

---

# How do teachers support children's social–emotional competence?

## *Strategies for teachers*

Tara McLaughlin, Karyn Aspden, and Linda Clarke

Social–emotional skills provide a critical foundation for learning and wellbeing in early childhood and beyond. In this article we present specific teaching strategies that teachers can implement within the context of supportive, responsive relationships to foster young children's developing social–emotional competence. The teaching strategies represent practices that have been identified and validated by a range of New Zealand kindergarten teachers and stakeholders from a larger research project focusing on teacher practices. The role of teachers' intentionality and pedagogical decision making is discussed to ensure practices identified are implemented in developmentally, culturally, and individually appropriate ways in New Zealand early childhood settings.

Social–emotional competence is increasingly recognised as one of the most significant areas of early learning and development (Goodman, Joshi, Nasim, & Tyler, 2015). Children who have effective social–emotional skills experience immediate benefits, noticeably the abilities to get along with others and actively engage in learning (Denham et al., 2003). When young children are socially and emotionally competent, they are more likely to grow into adults with positive life outcomes and higher levels of wellbeing than children with poor social–emotional skills (Goodman et al., 2015).

The New Zealand early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996, 2017), highlights how important it is for children to develop their abilities to identify and express emotions and to learn skills for initiating, maintaining, and enjoying relationships with others. Many aspects of social–emotional skills are familiar to teachers and teachers understand their importance (Kowalski, Pretti-Frontczak, & Johnson, 2001). However, research suggests that teachers need greater knowledge of effective strategies to teach social–emotional skills in intentional and appropriate ways (Hollingsworth & Buysse, 2009; Kowalski et al., 2001; Papadopoulou et al., 2014). In this article, we outline key aspects of children's social–emotional competence and learning and report on

a collaborative research project to identify valued teaching practices teachers can use to support and extend young children's social–emotional learning.

### What is social–emotional competence?

There is not one specific image of the socially-emotionally competent child; rather, there is a broad set of skills that children learn to use effectively and appropriately, depending on their identity, culture, context, and circumstance (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). These social–emotional skills include, but are not limited to, skills to form close, secure relationships; engage in positive interactions with others; persist; problem solve; understand, identify, express, and regulate emotions; and resolve peer conflicts; as well as a developing capacity to summon strength in adverse situations (cf. Denham et al., 2003; Goodman et al., 2015; Hyson, 2004; Sharp, 2001).

Children use their social–emotional skills in everyday interactions and activities, especially in the socially rich contexts of early education settings where social–emotional skills enable children to engage with and alongside others. In the short term, children with effective social–emotional skills are able to form and maintain friendships, have positive attitudes to learning and social experiences, are easily accepted by their peers, are more adaptable and

confident, and are more likely to be academically successful (Denham et al., 2003; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004a). In the long term, young children with good social–emotional skills are likely to grow up with the abilities to develop and maintain lasting friendships and intimate relationships, to be effective parents, hold a job, work well with others, make positive contributions to their communities, and experience good physical and mental health and life satisfaction (Goodman et al., 2015). Of particular relevance to early childhood teachers is emerging research that shows that the social–emotional skills learnt in the very early years of life have the greatest impact on lifelong outcomes (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004b; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

### What matters in social–emotional teaching and learning?

Research and professional knowledge have long established that relationships matter (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004a). When teachers establish responsive and supportive relationships with children, whānau, colleagues, and people in the community, they create an environment that brings people together and engenders, for each person in the group, feelings of belonging, security, and efficacy. This environment of relationships provides the platform for intentional teaching in which teachers help “children to extend their ideas and actions through sensitive, informed, well-judged interventions and support” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 43). However, stable, responsive relationships are not in themselves sufficient to teach children social–emotional skills; teachers also need to use well-informed and intentional strategies (Epstein, 2014; Kowalski et al., 2001; McLaughlin, Aspden, & Snyder, 2016; Rosenthal & Gatt, 2010). Furthermore, consideration must be given to different beliefs about what might be considered appropriate behaviours for young children and how social–emotional competence looks in different contexts (Rosenthal & Gatt, 2010).

Social–emotional competence is made up of a combination of skills, knowledge, opportunity, and motivation. To promote social–emotional competence, teachers need to be cognisant of key skills they can teach children. In addition, children need meaningful opportunities,

motivation, and the inclination to practise their developing skills. Teachers can support children in each aspect of this process.

A large body of research has identified how teachers can support and teach young children’s social–emotional skills and knowledge in ways that are intentional, create motivating opportunities to learn and practise, and honour children’s rights for appropriate and meaningful learning experiences (e.g., Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003; Hyson, 2004; Rosenthal & Gatt, 2010; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Ulloa, 2011; Webster-Stratton, 2012). The most effective learning isn’t contrived, nor is it left to chance; it occurs when teachers utilise the “naturalistic, moment-to-moment experiential opportunities for learning” (Evans & Harvey, 2012, p. 15).

### Teaching Practices project

To support teachers in their work with young children, we contend that the identification and naming of specific teaching practices can help teachers understand the possible tools and strategies they might use in the everyday moments to support children’s learning. To this end, we began the Teaching Practices project in 2014. Our goal was to establish a teacher-validated list of pedagogical practices intended to help New Zealand teachers identify and articulate specific practices that will support children’s learning and social–emotional competence, and that are consistent with *Te Whāriki*. Our approach to this work acknowledges the importance of teachers’ professional knowledge, experience, and background to inform intentionality in their teaching and the use of evidence-based practice models (cf. Bourke & Loveridge, 2013; Snyder, 2006) to guide pedagogical decision making. We sought to explore the range of practices used and to develop a resource that teachers could use to inform their practice. The results presented here report on research conducted in teacher-led kindergartens, typically serving children aged 3 to 5 years with a specific focus on the practices associated with social–emotional teaching. It is important to note that current research is focused on teaching practices for infants and toddlers (see Aspden & McLaughlin, 2016).

### Methodology

The Teaching Practices project adopted a mixed-methods, multi-phase design to generate and

then refine iterations of the practice list. In the first stages, direct observations and interviews with 24 teachers were used to create an initial list of valued practices that teachers typically use to support children’s social–emotional competence. Next, the initial teaching practice list was compared with existing research evidence and frameworks (e.g., Ministry of Education, 2011—Tātaiako; Webster-Stratton, 2012—Incredible Years) and additional teaching practices from the research evidence and frameworks were incorporated into the next iteration. In a second round of interviews and observations, teachers confirmed, critiqued, and refined the teaching practice list. From there, key stakeholders, including cultural advisers, professional development personnel, teachers, and tertiary staff, reviewed the teaching practices list, offering feedback and input. A more detailed overview of these aspects of the methodology can be found in McLaughlin, Aspden, and McLachlan (2015). The result of the practice list development process was a list of 26 practice sections (with 235 specific teaching practices within the 26 practice areas) organised within five overarching areas. The five overarching areas of practice are: (1) relationships; (2) environment; (3) social–emotional teaching; (4) intentional teaching; and (5) competent and confident learners.

The final stage of the project was to conduct a survey with kindergarten teachers from around the country to determine the extent to which teachers used and valued the practices. Invitations to participate in an online survey about the teaching practices were sent to 654 kindergartens listed on the Ministry of Education directory of services for 2013. A total of 118 teachers completed the survey. Teacher responses indicated a high level of support for the teaching practices identified. Specifically, 232 of the 235 practices were identified as evident in their practice by at least 95% of the respondents. See McLaughlin et al. (2015) for a more detailed overview of the survey methodology and findings.

### Findings

In this article, we explore findings for the area of social–emotional teaching. The area of social–emotional teaching was organised into five key sections: (1) emotional literacy; (2) social problem solving; (3) calming down; (4) social skills and friendship; and (5) prevent/address challenging behaviour. In the following sections, we define each of these areas and

identify the specific practices teachers might use to support and promote children's social-emotional competence. When presenting the teaching practices list we typically highlight a few key features of the list that are relevant for interpretation and use. These include:

1. Each practice section has an overarching teaching practice shown on the left.
2. Overarching practices are also described in te reo Māori, the indigenous language of Aotearoa New Zealand, consistent with the bicultural early childhood curriculum.
3. Specific teaching practices are the actions teachers might implement to help them achieve the overarching practice and are shown on the right.
4. Practices intentionally start with the word "teachers" followed by a verb to convey actionable behaviours of teachers to support children's learning.
5. The list is not exhaustive of all practices that might be used and individual practices may or may not be appropriate in any given situation; thus teacher professional judgement about the use of practices in context is paramount.

The practices described in the following section share many similarities with practices identified in other frameworks and practice lists (e.g., Incredible Years, Pyramid Model) and will be familiar to most early childhood teachers. What makes these practices unique is that New Zealand early childhood teachers and stakeholders identified them as important and salient and the practices are intended to reflect

the unique cultural context of New Zealand early childhood settings.

### Emotional literacy

Emotional literacy is the ability to identify, understand, and express emotions in a healthy way (Sharp, 2001). When teachers promote a positive and supportive emotional environment, teachers and children are able to effectively express, discuss, and share their emotions. The practices identified highlight the importance of acknowledging, naming, and validating children's feelings, modelling teachers' own emotional responses, and actively teaching children how to express emotions. Actively teaching refers to a range of strategies teachers might use to help make emotional skills explicit to children in the context of everyday activities and routines. Strategies can include: commenting on or asking questions about emotions that children might be feeling; giving information about the way bodies and faces might feel and look when experiencing different emotions; making resources (books, visuals, picture cards) that show or talk about emotions; or commenting or giving feedback when children show their emotions in different situations (e.g., It looked like you were feeling sad when your mum left. I feel sad when someone I love leaves too). We suggest that teaching teams consider the range of emotion words they want children to learn in their settings. Writing down a list of key emotion words can help teams be more intentional about supporting emotional literacy.

### Social problem solving

To be able to solve everyday social problems (e.g., one pair of scissors and two children who want to use them), children need to have skills to understand, express, and regulate their emotions; identify, communicate, and evaluate solutions; and make effective choices during interpersonal interactions (Gloeckler, Cassell, & Malkus, 2014). Solving social problems is a difficult task because social problems tend to occur during disagreements or peer conflicts, when emotions are charged. How teachers can best support children's social problem-solving skills is a complex matter because not only are peer conflicts emotionally charged events, the differences between conflicts can be as great as the differences between the children involved (cf. Chen, Fein, Killen, & Tam, 2001). Not surprisingly, there is not one best way for a teacher to respond to social problems or peer conflicts—the best response will depend on numerous factors (Clarke, McLaughlin, & Aspden, 2017). For example, sometimes, but not always, children may be able to solve conflicts independently and the teacher's role may be that of observer. Sometimes, but not always, aggression may arise and the teacher's role will be to ensure physical and emotional safety.

The practice list recognises that teaching children social-problem-solving skills is the first step in preventing peer conflict. However, when conflict does occur all children involved in the conflict must be given the opportunity to express themselves without judgement as well as work out a solution. Actively teaching a set

EMOTIONAL LITERACY/ARO KI NGĀ KARE Ā-ROTO	
Teachers establish a positive emotional climate in which teachers and children express and discuss their emotions.  Ka whakarite ngā kaiako i tētehi akomanga pai kia whakaputa, kia kōrero hoki ngā kaiako me ngā tamariki i ō rātou kare ā-rotou.	Teachers talk about their own feelings and model (talk aloud) what they do when they have different feelings.
	Teachers acknowledge and validate children's feelings.
	Teachers actively teach children about different emotions and feelings.
	Teachers actively teach children how to recognise emotions in themselves and others.
	Teachers actively teach children how to express their emotions appropriately.
	Teachers comment on or ask questions about how children are feeling.
	Teachers verbally revisit emotional experiences with a child to help the child understand their feelings, reaction, and possible responses next time.

SOCIAL PROBLEM SOLVING/WHAKATAU PUEHU	
Teachers teach children to resolve social conflicts.  Ka whakaako ngā kaiako i ngā tamariki kia whakatau puehu.	Teachers ensure all children have the opportunity to express themselves when a social conflict has occurred.
	Teachers support children to resolve social conflicts by providing language, guidance, and encouragement.
	Teachers actively teach a set of "problem-solving steps" for children to use when a social problem occurs.
	Teachers notice and comment on when children have been "successful problem solvers" during a social conflict.
	Teachers make judgements throughout the day about how they will respond to social conflict between children in ways that are personalised to the children involved, situation, and context.

of problem-solving steps, such as “identifying the problem” (e.g., four children and only three chairs at the table); “thinking of some solutions” (e.g., one person can stand, two children can share; get another chair); “consider which solution might work best” (e.g., if we get another chair then everyone is comfortable); and “giving the solution a try”; can be very helpful to support children to prevent everyday problems from turning into conflicts as well as support their conflict resolution skills (Fox et al., 2003). Similar to emotional literacy, active teaching might also include commenting, giving feedback when children successfully solve problems, or making resources that support social-problem solving. A notable practice in the social problem-solving list is the focus on professional judgements because teachers must make multiple decisions about how to most effectively support children in each new situation.

### Calming down

For young children, emotions can be overwhelming. Young children do not immediately have the tools and strategies to manage intense feelings; learning to control and regulate emotional responses is a key task throughout childhood, and beyond (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Thompson, 2009). Emotional regulation takes a long time to master. Geldhof, Little, and Colombo (2010) have described how the part of the brain connected to emotions (the limbic system) and cognition (the prefrontal

cortex) compete for attentional focus when both systems are activated. This competing for focus renders it difficult to think clearly when emotions are highly charged, particularly for very young children whose brains are still developing (Thompson, 2009). This does not mean, however, that young children’s emotional-regulation skills cannot be promoted; it means that young children need support in the form of realistic expectations, secure relationships, positive emotional environments, good role models, and predictable routines (cf. Hyson, 2004; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Thompson, 2009; Ulloa, 2011).

Underpinned by the importance of environmental and relational support, the practices for calming down focus specifically on this key aspect of emotional regulation—that is, knowing how to calm down when angry, upset, or overexcited. Teachers can help children develop the skills they need to calm down: by providing a quiet physical space that children are welcome to go to when they need to; through reassurance; by engendering children’s feelings of safety and security; and by using professional judgement to determine the best time to address a situation or actively teach strategies for calming down (e.g., take deep breaths; go for a walk). Teaching about calming down might occur before or after an upsetting event for children. As noted in the practices, when children are upset it is a time for comfort and reassurance.

### Social skills and friendships

Social skills begin to emerge from the earliest moment of shared eye contact between an infant and adult, through to games of peek-a-boo, and the growing capacity to share moments with others and to play. Children move from playing alongside others, through to co-operative play and the emergence of chosen friendships with peers. This is a continuum that may ebb and flow through the early childhood years, and varies from child to child. It may be presumed that friendships have an intangible quality; however, there is a range of increasingly sophisticated social skills that are required in order to develop and sustain peer relationships. Teachers are able to take an intentional role in helping to facilitate friendships, through helping children to understand the value of peer relationships, as well as identifying, modelling, and highlighting the skills needed to enact positive social interactions with peers. The strategies identified in this section also acknowledge that children need multiple opportunities to practise forming and maintaining friendships, and to develop the capacity to manage disappointment. Actively teaching different social and friendship skills involves a range of strategies, including using puppets, books, and stories, creating activities in which children work together, supporting children who do not independently engage with peers, and commenting on or giving feedback when children show positive social skills (Duley, 2017).

CALMING DOWN/WHAKATAU WAIRUA	
Teachers teach children how to calm down when they are angry or upset.  Ka whakaako ngā kaiako i ngā tamariki me pēhea e whakatau ai i te wairua ina riri, pōuri rānei.	Teachers provide a quiet physical space children can choose to go to when upset to support emotional regulation.
	Teachers focus on helping children to feel safe and secure when very upset and recognise the best time to address a situation is when the child is calm and receptive.
	Teachers provide in-situ support and reassurance to help children calm down when they are upset or angry.
	Teachers actively teach children skills and strategies for calming themselves down when they are upset.
	Teachers follow up with children who have been upset or angry after they are actively re-engaged.

SOCIAL SKILLS AND FRIENDSHIPS/PŪKENGA WHAKAHOAHOA	
Teachers support children to have positive social interactions with others.  Ka tautoko ngā kaiako i ngā tamariki kia whakahoahoa tētehi ki tētehi.	Teachers facilitate peer relationships and connections among children.
	Teachers use, display, and teach children whakataukī (proverbs) to share important knowledge and views of Māori that can guide children in their actions and interaction with others and in the social world.
	Teachers actively teach children about making and maintaining friendships (e.g., asking a peer to play, sharing toys, coming up with play ideas).
	Teachers actively teach children skills for group activities (e.g., waiting your turn, helping the team, how to join a group).
	Teachers support children to manage disappointment when things don’t go their way.
	Teachers support children to pursue individual play and work activities in respectful ways (i.e., let a peer know that you don’t want to play right now or share your materials).

## Prevent/address challenging behaviour

Challenging behaviour is a broad term that refers to behaviour that persistently interferes with learning and healthy social–emotional development (Dunlap, Lee, Joseph, & Strain, 2015). Challenging behaviour might manifest as aggression and destructive acts, or it may be more passive behaviour such as withdrawal or noncompliance (Dunlap et al., 2015). Challenging behaviour can also be considered in terms of the effect it has on children. Dunlap et al. (2006) report that challenging behaviour is a barrier to healthy social–emotional development and a predictor of maladjustment in school and adult life. On a day-to-day basis, children who exhibit challenging behaviour are seldom praised for appropriate behaviour, often miss out on learning opportunities, and often experience ineffective and punitive responses from teachers (Dunlap et al., 2006).

Teachers often report that challenging behaviour is one of their greatest challenges in supporting children's learning. *Te Whāriki* affirms that children must experience an environment in which they understand the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Teachers play an active role in guiding children's increasing understanding of and adherence to the expected behaviours of the early childhood setting, as well as adopting a variety of proactive strategies that are designed to prevent challenging

behaviour. When such behaviours do occur, teachers need to respond intentionally with the purpose of guidance, rather than punishment, focused on helping the child develop the understanding and skill needed to respond differently in future occasions (Dunlap et al., 2015). Teacher responses in such situations are grounded in maintaining the mana of the child, preserving the trust relationship, and supporting the child to move forward in a positive way.

## Conclusions

The teaching practices presented above represent those observed, reported, and validated by a range of kindergarten teachers and early childhood education stakeholders. They provide a comprehensive, but certainly not exhaustive, list of potential strategies that teachers can adopt to support children's social and emotional competence in early childhood settings. Many of these practices are inherent throughout *Te Whāriki*, and relate to key goals and learning outcomes. The practices highlight specific approaches and tools that support teachers to intentionally teach children the skills needed, provide the opportunity and context for safe practice, and foster the motivation required, to enhance children's social–emotional competence.

The practices discussed in this article and in the larger practice list are a potential resource

to support teachers to consider and reflect on practices that help them implement *Te Whāriki* and ensure positive learning experiences for all children. In offering this framework we emphasise the need for teaching practices to be implemented in ways that are developmentally, culturally, and individually appropriate for each child, family, and teacher. Teachers are encouraged to consider how the practices might look in their own settings, and in discussion with teaching colleagues and families, to identify further practices that are unique to their context.

Developing increasing social and emotional competence is a key task of early childhood. Existing research and literature firmly establishes that the first 5 years are critical in laying down the foundations for the way in which a child will relate to the social world. Early relationships are the context in which children come to form their self-identity and develop their sense of belonging and security, as well as their capacity for resilience. We argue that within the context of supportive, nurturing, and responsive relationships, teachers can implement specific strategies that support children to develop the skills needed to develop and sustain friendships, cope with change, understand and express their emotions, regulate their responses, and positively engage in social problem solving. Teachers play a critical role in supporting the

PREVENT/ADDRESS CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR/KIA Ū KI TE PAI	
Teachers use a variety of proactive strategies to prevent challenging behaviours and address behaviours that cannot be ignored.  Ka whakamahi ngā kaiako i ngā rautaki atawhai hei arai i te haututū me te kaha aro anō hoki ki ngā mahi nanakia.	Teachers spend one-on-one time with children who often present with challenging behaviour to build a sense of trust and better get to know children's positive qualities.
	Teachers consider factors that may contribute to a child's challenging behaviour to understand why the child might be engaging in the behaviour.
	Teachers give more attention to positive behaviours than to inappropriate behaviours.
	Teachers use structured choices to prevent or redirect a child from engaging in challenging behaviour.
	Teachers tell a child in advance if their continued behaviour will have a consequence (i.e., warning); this includes a statement of what the child should do.
	Teachers carry out consequences in respectful ways using a calm and supportive tone while interacting with children.
	Teachers address behaviour by focusing on the action of concern, why it is of concern, and what to do instead, rather than a reflection of the child being good or bad.
	Teachers support children to re-engage after challenging behaviour has occurred.
	Teachers acknowledge, comment on, or celebrate children's positive behaviours after they have re-engaged.
	Teachers work together to develop a continuum of responses to challenging behaviours that are age-appropriate (i.e., from general guidance to logical consequences) and contextually appropriate.
	Teachers ensure consequences are short and non-stigmatising and that team members respond consistently to a child's behaviours.
	Teachers help other children to know how to respond when another child exhibits challenging behaviour.
	Teachers actively work to address negative social reputations that children may develop as they are learning social skills or exhibit challenging behaviours.

growth of social and emotional competence that yields positive outcomes both in the moment, and also for future outcomes in childhood and beyond.

## Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the Massey University Research Fund. The authors would like to thank the teachers and stakeholders who have collaborated on this project. Their expertise, time, and commitment have contributed to the development of the practice list for early childhood education. Teaching practices and study procedure reprinted with permission from the Teaching Practices project (McLaughlin, Aspden, & McLachlan, n.d.).

## References

- Aspden, K., & McLaughlin, T. (2016). Voices from the field research update: Teaching practices to promote infants' and toddlers' learning and social emotional competence. *The First Years: New Zealand Journal of Infant and Toddler Education*, 18, 29–30.
- Birch, S. H., & Ladd, G. W. (1997). The teacher-child relationship and children's early school adjustment. *Journal of School Psychology*, 35, 61–79.
- Bourke, R., & Loveridge, J. (2013). A scientist-practitioner model for inclusive education: Supporting graduate students to conduct systematic reviews for evidence-based practice. *New Zealand Journal of Teacher's Work*, 10, 4–24.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology*, 22, 723–742.
- Chen, D. W., Fein, G., Killen, M., & Tam, H-P. (2001). Peer conflicts of preschool children: Issues, resolution, incidence, and age-related patterns. *Early Education and Development*, 12(4), 523–544. doi:10.1207/s15566935eed1204\_3
- Clarke, L., McLaughlin, T., & Aspden, K. (2017). Promoting learning during toddlers' peer conflicts: Teachers' perspectives. *Early Years: An International Research Journal, online first*, 1–15. doi:10.1080/09575146.2017.1384919
- Denham, S., Blair, K., DeMulder, E., Levitas, J., Sawyer, K., Auerbach-Major, S., & Queenan, P. (2003). Preschool emotional competence: Pathway to social competence? *Child Development*, 74(1), 238–256.
- Duley, L. (2017). *Exploring teaching practice to support young children's prosocial behaviour: "What would we tell pig and frog to do?"* Unpublished master's thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
- Dunlap, G., Lee, J., Joseph, J., & Strain, P. (2015). A model for increasing the fidelity and effectiveness of interventions for challenging behaviors: Prevent-teach-reinforce for young children. *Infants & Young Children*, 28(1), 3–17.
- Dunlap, G., Strain, P., Fox, L., Carta, J., Conroy, M., Smith, B., ... & Sowell, C. (2006). Prevention and intervention with young children's challenging behavior: Perspectives and current knowledge. *Behavioral Disorders*, 32(1), 29–45.
- Epstein, A. S. (2014). *The intentional teacher: Choosing the best strategies for young children's learning*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Evans, I. M., & Harvey, S. T. (2012). *Warming the emotional climate of the primary school classroom*. Wellington, New Zealand: Dunmore Publishing.
- Fox, L., Dunlap, G., Hemmeter, M. L., Joseph, G. E., & Strain, P. S. (2003). The Teaching Pyramid: A model for supporting social competence and preventing challenging behavior in young children. *Young Children*, 58, 48–52.
- Geldhof, G. J., Little, T. D., & Colombo, J. (2010). Self-regulation across the life-span. In M. E. Lamb & A. M. Freund (Eds.), *The handbook of life-span development, social and emotional development: Volume 2* (pp. 116–158). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Gloeckler, L. R., Cassell, J. M., & Malkus, A. J. (2014). An analysis of teacher practices with toddlers during social conflicts. *Early Child Development and Care*, 184(5), 749–765.
- Goodman, A., Joshi, H., Nasim, B., & Tyler, C. (2015). *Social and emotional skills in childhood and their long-term effects on adult life*. Retrieved from <http://www.eif.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/EIF-Strand-1-Report-FINAL1.pdf>
- Hamre, B., & Pianta, B. (2001). Early teacher-child relationships and the trajectory of children's school outcomes through eighth grade. *Child Development*, 72, 625–638.
- Hollingsworth, H. L., & Buysse, V. (2009). Establishing friendships in early childhood inclusive settings: What roles do parents and teachers play? *Journal of Early Intervention*, 1(4), 287–307.
- Hyson, M. (2004). *The emotional development of young children: Building an emotion-centered curriculum* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Kowalski, K., Pretti-Frontczak, K., & Johnson, L. (2001). Preschool teachers' beliefs concerning the importance of various developmental skills and abilities. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 16(1), 5–14. doi:10.1080/02568540109594970
- McLaughlin, T., Aspden, K., & McLachlan, C. (n.d.). Teaching practices to promote children's learning and social-emotional competence [Unpublished practice list]. Institute of Education, Massey University.
- McLaughlin, T., Aspden, K., & McLachlan, C. (2015). How do teachers build strong relationships? A study of teaching practices to support child learning and social emotional competence. *Early Childhood Folio*, 19, 31–38.
- McLaughlin, T., Aspden, K., & Snyder, P. (2016). Intentional teaching as a pathway to equity in early childhood education: Participation, quality, and equity. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 51, 175–195. doi:10.1007/s40841-016-0062-z
- Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education. (2011). *Tātaiako: Cultural competencies for Māori learners*. Wellington: Author.
- Ministry of Education. (2017). *Te whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa*. Wellington: Author.
- National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2004a). *Young children develop in an environment of relationships. Working paper no. 1*. Retrieved from <http://www.developingchild.net>
- National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2004b). *Children's emotional competence is built into the architecture of their brains: Working paper no. 2*. Retrieved from <http://www.developingchild.net>
- Papadopoulou, K., Tsermidou, L., Dimitrakaki, C., Agapidaki, E., Oikonomidou, D., Petanidou, D., & Giannakopoulos, G. (2014). A qualitative study of early childhood educators' beliefs and practices regarding children's socioemotional development. *Early Child Development and Care*, 184(12), 1843–1860.
- Rosenthal, M. K., & Gatt, L. (2010). 'Learning to live together': Training early childhood educators to promote socio-emotional competence of toddlers and pre-school children.

- 
- European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 18(3), 373–390.
- Sharp, P. (2001). *Nurturing emotional literacy: A practical guide for teachers, parents and those in the caring professions*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (Eds.). (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Snyder, P. (2006). Best available research evidence: Impact on research in early childhood. In V. Buisse & P. W. Wesley (Eds.), *Evidence-based practice in the early childhood field* (pp. 35–70). Washington, DC: Zero to Three.
- Thompson, R. A. (2009). Doing what doesn't come naturally: The development of self-regulation. *Zero to Three*, 30, 33–39.
- Ulloa, M. L. (2011). *Teaching to care: Emotionally intelligent teachers support preschool children's emotional competence*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Massey University, Palmerston North.
- Webster-Stratton, C. (2012). *Incredible teachers: Nurturing children's social, emotional and academic competence*. Seattle, WA: Incredible Years Inc.

**Tara McLaughlin, PhD,**

is a senior lecturer in the Institute of Education at Massey University. Her research interests focus on (a) teaching practices that support children's learning and social-emotional competence; (b) professional learning and development; (c) innovative data systems to inform teaching and learning; and (d) assessment practices in early childhood care and education.

**Email:** T.W.McLaughlin@massey.ac.nz

**Karyn Aspden, PhD,** is a lecturer in Early Years Education in the Institute of Education at Massey University. Her current research is focused on strengthening pedagogical practices to support quality early childhood provision for student teachers and practitioners in the sector. Key interest areas include infant and toddler pedagogy, leadership in ECE, early intervention and inclusive practice, and professional practice.

**Linda Clarke, MEd,** is a tutor in the Institute of Education at Massey University, and a relieving kindergarten teacher. Linda is a PhD student and her research interests are teaching practices and professional development to support toddlers' social-emotional competence.