

**Creative Approaches to Connecting
with Children, Families, and
Professionals:
Humor at Its Best**




Early On Center for Higher Education
Bite Size Webinar
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**Welcome and
Appreciation!**



Why This Topic?

- Stress
- Rapport building and collaboration
- Focus on the task at hand
- Strong support networks
- Increased productivity
- The big picture
- Happy and healthy children, staff, and families!



Productivity Roadblocks

- Identification of Challenges
- Strategies to Reduce or Eliminate Barriers
- Differences
- Why?



Differences of Opinion


- Definition of “sense of humor”
- Measurement of humor
- Does having a sense of humor matter?
- Impacts on all involved


Did You Know?


The average preschool child laughs how many times a day?



The average adults laughs how many times a day?


 **Did You Know?**
A great sense of humor or appreciation for humor can potentially add 8 years to your life!

 **Did You Know?**
Hearty laughter is a good way to jog internally – a good belly laugh is equal to 10 minutes on the rowing machine!

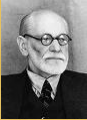
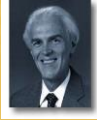

 **Did You Know?**
People smile only 35% as much as they think they do!

Did You Know?

Life is FUNNY! 😊




Theories of Humor Development

Psychoanalytic Theory	Cognitive Theory	Social Theory
Sigmund Freud	Paul McGhee	Doris Bergen
“...a safety valve for relieving excess energy in the nervous system.”	Incongruity – Resolution	Social Interaction
		

Benefits of Humor


Variety of Benefits

- In 1621, Robert Burton addressed the benefits of humor in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*,
 “mirth purges the blood, confirms health, causes a fresh, pleasing and fine colour, prolongs life, whets the wit, and makes the body young, lively and fit for any manner of employment” (p. 6).



Health Aspects

- “You don’t stop laughing because you grow old, you grow old because you stop laughing.” – Gerry Hopman
- Dr. Patch Adams – Gesundheit! Hospital Project



Health Aspects

- Humor = less stress and anxiety
- Stimulates circulation, relaxes muscles
- People that laugh regularly take fewer sick days



Social Aspects

- Humor flourishes best in safe settings
- Increases likeability and ease with friendships in children and adults
- Increases approachability, optimism, and positive communication



Facilitation of Learning

- Cognitive gains from humorous approaches at all levels.
- Humor in instruction increases information acquisition.
- Higher levels of engagement and participation.



Promotes Healthy and Optimistic Outlook on Life

- Reduces anxiety
- Softens hostility
- Strengthens coping skills
- Predictive of greater levels of mental and physical health, life satisfaction, job success, and marital stability



What Makes Good Early Childhood Professionals?

- Love for children
- Training and experience
- Respect for and trust in children
- Developmental learning theory
- Integrity
- Humor
- Courage



Cartwright (1999)

Benefits of Positive Attitude



Creating and Maintaining a Positive Attitude

1. Find the Humor
2. Play the Positives
3. Simplify!
4. Insulate Against the Negatives
5. Give Your Positive Attitude to Others
6. Look Better to Yourself
7. Accept the Physical Connection
8. Clarify Your Mission



Characteristics of Happy People

- They devote a great amount of time to family and friends
- They are comfortable expressing gratitude
- They are the first to offer a helping hand
- They express optimism when imagining their futures



Characteristics of Happy People

- They savor life's pleasures and live in the moment
- They make physical activity a daily habit
- They are deeply committed to lifelong goals
- They show poise and strength in coping with crises



Why Be Happy? 😊

Compared with less happy peers, happy people are:

- More sociable and energetic, more charitable and cooperative, and better liked by others
- Better leaders and negotiators; higher wage earners
- More resilient in adversity; have stronger immune systems; live longer

What Determines Happiness?

- 50% Set point/genetic make-up
- 40% Intentional activity
- 10% Circumstance

So What Now?

- Listen to Families!
- Research shows...
- Lighten Up
- Laugh at our embarrassing moments
- Take a humor break every day
- Start your own humor file



So What Now?

- Realize you don't have to be funny to increase laughter in your environment
- Be respectful in your humor – laugh at yourself first, laugh at your own mistakes



So What Now?

- Surround yourself with funniness
- Create a balance for you and those around you
- Utilize resources



So What Now?



Once upon a time...
What is your plan?



Thank You!

Have a
GREAT
and
HUMOR
FILLED
day!




Thank You!

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**Humor Barometer
Reading Time**


- Please answer the following questions **honestly** using the key below.
- 1—Never
- 2—Almost Never
- 3—Seldom
- 4—Sometimes
- 5—Often
- 6—Almost Always
- 7—Always



Let's get started...

1. I have a lot of laughs in my life:
2. I have a lot of fun:
3. I laugh at my own mistakes:
4. I think happy and fun thoughts:
5. I am spontaneous:

- 
6. I like to hear and tell jokes:
 7. I take myself lightly at work:
 8. I like to watch and read humorous material:
 9. I take responsibility for my happiness:
 10. I consider others' feelings before I attempt any humor:

- 
11. I surround myself with positive people:
 12. I plan time to play:
 13. I avoid offending people with my humor:
 14. I like to hear and tell funny life and work experiences:
 15. I use my sense of humor to deal with difficult times:

- 16. I don't mind acting silly once in a while:
- 17. I look forward to and take regular vacations:
- 18. I enjoy contributing my energy and time to things:
- 19. I use humor to deal with stress:
- 20. I believe that laughing and humor are good for my health:

How Did You Do?

- 115-140
 - Excellent sense of humor and attitude – you are an advocate and positively influence others with your humor.
- 85-114
 - Average and healthy sense of humor.
- 50-84
 - Fair sense of humor – a little “humor impaired” and need to do a little work.
- 25-49
 - You are definitely “humor impaired” and you need to do some serious work.
- 0-24
 - You suffer from “seriousitis” and are in need of drastic intervention!
