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McCormick Institute
for Early Childhood

We elevate the early childhood profession

through programming that is innovative, responsive, and informed by practice, applied research, and community and policy engagement.

National Louis University's Deep Roots in Early Childhood Education

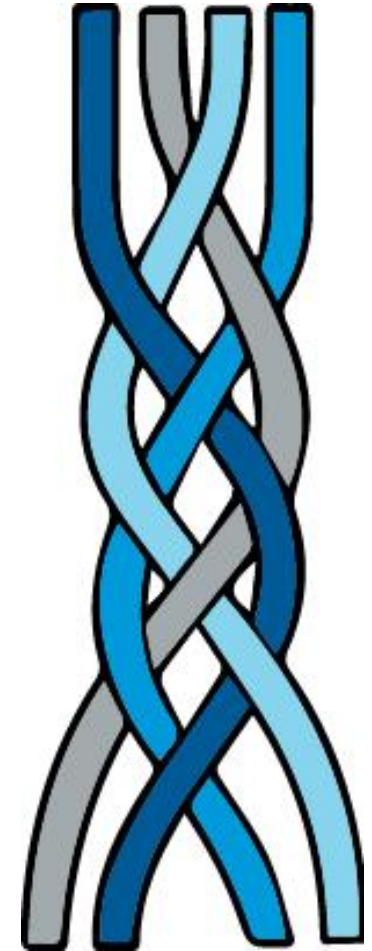
National Louis University (NLU) was founded in 1886 by Elizabeth Harrison, who believed that the future prosperity of a community begins with the education of its children. Every year, NLU serves more early childhood professionals than any other institution in Illinois providing scalable solutions in credentials, degrees, professional learning, and quality improvement initiatives to expand the knowledge and skills of a diverse early childhood workforce.

The McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership was founded in 1985 by Paula Jorde Bloom. In 2024, the Robert R. McCormick Foundation made a landmark investment in recognition of both the McCormick Center and NLU's significant contributions to the profession, establishing the McCormick Institute for Early Childhood at National Louis University.



Strands of Work

- Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Leadership
- Professional Learning and Innovation
- Applied Research
- Community and Policy Engagement



Professional Learning for Early Childhood Leaders

Our Professional Learning is designed for a wide variety of early childhood leaders: **Center-based administrators, family child care professionals, technical assistance providers, and leadership coaches.**

- Research-based leadership academies
- Data-informed coaching for ECEC leadership
- Professional learning on a wide variety of early childhood leadership topics
- Training on administration scales for continuous quality improvement



Professional Learning for Early Childhood Leaders

Our academies are designed for leaders at all levels:

- Ready to Lead – Leadership essentials
- Aim4Excellence™ – Earn the National Director's Credential
- Taking Charge of Change – Systems thinking for centers
- Taking the Lead – Elevate your family child care business
- Building Better Business – Family child care business practices with purpose
- Transformative Technical Assistance with the *Program Administration Scale (PAS)* and *Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care (BAS)*



Interested in learning more about how our services can support you?

Sign up to receive
our emails:



Visit our website:
mccormickinstitute.nl.edu

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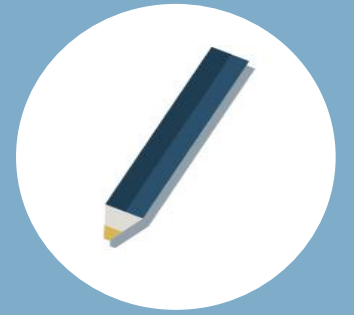
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Downloading Calm

Supporting Co-Regulation in Early Childhood Leaders

Lindsay Miner, M.S. Child Development | Report Review and Certification Specialist

AGENDA



- ☐ What is co-regulation?
- ☐ Common stressors
- ☐ Why find time for mindfulness?
- ☐ When do we find the time?
- ☐ Mindfulness exercises
- ☐ Questions

Co-Regulation vs. Self Regulation

Co-Regulation

- A process through which individuals develop the ability to manage and soothe distressing emotions and sensations through connection with nurturing and reliable caregivers.
 - The capacity for self-regulation is developed through co-regulation.
 - Successful co-regulation depends on a trusted caregiver's ability to manage and soothe their own distressing emotions/sensations.
 - Can be taught and strengthened!

Self Regulation

- The ability to identify and manage emotions, thoughts, behaviors, impulses and choices.
 - A key component in social-emotional development, emotional wellbeing, physical health, academic achievement, and socioeconomic success.
 - Dependent on co-regulation through warm and responsive interactions and modeling with caregivers.
 - Can be taught and strengthened!

Common Stressors

- In the chat, please answer:
 - What are 1-3 of the biggest stressors in your field of work?



Stress Begets Stress

- Public Pre-K teachers nationwide reported experiencing stress at nearly twice the rate of similar working adults in other occupations.
 - Common Stressors Include:
 - Low levels of compensation.
 - Lack of support and resources in addressing children's challenging behaviors and mental health needs.
 - Navigating teaching and learning during, and after, a global pandemic.
 - Increased workload that requires working outside of contracted hours.
 - Staffing shortages and high rates of teacher turnover.
 - Compassion fatigue and burnout from the emotional labor of the job.

Mindfulness and Co-Regulation

WHY FIND TIME FOR MINDFULNESS?

- You can't pour from an empty cup!
 - Your stress can transfer to others; as the trusted caregiver in your space, both children and adults rely on you to co-regulate.
 - The first step in successful co-regulation requires that trusted caregivers are able to manage their own stress in a healthy way.
 - We are living in unprecedented socio-economic and political times:
 - Higher levels of workplace stress are being reported in the early childhood field in recent years.
 - Leaders and administrators can emerge as a source of co-regulation for their staff and the families they serve.

Mindfulness and Co-Regulation

WHY FIND TIME FOR MINDFULNESS?

- Benefits of Mindfulness in Managing Stress for Early Childhood Educators (Zero to Three):
 - Reduces anxiety and depression.
 - Increases levels of empathy and compassion.
 - Enhances emotional regulation, self-compassion, attentional awareness, and perspective taking.
 - Leaders/Administrators “download calm” to staff □ staff “download calm” to children/families. (Dr. Becky Bailey)

Mindfulness and Co-Regulation

WHEN DO WE FIND THE TIME?

- Mindfulness exercises can be practiced in as little as 30 seconds to 5 minutes:
 - Preventive: ideally, you can practice a mindfulness technique before a time of day/interaction that tends to cause stress:
 - When you wake up.
 - In your car when you park at work or on public transportation before you get to work.
 - At a morning meeting with staff/families/children.
 - Reactive: you can also practice a mindfulness technique in response to a stressor:
 - After a stressful meeting/interaction.
 - Alongside a staff member/child/family member who is experiencing distressing emotions.
 - Before you go to bed after a stressful day.



“

Mindfulness is simply being aware of what is happening right now without wishing it were different; enjoying the pleasant without holding on when it changes (which it will); being with the unpleasant without fearing it will always be this way (which it won't).

James Baraz

”

Mindfulness Exercise Practice



- Rhythmic Breathing:

- Teach and practice rhythmic breathing alongside staff members as a tool to use when they are feeling stressed:
 - Breathe in as you count to four.
 - Hold that breath as you count to four.
 - Breathe out as you count to four.
 - Hold as you count to four.
 - Repeat this for a few rounds and notice how your mind and body feel afterwards.

Mindfulness Exercise Practice



- Five Senses Exercise:

- Teach this exercise to staff members and practice alongside them as a tool to use to ground themselves when they are feeling overwhelmed:
 - See: Look around you and name **five** things you can see.
 - Feel: Notice and describe the texture of **four** things you can feel/touch.
 - Listen: Notice and name **three** things you can hear.
 - Smell: Notice and name **two** things you can smell.
 - Taste: Notice **one** thing you can taste. Focus on the sensations in your mouth, such as your teeth and tongue.

Mindfulness Exercise Practice



- The STOP Strategy:
 - Stop:
 - In times of stress and overwhelm, encourage staff members to: Stop, pause, and focus.
 - Take a deep breath:
 - Take a deep breath in and out alongside staff members. Encourage them to notice how it feels to breathe
 - Observe:
 - Encourage staff members to acknowledge the emotions and physical responses that they are feeling, positive or negative, without judgment. Recognize that these feelings are valid, momentary, and manageable.
 - Proceed
 - Give staff members space to think about how they want to respond. Process alongside them if they need to talk and provide assistance in the classroom if they need a moment to themselves.

Mindfulness Exercise Practice



- Progressive Muscle Relaxation:

- Use a guided video or script to tense and relax each muscle (this can be done independently, or you can use the video/script to guide and practice alongside others):

- Script:

- <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/progressive-muscle-relaxation-script>

- Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nZEdqcGVzo>

Questions?



- Any questions?
- Thank you for having me!
- Feel free to contact for any questions:
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Training content was created by McCormick Institute for
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