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## Bringing It All Together

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*Yoon Seo ran around the block area swinging one arm wildly up and down and making loud crashing sounds with his voice. All around him, small groups of children were noisily at play. His teacher, Ms. Gloria, watched Yoon Seo carefully to see if his behavior would decrease on its own or increase in intensity. When it was clear that Yoon Seo was becoming more and more agitated in his surroundings, Ms. Gloria walked over slowly and put a gentle hand on his back. “Yoon Seo, you look really excited. It’s pretty busy over here.” He continued to move around haphazardly and did not seem to notice Ms. Gloria’s comment. “I know it’s sometimes hard to play in our busy classroom. Let’s go take a rest together in the book area where we can look at books, and you can snuggle with your special blanket.”*

*Ms. Gloria and Yoon Seo spent several minutes in the book area looking at books while Yoon Seo held his special blanket up to his cheek. When Yoon Seo appeared relaxed and focused, Ms. Gloria said, “Sometimes we all need a little rest to feel better. When the room gets too noisy for me, I go to the play dough table. It looks like play dough and your blanket help you feel better.”*

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The strategies described above had been planned for Yoon Seo, but similar techniques can help many preschool children. In this situation, Ms. Gloria recognizes that Yoon Seo is overstimulated by his environment and works to help him attend to his personal cues and preferences. Her interaction style is warm and reassuring and helps maintain a positive sense of self for Yoon Seo. She also lets

him know what seems to help him “feel better” as a point of reference for the next time he begins to feel overstimulated.

### Engaging Families

The following ideas may be suggested by teachers, published in classroom newsletters, or mentioned in parent–teacher conversations, as ways families can enhance their children’s social and emotional understanding and self-regulation abilities at home.

- ✓ Share stories with their children about what they were like as babies and converse together about the ways they have changed and grown.
- ✓ Respond to children’s observations of other people’s characteristics by sharing ideas about the many ways people can be the same *and* different.
- ✓ In circumstances that evoke frustration or sadness (e.g., accidentally spilling something in the kitchen, missing an absent family member), model for children constructive coping strategies. Letting children know that frustrating and sad things happen to everyone sometimes allows family members to share ideas about how to handle strong feelings.
- ✓ While sharing a storybook with children, wonder together about how the story’s characters might be feeling and why. This is one way families can help children identify emotions and learn words that describe them (e.g., *excited*, *surprised*, and *frustrated*).
- ✓ Think about the range of activities their children engage in most days and help them balance vigorous activity with calm and focused times.