



Resilience

Responsiveness

Renewed Approach

The Fourth “R”

Relationships

Presented by the Early Learning Team
Maine Department of Education

Maine DOE Early Learning Team



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Making Connections

- Think of teacher with whom you had a positive relationship. What made the relationship positive? Jot down 3 or more ideas.
- As a table group, take a moment to make introductions and then share your ideas. Look for commonalities in the ideas that surface across the members of your table group.
- Be prepared to share a common idea with the large group.

Session Objectives

As a result of this session, you will:

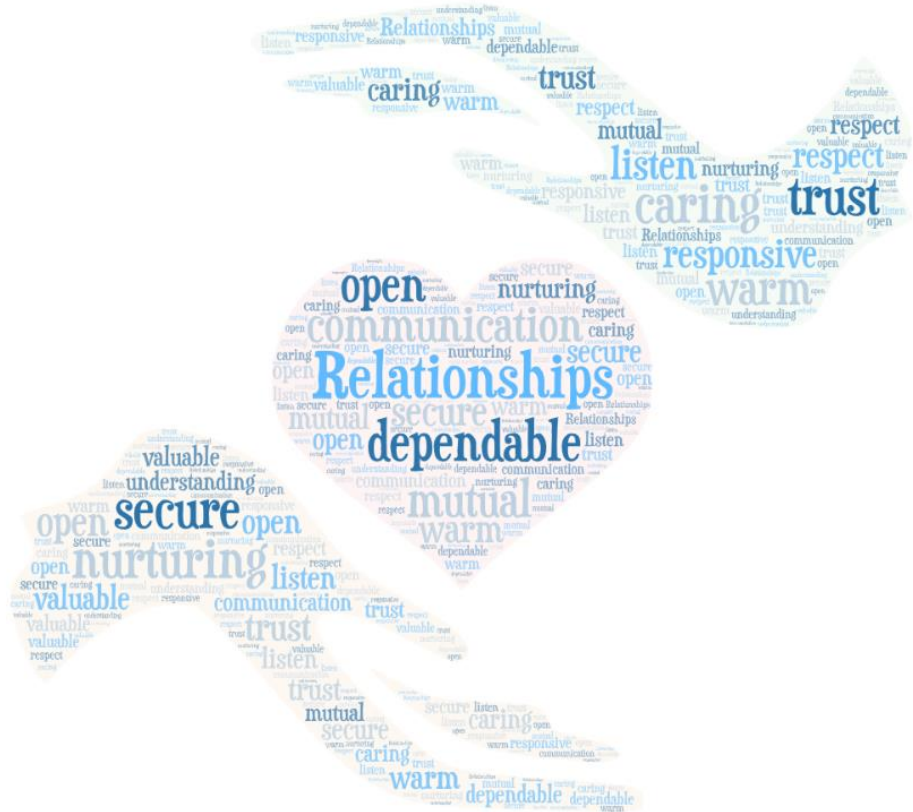
- Explore the impact of relationships on whole child growth and development
- Examine key aspects of building positive relationships by considering the what, who, why, when, and how
- Identify strategies and resources to strengthen relationship building as part of your practice

What Are Relationships?

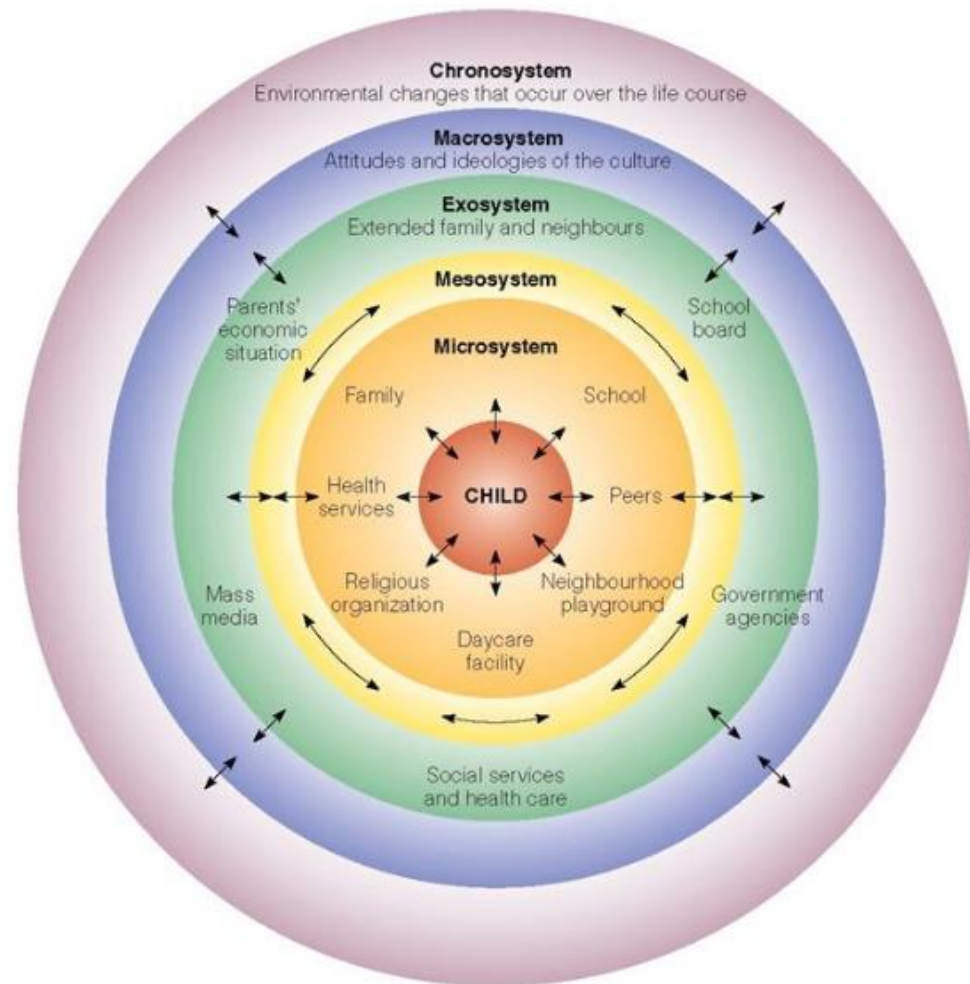
A quick Google search defines “relationship” as,

*“The way in which two or more concepts, objects, or people are **connected**, or the state of being connected.”*

*“The way in which two or more people or groups **regard** and **behave** toward each other.”*



Who



Five Ecological Systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977)

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/Bronfenbrenner.html>

Why should we be focused on making positive relationships?

“Through relationships, children gain either a positive sense of self and self-worth or the opposite.”

(Ann McClain Terrell, Young Children December 2020)

“Strong relationships provide a foundation for student engagement, belonging, and, ultimately, learning. The more high-quality relationships students have with their teachers, the better their engagement in school.”

(Ed Trust and MDRC. May 2021)



https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=4p5286T_kn0

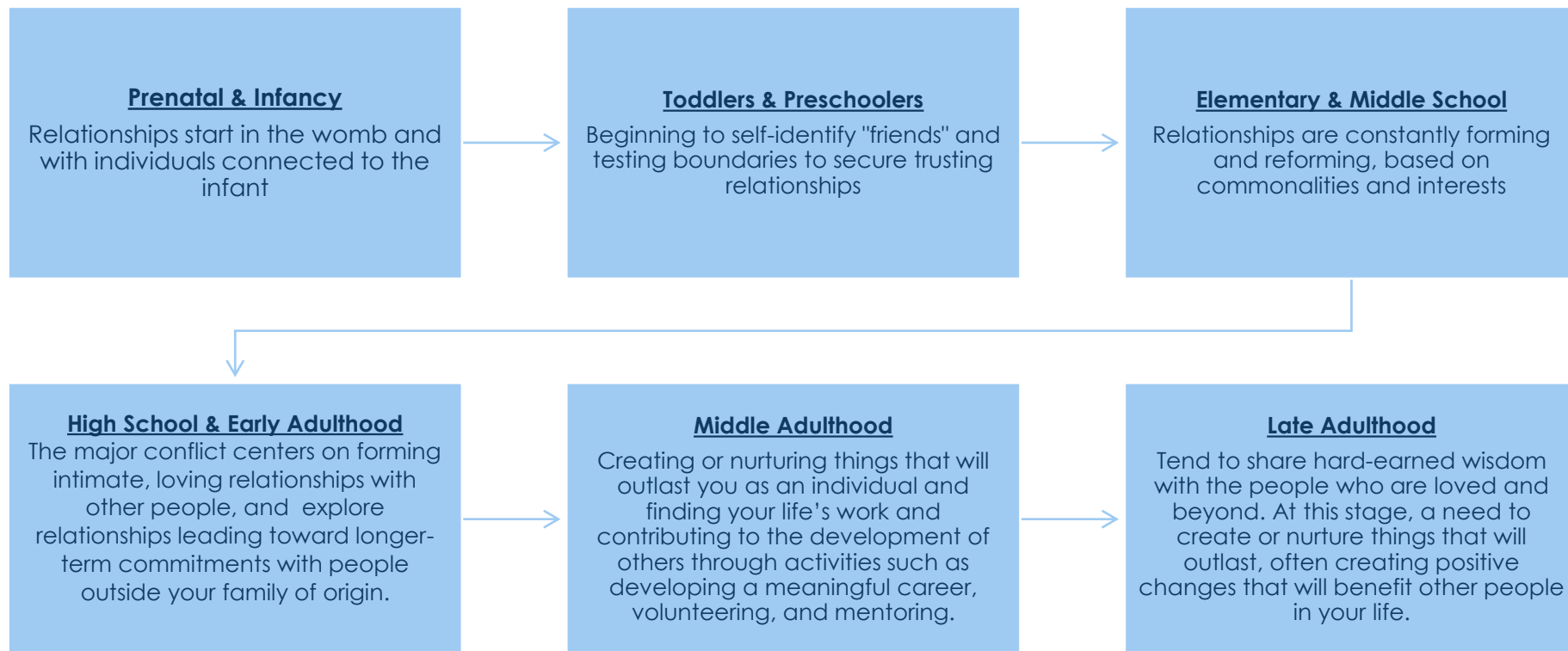
What the research says...

- **Children’s relationships with teachers were associated with social-behavioral functioning immediately and over time.**
- **Parent–teacher relationships as reported by teachers predicted children’s positive social-behavioral functioning in the same year.**
- **Sustained relationships between parents and teachers during the Pre-K to first grade transition predicted improved social skills and fewer problem behaviors over time.**



“Relationships as Malleable Factors for Children’s Social-Behavioral Skills from Preschool to Grade 1: A Longitudinal Analysis” Early Education and Development (2021) Susan M. Sheridan, Lisa L. Knoche, Courtney Boise, Amanda Witte, Natalie Koziol, Amanda Prokasky, Rachel Schumacher and Hannah Kerby, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Development of Relationships Over Time



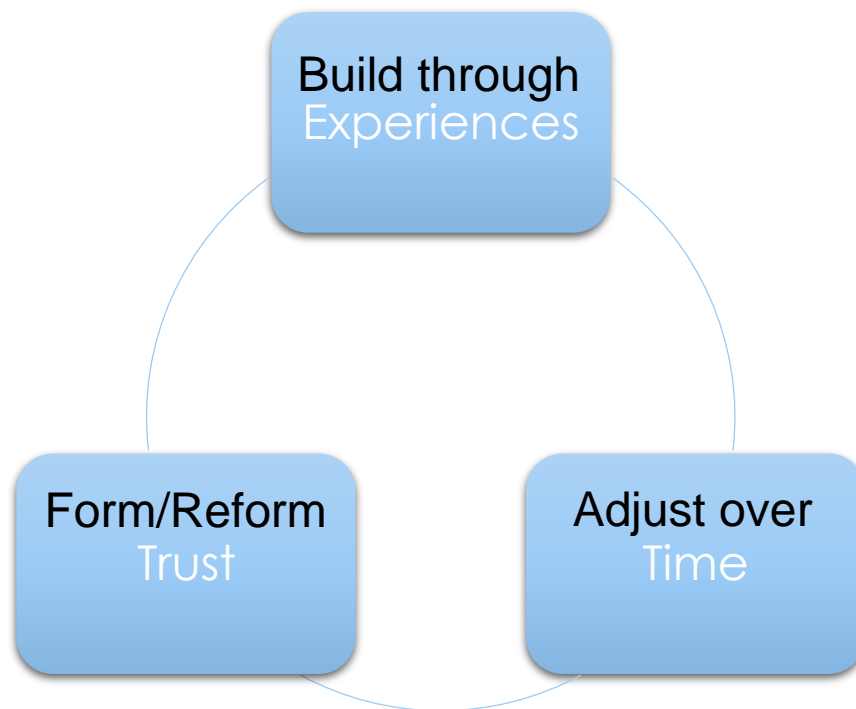
“What our adult intimate relationships look like stems from infancy and our relationship with our primary caregiver, a process of development described by attachment theory”

~ Author Unknown

When Do Relationships Form?

Relationships (are constant)

- Build through experiences
- Adjust over time
- Form/reform trust



“All learning happens within the context of relationships”

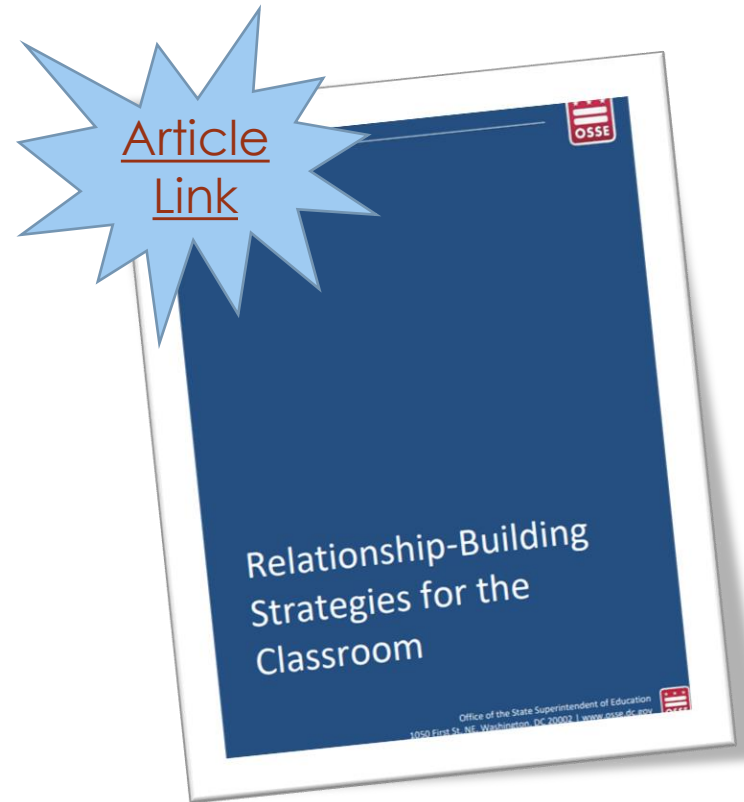
~ T. Barry Brazelton

When Are Relationships a Priority?

Turn & Talk Activity

Identify critical activities and points in time when ***relationships*** are the focus for:

- Children
- Staff
- Family Members
- Community Members



Building Strong Relationships with Students

- Give students a voice:
 - Support autonomy and leadership in the classroom
- Take interest in student's interests:
 - First Observe, Then Interact
- Model reciprocal respect
- Use Students' names
- Talk about feelings; prepare children through SEL learning
 - SEL for ME www.maine.gov/doe/sel/sel4me
 - Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) www.csefel.Vanderbilt.edu
- Understand student perspective:
 - Be flexible in the classroom, follow students leads and interests when you can
- Be aware of your own triggers and “hot buttons” in the classroom
- Remember the quiet ones



The image is a collage. On the left, there are several spiral-bound notebooks with colorful covers (green, pink, blue). The pages are filled with handwritten notes in various colors and fonts. One note says "When I was 5, I broke my left arm. I found out 7 years later that the doctors messed up the surgery." Another note says "I have 30 cousins on my mom's side, this is because my mom is a 'baby' out of children." A third note says "I live extremely close with my mom, I consider her one of my BFFs." A fourth note says "I have a lot of friends who live in Holland and I want to go there when I grow up, I want to be a teacher." A fifth note says "My best-friends are Miranda, Tyler, Emma, and Ashley." A sixth note says "My favorite color is blue because it can represent many things." On the right, there is a clipboard with a white questionnaire form. The form has a dashed border and contains the following questions: "Date of Birth: _____", "What is something that you would like me to know about you?", "What is something about our classroom that you love?", "What is something about our classroom that you would change?", "What is something that you can help others do or learn?". The form also has a section for "Who are your friends at our school?" and "What do you want to get better at in at school?".

Get to Know Each Student as an Individual – Walk in Their Shoes!

Student Questionnaire

Date of Birth: _____

Who are your friends at our school?

What is something that you would like me to know about you?

What is something about our classroom that you love?

What is something about our classroom that you would change?

What is something that you can help others do or learn?

What do you want to get better at in at school?

Who are your friends at our school?

What is something that you would like me to know about you?

What is something about our classroom that you love?

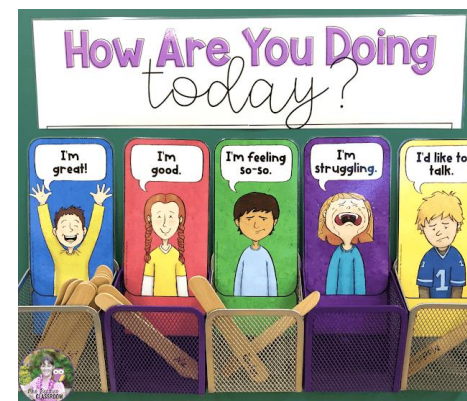
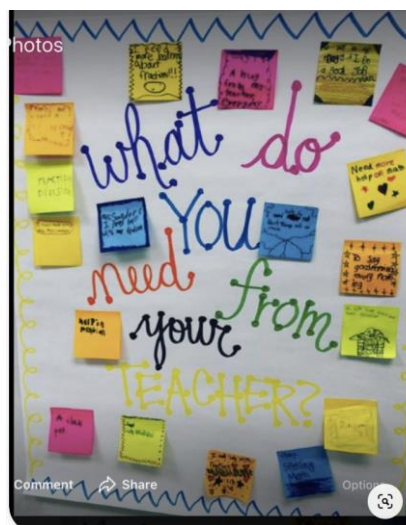
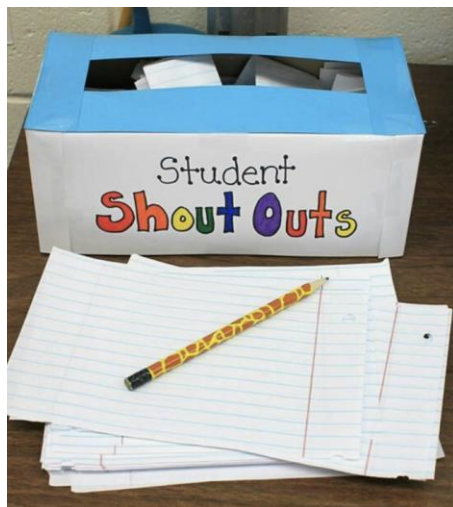
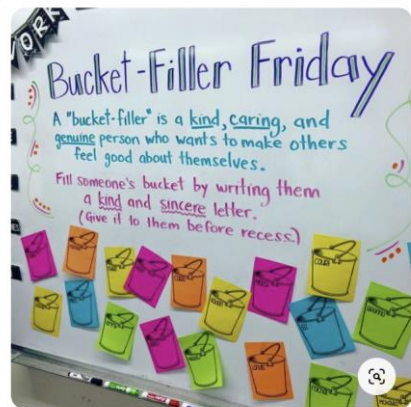
What is something about our classroom that you would change?

What is something that you can help others do or learn?

Assume the Best in EVERY Student

The most important thing schools can do to foster these relationships is to have a culture that explicitly values adults nurturing relationships with students and providing teachers and school staff with the time, space, and occasions to interact repeatedly with individual students, especially those that seem less engaged.

-Ed Trust & MDRC. , 2021



Building Relationships with Adults



- Build school or district-wide expectations as a **judgement-free zone**
- Be **intentional** in **meeting** families
- **Engaging families** is more than involvement
- Model **respect**



- Show **professional respect**
- Know that **networking** is powerful
- Display a positive **united front**
- Maintain a **positive** classroom **environment** – Celebrate!!
- Offer **team building** and team **professional development** opportunities

“Strong relationships with teachers and school staff can dramatically enhance students’ level of motivation and therefore promote learning. Students who have access to more strong relationships are more academically engaged, have stronger social skills, and experience more positive behavior.”

-Ed Trust & MDRC, 2021

[Video Link](#)



RITAPIERSON

Looking Ahead to DOE PD

- Early Childhood Conference
 - October 28th & 29th
 - Cross Insurance Center in Bangor
- Text Study ~ [A Moving Child is a Learning Child](#)
 - More information to come through the DOE Newsroom and the Early Learning Newsletter
- Professional Learning Modules



Questions, Discussions & the Exit Ticket



Resources

- Office of the State Superintendent of Education. (2022, July 21). Relationship-Building Strategies for the Classroom. Washington, District of Columbus, United State of America. Retrieved from School Climate and Culture:
https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/Relationship_Building_Toolkit.pdf
- The Education Trust. (2021, March 17).The Importance of Strong Relationships. Washington, District of Columbia, United States of America.
<https://edtrust.org/resource/the-importance-of-strong-relationships/#:~:text=Strong%20relationships%20with%20teachers%20and,and%20experience%20more%20positive%20behavior>