shown to be effective in enhancing child interest and engagement (Gronna, Serna, Kennedy, & Prater, 1999; Shepherd & Koberstein, 1989; Silvers, Williamson, & Water, 1985; Smart & Maguire, 1986; Turner, 2003; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003.)
- Puppets as effective technique for modeling a variety of age appropriate social-emotional concepts (Matson et al., 1995; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003.)
- Puppets effective strategy for some children to more likely talk about sensitive issues with a puppet than with adults (Turner, 2003)
- Kids on the Block puppets effective in increasing children’s knowledge and acceptance of peers with disabilities (Smart & Maguire, 1986)
- Puppets have been show effective to teach sharing behavior (Shepherd & Koberstein, 1989)
- Puppets using sociodramatic scripts effective in teaching appropriate social communicative skills to a preschool child with significant visual impairment (Gronna et al., 1999)

Making an Evidence-based Decision: About Whether to Use “Persona” Puppets

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Research Evidence</th>
<th>Policy Evidence</th>
<th>Experience Evidence</th>
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| Persona puppets use has been shown to increase interest and sustain children’s attention, and also reinforce key concepts and newly acquired skills through demonstrations, role-playing solutions, and fantasy play. | Kansas Early Learning Standards provide strong support for the critical role of social competence in children’s readiness for school.  
-DEC recommended practices and NAEYC Recommended Practices | Information we have about children’s learning and active engagement tells us that persona puppets use will likely be an effective strategy for promoting children’s understanding of emotional literacy and of social concepts |

Our decision based on an evidenced based decision making process says YES – but as always we should carefully evaluate its impact in our specific contexts.
WHY SHOULD YOU USE PUPPETS?
Puppets can...
• Increase children’s engagement
• Model social and emotional skills
• Model emotional vocabulary
• Encourage imitation of appropriate friendship skills
• Demonstrate how to accept responsibility for inappropriate choices
• Demonstrate how to problem solve social dilemmas

STRATEGIES FOR INCLUDING THE PUPPET AS A FRIEND
• Have the puppet join all class activities
• Dress puppet appropriately
• Change puppet’s clothes everyday
• Have backpack hook or cubby for the puppet
• Teaching children how to treat puppet with respect

WHY SHOULD YOU USE PUPPETS?

EMOTIONAL LITERACY OUTCOMES

1. Read Emotions of Self & Others
2. Interpret Cause and Purpose of Emotions
3. Clarify Interpersonal Goals
4. Develop Solutions
5. Make and Act on Decisions

HOW DO YOU PLAN A PUPPET LESSON?
IDENTIFY DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. Define the problem
2. Generate alternative solutions
3. Evaluate proposed solutions
4. Agree on a solution
5. Follow through to determine if the chosen solution is successful

PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS

REINFORCING CHILDREN’S RESPONSE

Reflect children’s comments back and/or refine them
“Maybe he could get some rest.”
“Neither could I.”
“Maybe we could work a little better if you get some rest!”
CLOSURE

- Use puppet to review the lesson
- Remind children what to do next time they encounter a similar problem
- Allow children to teach the puppet how to use skills presented

PUPPET LESSON: BEGINNING TO END

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>During</th>
<th>At the End</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Use puppet to review the lesson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make the puppet a friend and member of the classroom</td>
<td>Define the problem</td>
<td>Remind children what to do next time they encounter a similar problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use classroom social dilemmas to identify outcomes</td>
<td>Generate alternative solutions</td>
<td>Allow children to teach puppet how to use skills presented</td>
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<td>Use teachable moments to identify outcomes</td>
<td>Evaluate proposed solutions</td>
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<td>Reinforce previous emotional literacy lessons</td>
<td>Agree on a solution</td>
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<td>Determine if the chosen solution is successful</td>
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SUGGESTED READING:


