BITE-SIZED TIPS FROM NIEC'S

NAPTIME WEBINAR



Supporting Educators to Thrive and Grow Professionally in Inclusive Practice

Educator happiness is...

✓ feeling **supported**, **respected** and **equipped** to manage the demands of a day at the preschool

✗ feeling cheerful all the time

Why is educator happiness important for inclusion in classrooms?

A well-supported educator is:

- **Socially and emotionally** competent to **support children** and **manage the classroom**
- Able to provide **high-quality education and care** for children by **balancing individual as well as class-wide learning needs**

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR DAILY USE

1 Pause & Name



Before responding in a challenging moment, **pause** for a few seconds and silently **name** what you are experiencing.

I am feeling rushed

I am feeling worried

I am feeling frustrated

This does not remove the challenge, but it **creates a small space** between the emotion and the response, which can help you return to a **calmer and more intentional state**.

2 Micro-recovery strategies

Subtle actions that allow the educator to reset on the spot without needing to step out of the classroom.

Deep breathing - Take slower breaths

Soften voice & relax shoulders - Soothe the voice and body

Grounding - Plant both feet firmly on the floor, walk across the room or sit down briefly



3 Recognising children's behaviour as communication & responding with curiosity

With the mindset of wanting to learn and find out more, educators respond with curiosity instead of stress. This mindset shift protects wellbeing by **reducing self-blame and frustration** within themselves.



Throwing toys — **Feeling overwhelmed**



Refusing to sit — **Requiring movement breaks**



Hitting someone — **Struggling to express frustration in words**

Click to learn more about children's sensory needs, emotional regulation, developmental expectations, and how to manage classroom behaviour with NIEC's CPD courses!

4 Reflect with the ABC strategy

A Antecedent

What happened before the behaviour?

- *Was the environment too noisy?*
- *Was the child tired or hungry?*
- *Was the task too difficult?*



B Behaviour

What did the child do?

Describe the behaviour clearly and objectively, without judgement.

✗ *The child was naughty*

✓ *The child pushed a peer*

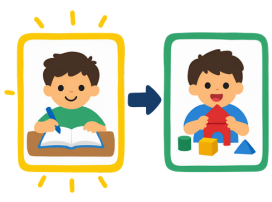
C Consequence

What happened after?

- *How did the adult or other children respond?*
- *Did the child avoid something, or receive attention?*
- *Did anything help the child calm down or re-engage?*

5 Strategies benefitting the class and educator wellbeing

Use visual supports



Reduces uncertainty and the need for repeated reminders

Offer choices and flexibility in participation



Promotes agency in a child and can reduce power struggles

Click here for samples!

HOW LEADERS AND CENTRES CAN SUPPORT INCLUSION WORK

Acknowledgement is key!



When leaders notice and celebrate inclusive efforts, it sustains motivation for the work that can sometimes feel invisible.

- **Recognise** that inclusion work is **complex** and some days are difficult
- **Provide safe spaces** for educators to talk about **how they feel** and **what they need**, not just the strategies they used
- **Normalise** that feeling overwhelmed does not mean someone is ineffective
- Frame challenges as **learning opportunities** and **acknowledge efforts publicly**



Protect time for thinking

This signals to educators that the time taken to plan and review inclusive strategies is just as crucial as classroom delivery!

Support on a centre-level



Resource banks
Having resources ready saves educators time and provides ease of use.



Shared documentation
A simple child-support plan can help all staff use consistent strategies.



All hands-on-deck
Involving more manpower during demanding routines like mealtimes, toileting, or outdoor play, helps educators and children feel supported.



Community support
Leaders can consider drawing on community helpers or parent volunteers for excursions, events, or activities that require additional adult support.

"If we want inclusive environments for children, we must first create inclusive environments for educators—where well-being, learning, and support are embedded into everyday practice."



MS FIONA LEOW
Curriculum Specialist
Curriculum & Programmes
NIEC

"The bottom line is that when educators are socially and emotionally well supported, they create a positive classroom climate that promotes better academic, social, and emotional outcomes for children."

DR. ABHIRAMI PRAKASH
Assistant Director, InSP
Early Intervention Services
Community Psychology Hub



Lipponen, L., Ang, L., & Lim, S. (2019). *Vital voices for vital years 2: Perspectives on early childhood development in Singapore.* Lien Foundation.
Ng, E. L. (2024). *Enhancing children's well-being by supporting the well-being of early childhood educators*. In O. S. Tan, E. L. Low, I. S. Caleon, & E. L. Ng (Eds.), Enhancing holistic well-being of children and youth (pp. 79–90). Springer.
Ng, E. L., Bull, R., Cumming, T., & Wong, S. (2023). *Well-being of early childhood educators in Singapore* (NIE Working Paper Series No. 22). Office of Education Research, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University.
Early Childhood Development Agency. (2026). *Inclusive preschool practice guide: A resource to begin your inclusion journey*. Ministry of Social and Family Development, Singapore.