



# Harnessing the Power of Play with Intentional Teacher Support



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Playful Learning: The Role of Play in Early Childhood Educational Settings

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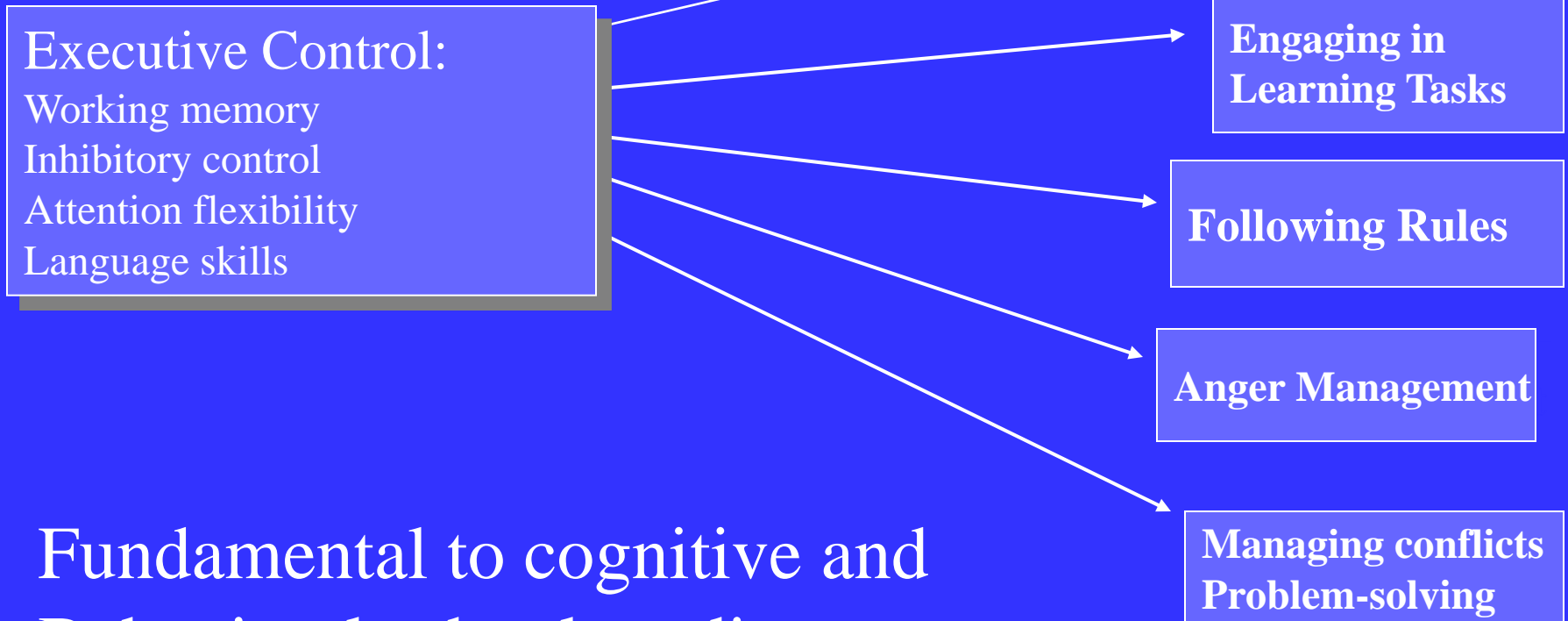
# Poverty (and early adversity) is associated with lower neural resources for learning.

- Attention skills
- Language skills
- Memory skills
- Impulse control
- Emotion Regulation
- Problem-solving ability



# Poverty Delays Pre-frontal Cortex Development

## Key Competencies



Fundamental to cognitive and Behavioral school readiness

# Developmental Roots of Executive Functioning are in Social Interaction

## ◆ With Parents...

- ◆ Attachment processes
- ◆ Joint attention & sensitive responding

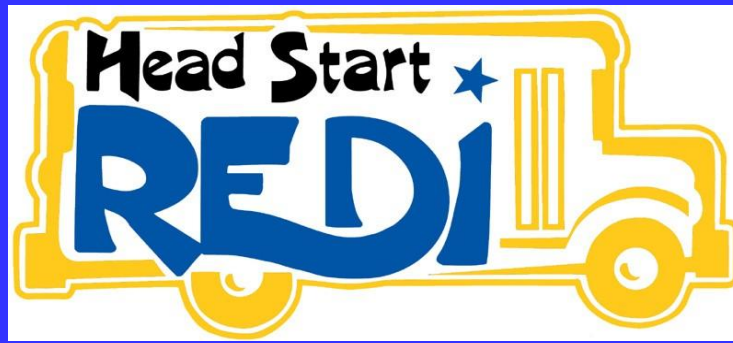
## ◆ With peers ..

- ◆ social imitation & reciprocity
- ◆ negotiation & collaboration



# Challenge

- Integrate research-based models of social-emotional development and self-regulatory (executive control) with
- Research-based models of emergent literacy & math skill development with
- Comprehensive early education programming



## Funded through the Interagency School Readiness Consortium

- Build upon the foundation of strong Head Start programming (High Scope/Creative Curriculum)
- Foster the diffusion of research-based practices in the two skill domains of: 1) social-emotional competencies, and 2) language & emergent literacy skills
- Provide a curriculum base and mentoring program to support teachers' professional development and promote the quality of cross-domain instructional practice

# Intervention Components:

## *Language and Literacy Skills*

### Target Skills

- Vocabulary
- Syntax
- Phonological Sensitivity
- Print Awareness

### Curriculum Components

Interactive Reading  
Sound Games  
Print Center

### Teaching Strategies

Language Expansions  
Rich & Targeted Vocabulary  
Questions & Reflections  
Decontextualized Talk

# Intervention Components:

## *Social-Emotional Competencies*

### **Target Skills**

- Prosocial Skills
- Emotional Competence
- Self Control
- Social Problem Solving

### **Curriculum Components**

PATHS Friendship Lessons  
PATHS Feeling Lessons  
PATHS Turtle Technique  
PATHS SPS Lessons

### **Teaching Strategies**

Positive Classroom Management  
Praise & Warm Involvement  
Emotion Coaching  
Induction Strategies  
Social Problem-Solving Dialogue



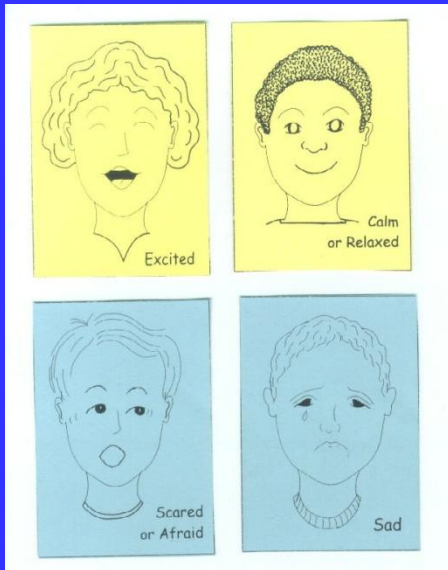
# Preschool PATHS

## Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies

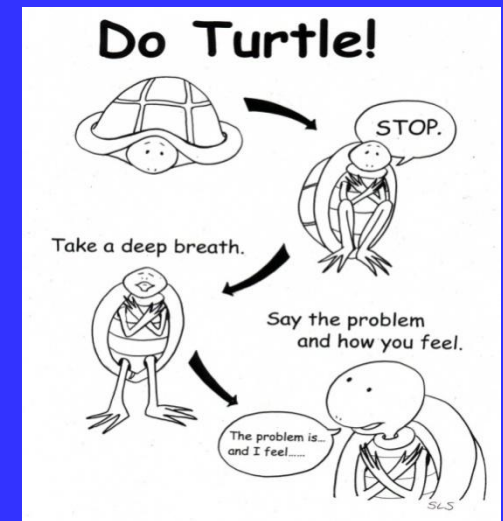


### Lessons & Activities:

1. Emotional understanding
2. Friendship skills
3. Intentional self-control
4. Social problem-solving



Compliment List	
From My Teachers:	
From My Friends:	
From Myself:	
Other Family Members:	



# Play was the Primary Context for Social-Emotional Learning

- For prosocial reciprocity & exchange
- For emotion coaching & empathy building
- For practice in intentional self-control
- For practice in social problem-solving

# Professional Development Support

- Initial 3-day training workshop
- Mid-year 1-day booster training workshop
- Weekly classroom visit from REDI trainer
- Weekly meeting with REDI trainer

Model of change: Promote positive classroom practice with curriculum-based activities & guide; support generalization with coach models and self-reflection

## Intervention Effects on Teaching Practices

Teaching Quality	Effect	P-Value
■ Positive Emotional Climate (TSRS)	.42	.05
■ Emotional Support (CLASS)	.49	.11
■ Positive Class Management (TSRS)	.40	.06
■ Positive Discipline (TSRS)	.66	.002
■ Instructional Support (CLASS)	.54	.08

Teacher Language Use	Effect	P-Value
■ Statements (CLEO)	.72	.001
■ Questions (CLEO)	.77	.001
■ Decontextualized Talk (CLEO)	.62	.001
■ Rich-sensitive Talk (CLEO)	.62	.004

# Significant Effects on Child Outcomes Across Domains

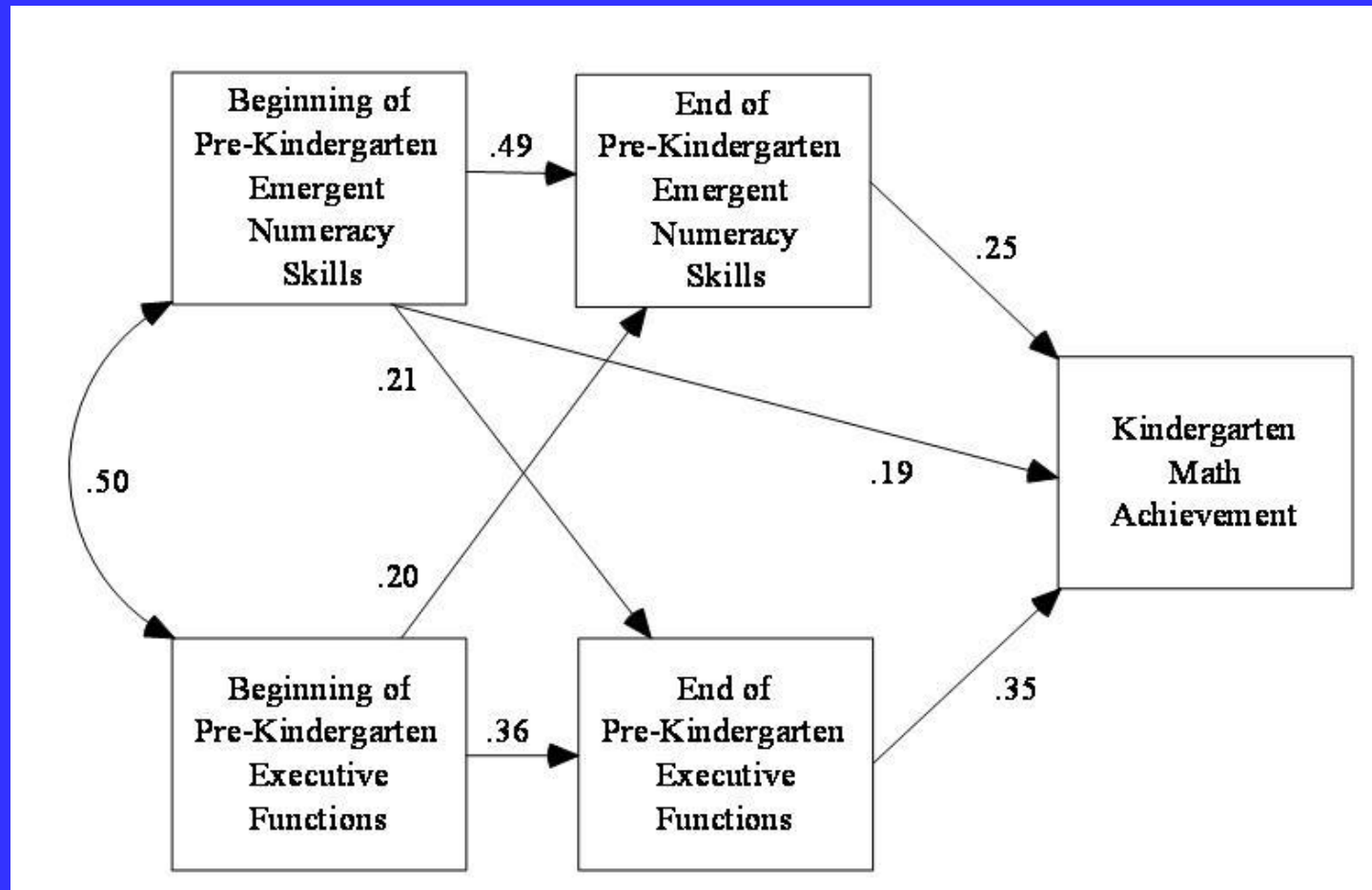
## ■ Language & Literacy

- ◆ Vocabulary growth
- ◆ Phonological sensitivity
- ◆ Print awareness

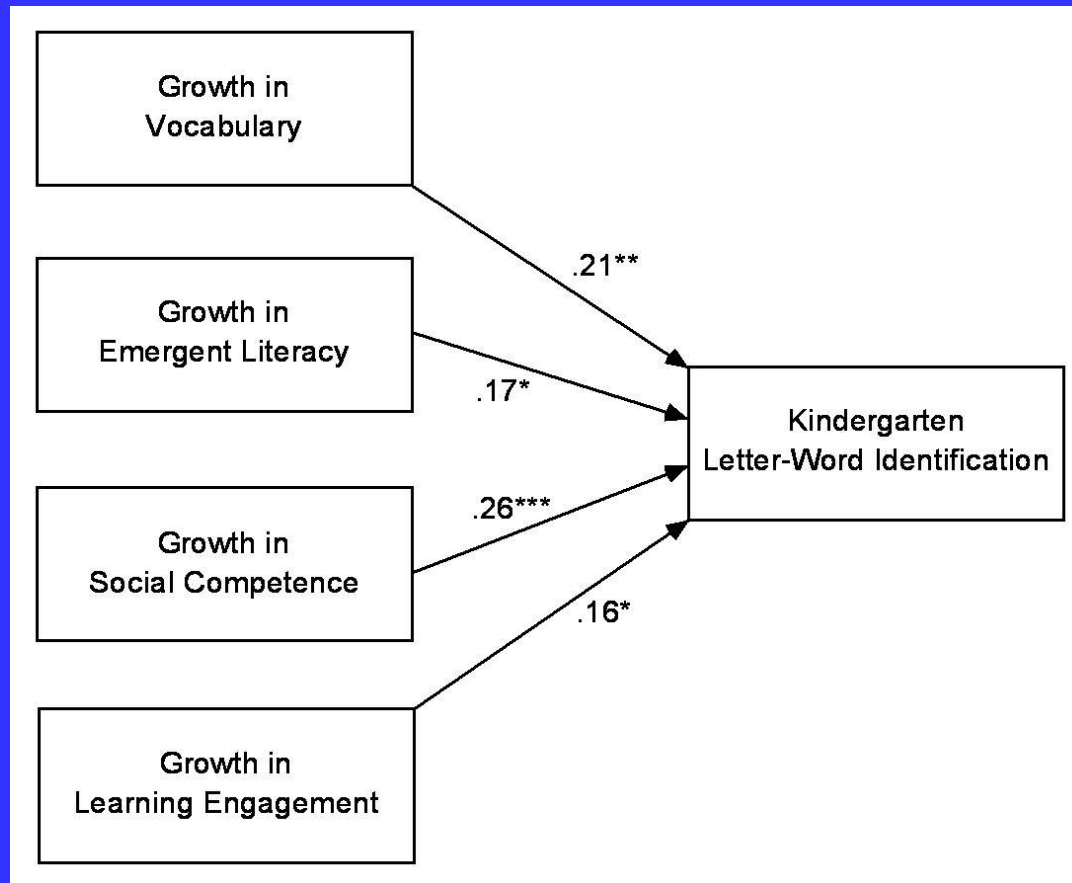
## ■ Social-Emotional Competencies

- ◆ Emotional understanding
- ◆ Social problem-solving skills
- ◆ Teacher-rated social competence & aggression
- ◆ Observer-rated social competence & task orientation
- ◆ Parent-rated attention and communication skills

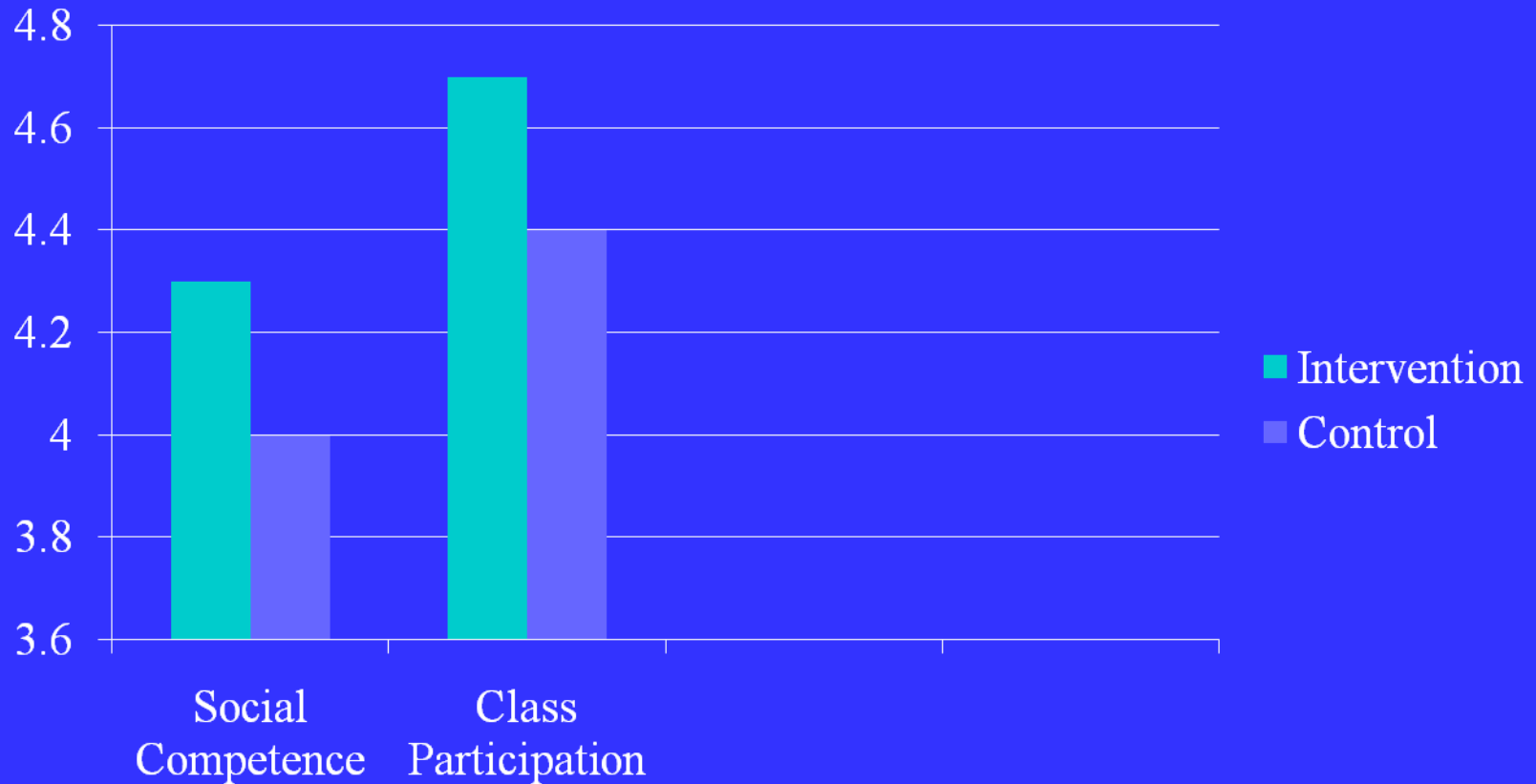
# Developmental Cross-over Facilitation: Content Learning and Approaches to Learning



# Developmental Cross-over Facilitation: Behavioral and Cognitive School Readiness



# Impact on Kindergarten Adjustment





## High Quality Curriculum: Intentional vs. Incidental Instruction

Providing time to play is not enough.

Incidental & implicit learning is limited by the quality of models and neural capacity – it is not sufficient to “close the gap”

Intentional instruction, based on an organized curriculum that clarifies the scope and sequence of play skills & self-regulatory capacity is probably critical in Head Start.

# Skill Acquisition Requires Repeated Practice



Incidental exposure is often insufficient to drive acquisition.

Repeated exposure with multiple, distributed practice opportunities are required.

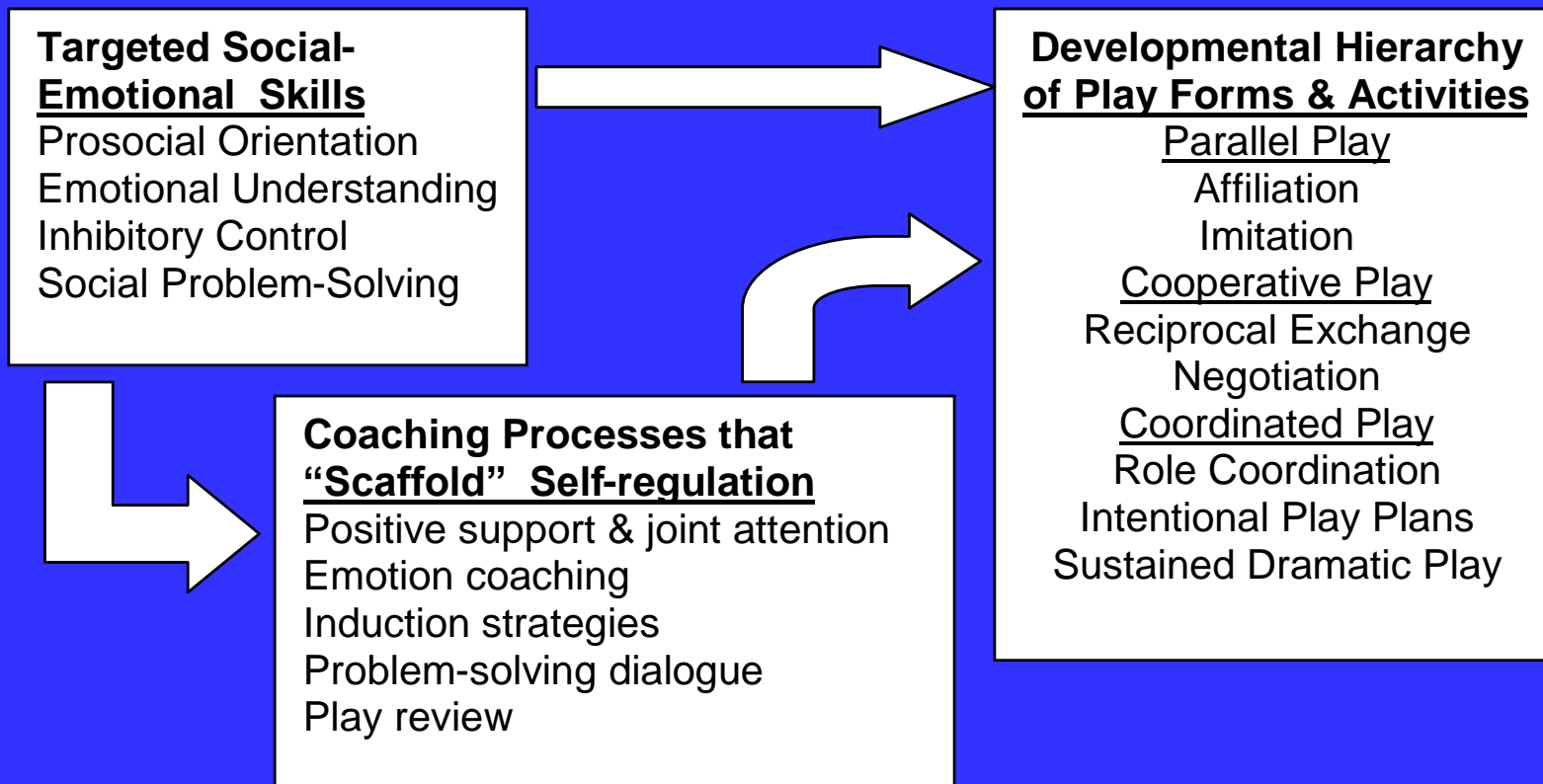
**Aware**

**Awkward**

**Automatic**

# Play Coaching for ADHD Prevention (NIMH funded R34)

**Figure 2: PIPS Coaching Intervention Processes**





## Take Home Points



- Dual domain focus is synergistic: **cognitive & behavioral readiness**
- Enriched curriculum guides and intentional instruction are of high value: **to promote emergent literacy and math skills and to foster self-regulation**
- Play is a critically important context for learning: **but intentional & strategic support is needed**
- Strong **professional development models & administrative support** are critical

# Acknowledgments

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# REDI References

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## For More Information

<http://www.channing-bete.com/prevention-programs/paths-preschool/>

<http://headstartredi.ssri.psu.edu/>

