

Reflection

Video Transcript

Title Screen: Reflection, The Maryland EXCELS and Maryland State Department of Education logos.

This video is an animated presentation where the content on the slides is represented in the narration.

Narrator: Reflection allows you to process a situation to identify what happened, how you responded, how others responded, and what you could do differently next time. This is a common tool that early educators use to continually improve their own practices. It's also a powerful tool to help children build social-emotional skills and process their own behavior.

For preschoolers and school-aged children, walk through these questions together:

- What happened?
- How did you feel or react?
- How did your friend feel?
- What could we do differently next time?

You can encourage children's reflection by using tools or visuals. Children can identify how they felt in the moment by using a feelings chart with real-life images and the written word.

Some children, either because of age or developmental level, may not be ready to reflect on their own, but they will begin to learn reflection skills as they watch adults who talk through reflection processes out loud. For example: "Your friend looked sad when you took their toy. Next time, you can ask me to help you find another toy."

It is important to note that reflection is not a timeout. Sending a child away as a punishment doesn't help them process or learn. A calming space with sensory toys, books, or calming music can be helpful, but only if it's offered as a choice or used with support. Sit with the child, ask open-ended questions, and guide them through the thinking process. As they grow and develop, they will be able to do this with less support.

Take time to do your own professional reflection. What patterns are you noticing? Are certain behaviors happening at the same time of day? Do certain behaviors only occur between particular children? Your own reflection can lead to better support strategies moving forward.

Think about it. How does your program help children reflect on their behavior after a conflict or challenging moment? Is there a designated calming or reflection space for children to process? If so, how is it used? How does the reflection process change with children of different ages and developmental levels?

Please take advantage of this time to answer the questions. This will help you build an effective Positive Guidance Policy or strengthen the policy your program already has.