Target Participants: Undergraduate college students in early childhood courses

Time Required: 35 minutes

Objectives [5 minutes]
To discover that:
• Feelings are important and acceptable in the early childhood classroom.
• The concept of sharing is universal and central to the social and emotional development of young children.

Materials Needed:
• 4 copies of the book, On Monday When It Rained (Kachenmeister, 1989) (to be used in class and loaned to students for field placement activities)
• 4 copies of the book, Stone Soup (Muth, 2003)
• 1 copy per person of a handout related to widely held expectations for the social and emotional development of young children. An example would be “Emotional and Social Development: Developing A Sense of Self, Developing A Sense of Self with Others” from Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers and Strategies for Guiding Their Success, pp.24-27, available to download at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/success/downloads(foundations.pdf)
• Paper and pens

Setting the Stage [5 minutes]
• Encourage a willingness among the students to be open with one another, to consider issues and ideas from multiple perspectives, and to listen carefully to the perspectives of each person in the class. Assure students that they may “pass” whenever there’s a question they don’t want to answer.
• Create with the students an atmosphere of openness and trust as they explore loving family relationships in other cultures and in their own experiences.
• Introduce the topic: Reading children’s literature that supports the social and emotional development of young children within cultural contexts

Procedures [25 minutes]
Distribute the handout.
• Ask students to read the handout and become familiar with the skills that are described. Ask them to think about strategies that might help children express their feelings. Finally, ask them to identify the aspects of social and emotional development that are most affected by culture and context.
• Pair the books: *On Monday When It Rained*, [hereafter *Monday*] and *Stone Soup*. Pairing books encourages children to further explore and express their feelings and draw on their lived experiences in their families and cultures (Whitin & Whitin, 2005). **Pairing** books helps children identify with people of other cultures.

**Discussion Group**

• Ask each group to identify a “reader” to read *Monday* for the other group members. Ask another “reader” to read *Stone Soup*.
  - Ask participants to review the handout and describe, in writing, the connections that can be made between expectations for children’s social and emotional development and these books. Ask that they support their comments with quotes from the book or the handout.
  - Discuss how you could use *Stone Soup* to talk about other cultures and customs? about people of different religions? about people of different ages? For which age group would you read these books?

**Follow-up Assignments**

• **Activity Plan:** The Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning has posted excellent examples of activities and suggestions for exploring concepts in the *Monday* book. Check out the web site: [http://csefel.uiuc.edu/booknook/mondayrain/mondayrain2006.html](http://csefel.uiuc.edu/booknook/mondayrain/mondayrain2006.html). Write an Activity Plan using one or more of the activities. Include in the Activity Plan: Objectives/Materials Needed/What to Do/Words to Learn/Lessons to Learn/Reflection. Select one Concept of the Day from *Monday* that also fits with *Stone Soup*. How would you help children connect those concepts?

• **Writing Exercise:** Write a dialogue showing how you would talk about both books with the children. Use open-ended questions whenever possible. Anticipate their comments and questions, write your response, etc. Explain words that children may not understand, e.g., “weary” or “suspicious.” You may dialogue about both books simultaneously or separately. For example, after reading both books to the children, go back to a particular picture and say, “We said the boy feels _____ in this picture. I wonder if there was a time in the *Stone Soup* book when the villagers felt ______. Here, the boy is angry because Janie wouldn’t share her new dump truck. Tell me what the village people learned about sharing.

• **Extend** concepts: Write a dialogue around the concept of happiness in the *Stone Soup*. What will you say? Anticipate the responses of the children. Record your reflections.

**Analysis and Reflection**

Evaluate this activity. What do you think children might learn from this experience? Was it useful or helpful to you? Explain. What will you take away from this experience?

**Sources:**

