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Webinar Presents:

THE SEL BLUEPRINT: PRACTICAL INTERVENTIONS FOR NURTURING YOUNG MINDS



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Meet the Speakers



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Agenda



INTRO & OVERVIEW OF USING SEL CORE COMPONENTS
WHEN COUNSELING YOUNG CHILDREN



CYB MFLC WORK WITH YOUNG CHILDREN



IMPLEMENTING SIGN LANGUAGE INTO COUNSELING
INTERVENTIONS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY SEL



THE ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL
CLIMATE AND SEL



Q&A



Intro & Overview of Using SEL Core Components when Counseling Young Children

PAUL TARABORELLI,
Child and Youth Behavioral Director,
Military & Family Life Counseling Program (MFLC),
Magellan Federal



Five core social emotional goals to focus on:

1. Self-Awareness
2. Self-Management
3. Social Awareness
4. Relationship Skills
5. Responsible Decision Making



Importance of integrating the 5 core SEL goals into counseling and consultation work with young children

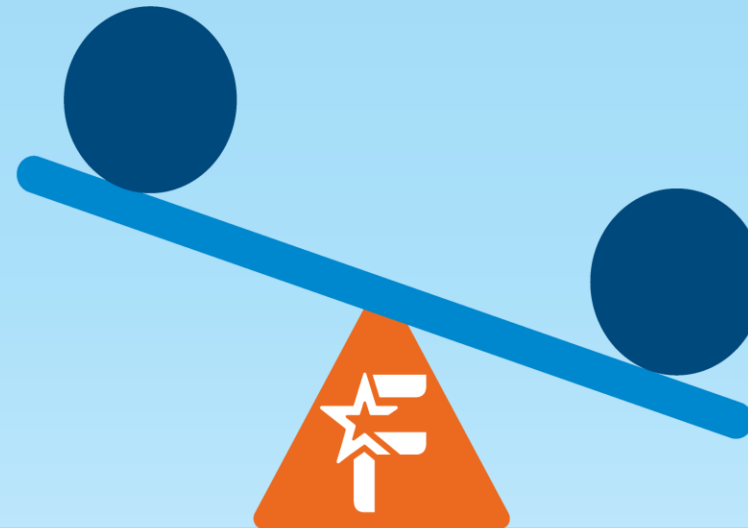
- Can help build trust and self esteem
- Create a safe space to explore feelings and start building emotional intelligence
- Offer choice within your interventions
- Promote with adults the importance of developing some type of basic predictability within a young child's life.



The Importance of Positive Childhood Experiences (PCH)



ACES
Adverse Childhood
Experiences (ACEs)



PCHS
Positive Childhood
Experiences (PCHs)

CYB MFLC Work with Young Children

MELINDA GILL

Regional Supervisor,
Military & Family Life Counseling Program (MFLC), Magellan Federal



MFLC Providers are Licensed to Practice Independently

Tools of the Program: Referrals, Coaching, Supporting, Consulting, Individual Sessions



- MFLCs supplement the natural and community supports families use every day: Friends and colleagues, Neighbors, Extended Family, Self-Help or Community Groups.
- MFLCs are specialists in linking families with Military Community Support Programs



MFLCs support the family in meeting their goal: Social Emotional Learning



Implementing Sign Language Into Counseling Interventions to Promote Healthy SEL

LISA JENNINGS

Counselor,

Military & Family Life Counseling Program (MFLC), Magellan Federal



Empowering Connection:

How Baby Sign Language Supports Social-Emotional Learning for young children



Evidence-Based Insights:

BSL's Role In Communication And Social-Emotional Learning

Research Findings

- **Symbolic skills (words and gestures) predicted social skills development in children.**

Vygotsky's Social Development Theory:

- **Social Interaction** is central to early childhood development. BSL promotes frequent, meaningful interactions between child and caregiver, aligning with Vygotsky's emphasis on guided learning through social exchanges.
- **Building Learning Opportunities:** BSL allows caregivers to scaffold language development by interpreting the child's gestures and expanding on their intent, providing support just beyond the child's current abilities.

Social Interaction

BSL encourages shared attention and bonding between child and caregiver.



More Knowledgeable Other (MKO)

Caregivers guide the child's learning by responding to signs and modeling language.

Zone for Learning Opportunities

BSL helps scaffold language by interpreting signs and expanding on the child's intent.



Bridges Communication Gaps:

- Early expression
- Empowerment

Promotes Social-Emotional Development:

- Reduces frustration
- Builds confidence

Supports Language Development:

- Prepares for verbal language
- Enhances understanding

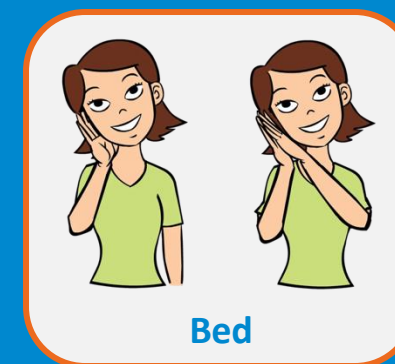
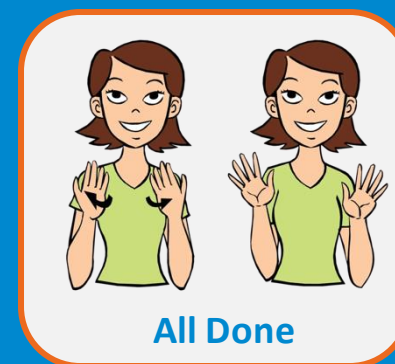
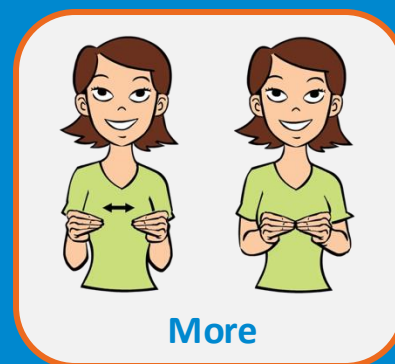
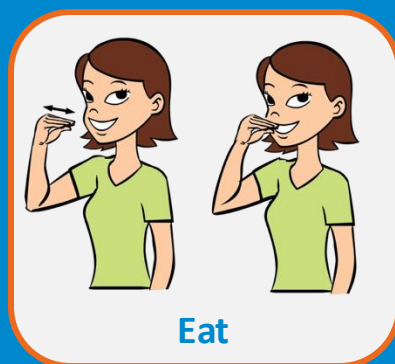
Caregiver-Child Connections:

- Supports emotional regulation and language development
- Provides children with socially appropriate ways to express needs
- Strengthens parent–child relationships and reduces problem behaviors

Babies Are Engaged from the Start

Even before they speak, babies are observing, learning, and trying to connect. BSL opens the door for babies to **share their world as early as 4 months**. As children get older, more advanced BSL can help them connect to books, stories, songs, nature and the world around them!

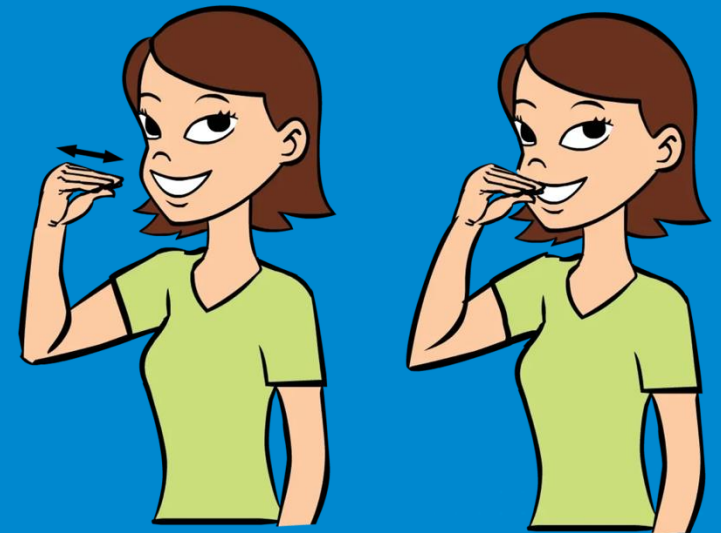
Signs to Start BSL Practice



Sample Signs to Start With: EAT

Helpful Tips for Teaching the Sign “Eat”

- **Go Beyond Mealtime**
 - Use the sign for more than just food—signal hunger, describe others eating (like a caregiver or pet), or support older children’s abstract thinking.
- **Reinforce with Repetition**
 - Pair the sign with phrases like:
“Are you ready to eat?”
“Look, the dog is eating!”
- **Encourage Early Attempts**
 - Babies might pat their mouth, face, or put a hand in their mouth—these are valid early signs and should be encouraged!



Sample Signs to Start With: MORE

Helpful Tips for Teaching the Sign “More”

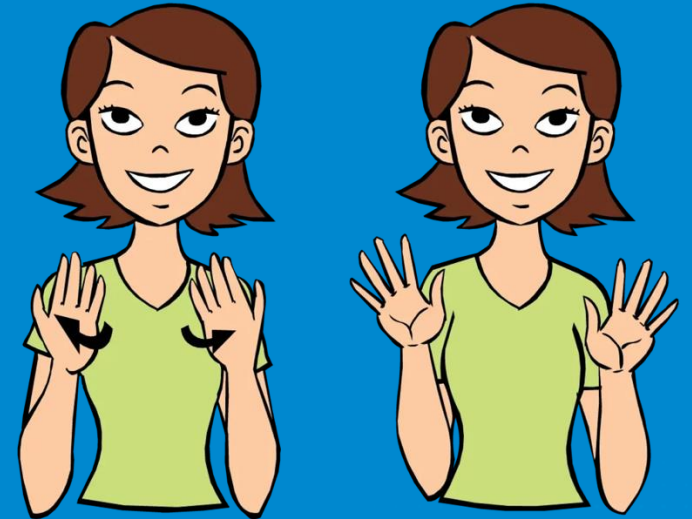
- **Go Beyond Mealtime:**
 - While “more” is often first used with food, expand its meaning by signing during songs, stories, and playtime to teach a variety of uses.
- **Build Understanding Through Repetition:**
 - Use the word and sign together consistently: “Do you want more blocks?” “Let’s sing one more time!”
- **Watch for Early Attempts:**
 - Babies may clap or bang fists together as they learn—these are valid early efforts and should be encouraged!



Sample Signs to Start With: ALL DONE

Helpful Tips for Teaching the Sign “All Done”

- **Go Beyond Mealtime**
 - Use “ALL DONE” to signal the end of activities, not just meals (e.g., getting out of the car seat, finishing bath, or completing art time).
 - Encourages the child to express when they’re finished, preventing tantrums and frustration.
 - Can also represent “finished” or “the end” (book, program, etc.).
- **Reinforce with Repetition**
 - Pair the sign with consistent phrases: “Are you all done?” “Bathtime is all done!”
- **Encourage Early Attempts**
 - Babies may wave, flap, or sweep their hands side to side—these are valid early attempts and help support their practice!



Sample Signs to Start With: BED

Helpful Tips for Teaching the Sign “Bed”

- **Go Beyond Naptime or Bedtime**
 - Use “BED” to help children signal sleepiness or feeling tired, not just when it’s time to sleep.
 - Helps them connect the feeling of tiredness with a way to communicate it.
 - Talk about others sleeping (e.g., a pet, book character) to build abstract thinking in older children.
- **Reinforce with Repetition**
 - Pair the sign with familiar phrases like:
“Are you feeling sleepy or tired?”
“Look, the baby in the book is sleeping!”
- **Encourage Early Attempts**
 - Look for early gestures like holding hands together by the head or resting the head on hands or chin—these are valid early signs and should be encouraged and celebrated.



Communication is a foundation for social interactions and learning. Signing is more than vocabulary — it's about **connection and understanding**. BSL helps build trust, reduces frustration, and strengthens the bond between child and caregiver.

Focus on Four: Key Strategies for Teaching BSL



Fun – Keep it Playful and Relaxed

- Make signing an enjoyable part of your daily routine. Use songs, games, and silly moments to introduce signs. When it's fun, children are more likely to stay engaged and want to imitate you.



Repetition – Sign Often and in Context

- Consistency is key! Use signs during regular routines like meals, diaper changes, and playtime. The more often a child sees a sign used meaningfully, the quicker they'll understand and start using it themselves.



Encouragement – Celebrate All Attempts

- Whether it's a perfect sign or a creative version, celebrate every effort! Positive reinforcement builds confidence and motivates children to keep trying and communicating.



Expansion – Grow with Their Interests and Skills

- Start with basic signs, then introduce new ones as your child's understanding and curiosity grow. Follow their lead—if they love animals, teach signs like “dog,” “cat,” or “bird” to keep the learning relevant and exciting. More advanced signs can be used with interactive activities (singing, reading, etc.)

Resources for Families, Caregivers & Practitioners

There are many free and accessible resources available to support the use of American Sign Language (ASL) and Baby Sign Language (BSL). From online dictionaries and video tutorials to downloadable guides, these tools can help families, caregivers, and practitioners feel more confident as they get started. Whether you're introducing signs at home or in a professional setting, these resources make it easier to support early communication and meaningful connection with young children.


Books:

- Baby Sign Language Made Easy by Lane Rebelo
- Baby Sign Language Songs & Games: 65 Fun Activities for Easy Everyday Learning by Lane Rebelo

Websites:

- <https://www.handspeak.com/>
- <https://tinysigns.com/books/>



 **Evidence-Based Practice** BSL supports social-emotional learning (SEL) and cognitive development in young children.



Connections & Conversations Encourages meaningful, responsive interactions between children and caregivers.



Focus on Four

Fun – Keep it playful

Repetition – Sign often, in context

Encouragement – Celebrate all efforts

Expansion – Grow vocabulary with the child's interests



Free & Accessible Resources - Videos, dictionaries, and guides are available to help families and professionals get started confidently.

The Role of Environmental and Social-Emotional Climate and SEL

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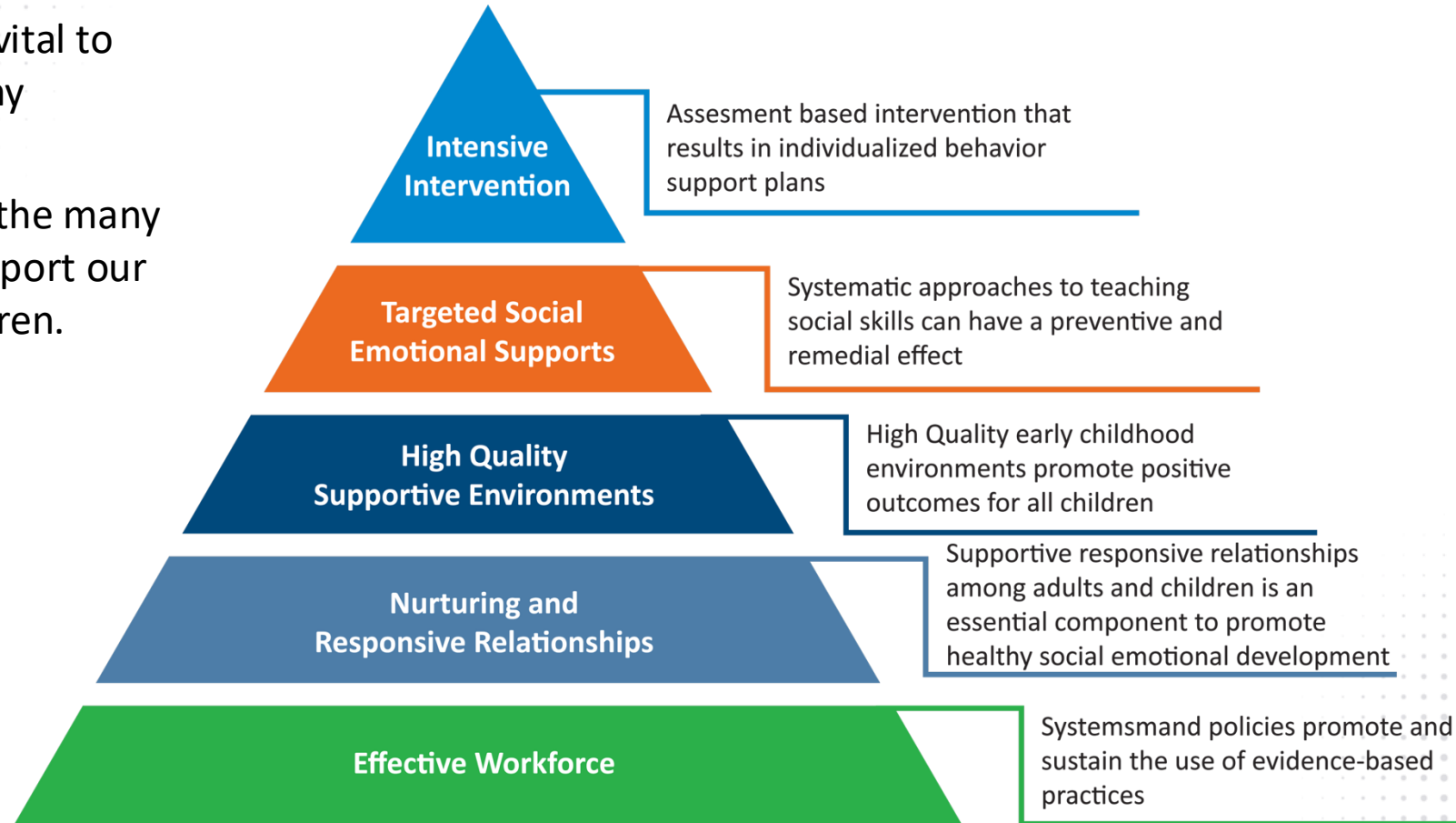


Using the Preschool Mental Health Climate Scale (PSMHCS): A Framework for classroom consultation.



Why Classroom Climate Matters

- Emotional security is vital to support overall healthy development
- As CYB MFLCs one of the many things we offer to support our military connect children.



Challenges in Early Childhood Setting

- Limited Resources, high demands
- Emotional support can be often overlooked.



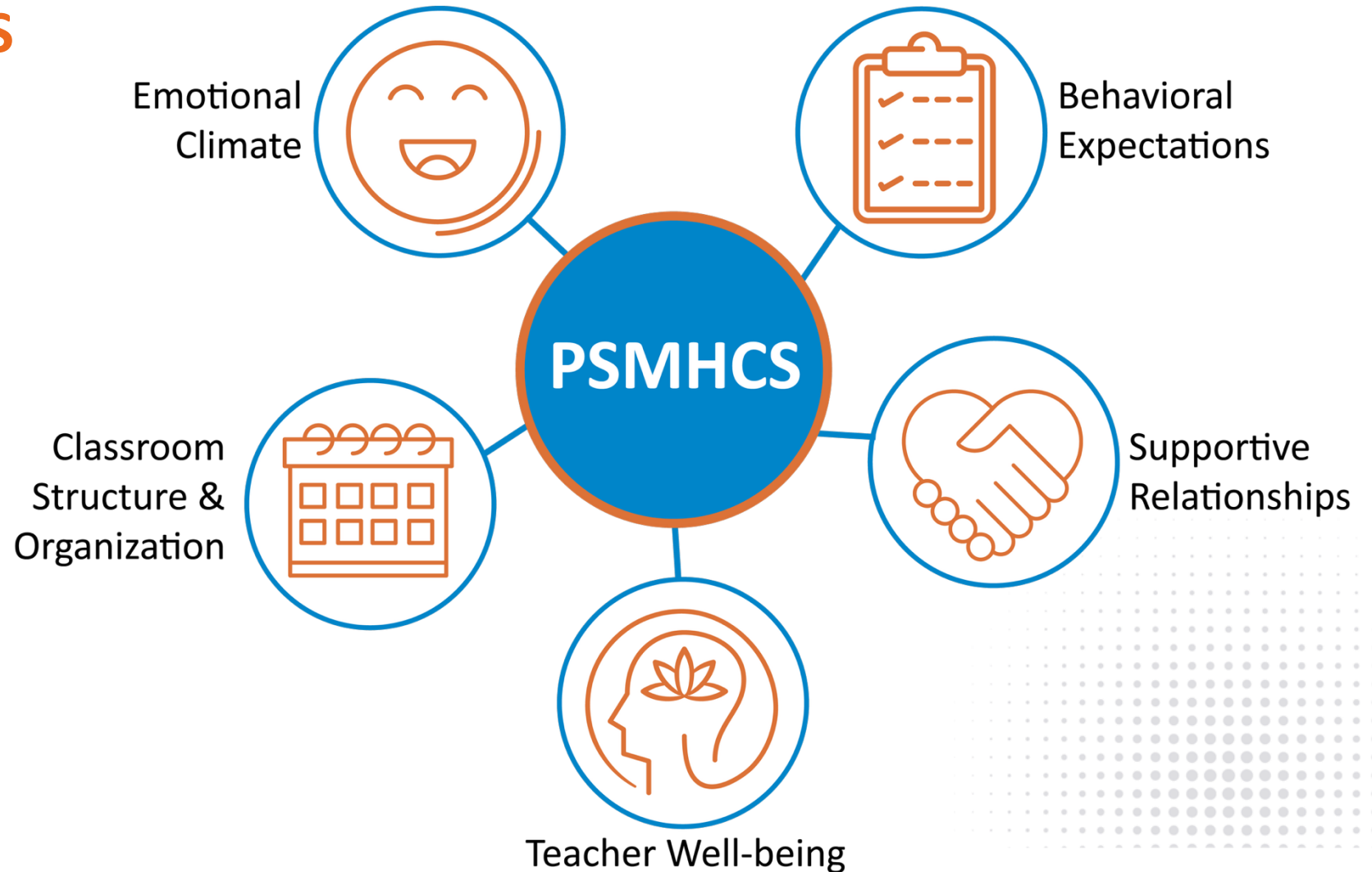
Overview of CYB MFLC Role

- Bridging mental health and classroom practice
- Use of PMHCS principles to inform CYB MFLC services and supports.



Key Domains of PSMHCS

- Transitions, rules, staff awareness, and affect
- Collaboration, child interactions, emotional coaching
- Sample strategies: reflective questions, visual cues, modeling warmth



Aligning with ECERS

- Uses a shared language
- Reinforces familiar developmental goals



- MFLCs support emotional well-being and educator confidence
- Resources: ECERS, PMHCS, DECA, CSEFEL, NCPMI, ZERO TO THREE



Q&A



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