

Thinking Emotions (Pensando las Emociones)

Program Overview

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Program name

Thinking Emotions (Pensando las Emociones)

Country of Origin

Spain

Implementation level of the program

Organization

Type of Program

Evidence-based intervention

Description

Pensando las emociones is an intervention program to improve knowledge and regulation of emotions and social skills in young children. It intends to teach emotional skills during the first years of life. This program is an evidence-based program.

The program is based on the theory that knowledge of emotions is acquired and organized into hierarchical components and on studies that show that emotional knowledge is the basis of social competence. Thus, the program includes classroom work structured according to components and emotions.

Educators are provided with an initial step guide and tools for working this content with children in a meaningful way. For a better organization, the program is divided by ages with suitable proposals for each level.

Format:

The program consists of two parts:

Structured guidelines to apply in the classroom as early as possible (2 years old);

Guidelines for the use of dialogue and reflection among peers, with the aim of building knowledge of emotions (for the final years of preschool, 4 and 5 years).

Methods and materials:

The goal for 2 and 3-year-olds is to acquire the most basic emotional knowledge through fun, yet highly structured, adult-led tasks. Here the four basic emotions are worked (happiness, sadness, anger, fear): identify emotional expressions, start to learn how to label emotions and identify causes of different emotional states. The program also begins to teach them some basic emotion regulation strategies.

The tasks are organized in games and attractive materials, such as games, stories and puppets in the transition to the next session.

Before the start of the program, children are assessed individually. Emotion regulation assessments were completed by parents and social competence was assessed by the educator.

Age Range

0-3 years, 3-7 years

Age Range Information

Children from 2 to 5 years old.

SEL Skills Targeted

Responsible decision-making, Relationship skills, Social awareness, Self-awareness, Self-management

Sequenced Activities

Skills targeted:

Development

Emotional Knowledge

Emotional Regulation

Social Competence

Sessions are held in the classroom, in groups and over a few sessions. All sessions take about 30 minutes, starting with puppets that give examples of everyday situations; then explain the activity or game the children are going to do; finally, the puppets and the teacher summarize the session.

The program provides some activities that allow parents to work with their child at home.

Active Learning

The program consists of attractive games and activities, so that all children actively participate and answer the questions posed by the puppets about everyday situations that refer to emotions or social skills.

Outcomes / Results

This program was implemented during the school year. The study to test initial evidence of the program showed that its implementation, in a classroom context for 6 months, in 2-year-old children, significantly improved the level of emotional knowledge (emotion labelling powers; typical and atypical causality) and social skills. In addition, some improvements in emotion regulation were observed.

The implementation of the program has made it possible to observe that it is possible to improve emotional knowledge in the classroom, from very early ages.

It is notorious that knowledge of emotions and emotion regulation seems to affect children's social competence, even at 2 years of age.

In addition, the program also had significant effects in terms of attributing causes that enhance certain emotions and their understanding, this process being more complex than their identification.

Strengths and Weaknesses

At the beginning of the program, children are assessed individually. The program allows educators to have access to training on the structure and organization of the program, so that children feel familiar.

References

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Giménez-Dasí, M., Fernández-Sánchez, M., & Quintanilla, L. (2015). Improving social competence through emotion knowledge in 2-year-old children: A pilot study. *Early Education and Development*, 26(8), 1128–1144.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2015.1016380>

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