

An illustration of two people embracing in a lush garden. The person on the left has dark curly hair and is wearing a bright green long-sleeved shirt and a pink patterned skirt. The person on the right has lighter curly hair and is wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt and a pink patterned skirt. They are surrounded by various plants, including tall green stalks, pink flowers, and yellow and orange flowers. The background is a dark blue gradient.

EVERYONE'S

GOING

THROUGH

SOMETHING

# Early Childhood Mental Health Assistant Services at Champaign County Head Start

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Social-Emotional Development Specialist

## Snapshot of our students

- 417 children living at or below the poverty line
- 37 children with an IEP
- 58 children experiencing homelessness
- 28 children involved with DCFS
- 16 children impacted by gun violence
- 26 children with an incarcerated parent
- 81 children with high ASQ-SE scores
- 81 children experienced divorce or transient caregivers
- 28 children exposed to domestic violence

## Other Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Related Factors

- 108 children identified as overweight
  - 47 of those have a BMI of 95% and over and were referred to the Nutritionist
- 69 children in need of dental treatment for cavities
- 1 child with high lead level
- 9 with borderline lead concerns
- 9 with low hemoglobin



## The Basics

- With your support we were able to hire 3 staff for 3 out of our 4 sites.
- Changed the title of the position to Social Skills and Prevention Coach (SSPC)
- SSPC's are supervised by Social Emotional Development Specialist (SEDS) a position funded through the DD board
- SSPC's function as an extension of the SEDS to provide social-emotional support, learning, parent education, and referrals as needed.

**Intensive  
Intervention**

Involves the SEDS,SSPC, families, teachers, family advocates in a child study process to identify referrals and a treatment plan to support successful inclusion of children engaged in persistent challenging behaviors.

**Targeted  
Intervention**

SSPC's work with teachers to identify areas of need of individuals and strategies to support the learning of social emotional skills

**Engaging Environment &  
Responsive  
Relationships**

SSPC's support this through providing Practice Based Coaching and behavior support to all classrooms.

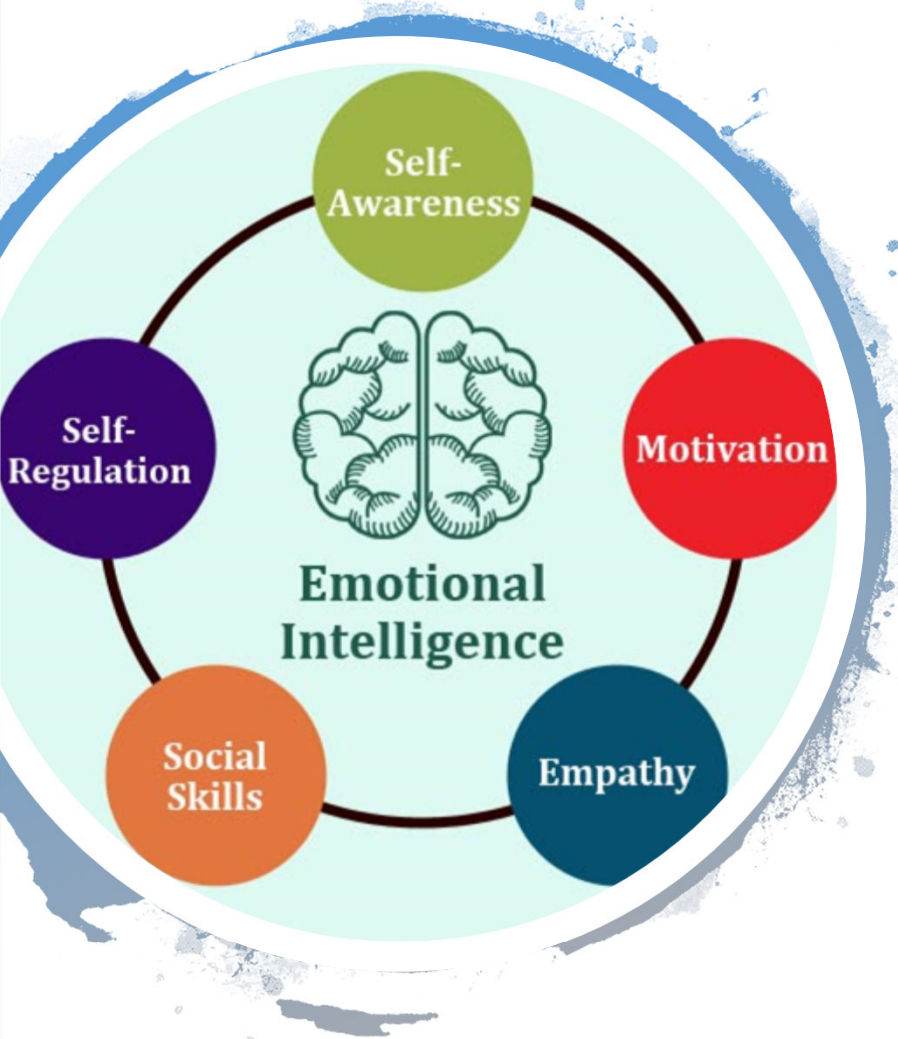
# Practice Based Coaching

- Needs assessment focused on social emotional learning and related teaching practices
- 2 week coaching cycle
  - Action Plan
  - Focused Observation
  - Reflection/Feedback

Using  
attunement  
during diaper  
changes

“How are you  
feeling this  
morning”  
ritual with  
parents

Teaching voice  
volume with  
an animal  
based scale



We focus on the building blocks of emotional intelligence and resilience

- Emotional Literacy
- Self-regulation
- Attachment
- Problem solving
- Friendship skills

# Child Study and Support plans

## Process includes

- Functional Behavioral Assessment
- Conducting and Review of assessments (ASQ-SE; DECA)
- Observation/data collection
- Collaboration with families
- Referrals for further evaluation or services

## Involvement of SSPC's

- Carries out and supports strategies of support plans on site
- Friendship groups
- Kindergarten readiness groups
- Creation of visual aid materials
- Bonding and attachment with teachers



# Outcomes so far

At this time last year, I had a total of 44 students on my caseload

- Observation
- Support plans
- Teacher consultations

To date, the three additional staff have served 95 students, and more than doubled our support services.

- Improved data collection
- Reduction in transition related behaviors
- Social skills learning groups
- Decreased stress in teachers related to behaviors
- More ongoing support to teachers and students

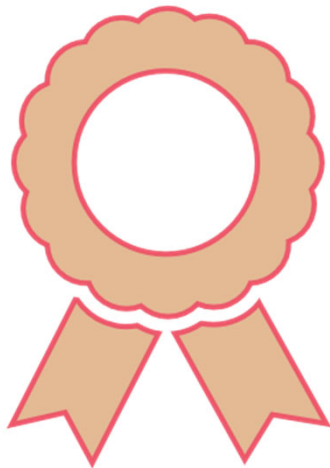
K.J.

K.J. started school in Sept. This is his first school experience. Witnessed domestic violence at home, currently living in a homeless shelter with mom. When he started the school year, he was agitated and paced the room throughout most of the day, feeling unsure of his environment and missing his Mom. His way of dealing with conflict in the classroom was to hit and scream making it hard for him to make and maintain friendships with his peers. Our Coach worked with him a couple of times a week helping him learn how to calm down through breathing, worked with teachers on how to recognize behaviors caused by hypervigilance in the classroom. Now, when he becomes upset, he works on his breathing to help calm himself down and uses his words for his wants, needs and how he feels in a calm manner. He comes into the classroom calm, excited to learn, is eager to help and loves being in the company of his classmates and teachers.

He has even generalized this skill to other environments! His case manager shared with us that she has seen him practice his breathing to self-regulate at home and in the community with great success.

# Innovative Bright Practices Award

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**Our program was recently awarded the Illinois Head Start Association's Innovative Bright Practices Award, which is designed to highlight programs that are using innovative and creative strategies within their program. Since we were selected, our program is automatically nominated for the yearly Vanessa Rich Innovative Award at the IHSA Annual Conference in March 2019.**