Mindful Movement & Play
For Preventing and Responding to Challenging Behaviors

Why?

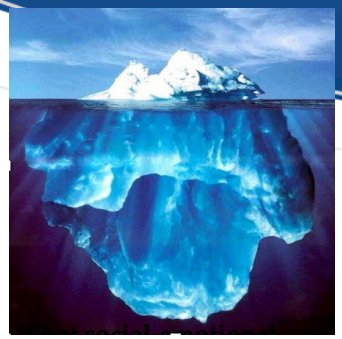
Children's natural forms of expression are play and movement, not words.

Intense feelings ⇒ physical tightness ⇒ challenging behavior (iceberg!).

Physical relaxation ⇒ calming feelings ⇒ positive behavior.

Mindful movement and play promote **co-regulation** = support for emotional self-regulation through caring relationships.

Co-regulation ⇒ self-regulation ⇒ calm feelings ⇒ positive behavior.



Preventing

With regular, relaxing-expressive movement & play

Bubble game.

Bubble bouncing.

Noodle game.

Noodle dance.

Dance with stuffies (fast -middle-slow pace).

Tight hugs with breathing.

Rain song, with tapping body parts.

Any non-competitive exercise or dancing.

Watching glitter jar.

Responding

With releasing the physical tightness of intense feelings

BLOWING (aka breathing): feather, tissue paper flower, imaginary balloon.

Belly breathing (see Elmo).

Breathing ball.

Ripping, punching, crumbling and throwing paper.

Punching balloons or cushions.

Squeezing stress balls.

Screaming into cushions.

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