



Early Childhood Connections with Shel Krasman

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All over the country, educators will tell you that since coming back from Covid restrictions, children have a huge need for social/emotional/resilience skill building.



Daily, we are still experiencing side effects from wearing masks and isolating ourselves at home. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is one way that our ECC helps our young children regulate their own emotions and behaviors, be aware of the emotions of others, and foster relationships and communication among children and teachers. SEL emphasizes social and emotional skills to the same degree as academics, prioritizing the importance of helping children become responsible and caring community members equally with the need to master academic skills.

Here at our ECC we are blessed to have a talented and caring staff who prioritize the social/emotional needs of their students right along with their physical, spiritual, and academic growth. Our team is filled with talented professionals, who make our community such a loving and special place.

One way that TBE ECC integrates SEL into our program is with the help of our behavioral consultant and social/emotional skill expert, **Shel Krasman**, to assist the educators, families and children. Shel consults with teachers and parents, and works with children four days a week. I sat down with her and asked her some questions about her approach.

Q. What led you to becoming a behavioral coach/consultant? What was your path or journey?

A. As an Early Childhood educator, I observed children who showed atypical social and emotional behaviors; whether they were attention-seeking, struggling to focus, or their learning style was not compatible with a certain teaching personality. There was a time when there was a shortage of shadows/paraprofessionals to help throughout the community, and our assigned coaches would only spend 2-4 weeks supporting a child in need. This was not enough time for the new tools to be put in place or be sustainable, so I found myself naturally stepping in and assisting these children.

I also observed consistently that in the classrooms where the teachers prioritized social/emotional learning rather than a focus on academics, the children were more responsive and willing to listen.

TBE, with your [Susie Weiner's] mentorship, afforded me the opportunity to hone in on behavioral development and focus my attention on those children who needed support. I sought out training and earned endorsement from the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health as an Early Childhood Family Specialist. In addition, I am fortunate to have the guidance, professional training, and supervision of child psychologist Dr. Ira Glovinsky, Ph.D.

Q. Why did you choose to work here at the TBE ECC?

A. TBE has been my professional home for the last 16 years. I appreciate the support, teamwork, and the flexibility of my ECC family – and I get to do what I love. The more I work with children, the more inspiration I gain from their ability to live in the moment and continue to strengthen their inner compass.

Q. What do you wish all people who work with young children ages 0-5 knew?

A. To truly support a child's success, educators must listen with intent and observe with care to understand their needs and learning styles. Letting children take the lead in their learning journey lays the groundwork for a lifelong passion for learning. This approach allows creative expression and curiosity to flourish, enriching the educational experience for both children and educators.

Q. In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge for families with young children in 2024?

A. The enduring effects on children and their families from long-term isolation coupled with the dependance on technology are huge challenges. This combination has resulted in a lack of communication and social development skills, which puts extra stress on families. In my private practice, I prioritize the relationship between child and parent, and for both to understand the others' needs. We work as a team to create an ideal environment for social and emotional growth.



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