Banking Time

Banking Time is an evidenced based strategy developed by Dr. Robert Pianta, Dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. Teachers have reported greater teacher child closeness and gains in children’s frustration tolerance, competence and task orientation and decreases in behavior problems. Children who show many challenging behaviors have difficulty forming close relationships with others and learning skills in regulating thoughts and feelings. Banking Time is a set of techniques designed to build supportive relationships between you and the children who need those relationships the most.

Banking Time are 10-15 minute one on one play sessions with a teacher and child that take place 2-3 times a week. It is called Banking Time because you are banking positive relationship time with the child that you can later draw upon if classroom conflicts or problems arise. Important aspects of Banking Time are, the sessions are consistent, child focused and they happen on days even when the child is really misbehaving. Banking Time is all about having the child know that you are there for them on good days and on the not so good days. Banking Time is also not about teaching. They are about you taking time to really pay attention to the child and follow their lead.

Teacher’s Role in Banking Time:

Observing:
Observing means that you’re carefully watching and taking mental note of the child’s behavior, words and feelings, as well as your own thoughts and feelings during each Banking Time session.

Narrating:
Similar to observing, narrating does not include any teaching, directing, questioning or even positive reinforcement. There are three important tools that will help you when you are narrating: reflection, imitation and the sportscaster technique.

- **Narrating-Reflection:**
  Reflection is when you listen to the child and repeat them back in a slightly different way. For example, if the child said, “Play-dough is my favorite,” you might say, “You really like play-dough”

- **Narrating-Imitation:**
  Imitation is a non-verbal narrating tool. When you imitate, you watch the child carefully and follow his or her lead. So if the child starts stacking blocks, you start stacking blocks too.

- **Narrating-Sportscaster Technique:**
  Finally, the sportscaster technique is when you carefully watch the child and describe the actions you see. So, if the child is organizing counting bears by color, you might say, “I see that you are putting all of the blue bears together and now you’re putting all the green ones together.”

Labeling:
The technique of labeling is when you communicate out loud what you notice about a child’s feelings and emotions.
Developing Relational Themes for Banking Time: During banking time sessions you will be conveying messages to the child such as:

- “I’m here for you.”
- “I accept you.”
- “You are safe with me.”
- “Adults are helpers.”
- “I am paying attention.”
- “I’ll be here when times are tough.”

Be thoughtful about which messages are most helpful to the child with whom you are working. Then find ways to convey these messages, not only during banking time sessions but throughout the day. A child who is continually getting into trouble in the classroom may really need you to convey that you know he can do things well or that you will be there when times are tough. A child who never comes to you for support may need her to really see adults as helpers. Being aware of relational themes you’re working on with the child helps you be intentional with your interactions with them throughout the day. These messages may change over time depending on how your relationship is progressing.

For more information on Banking Time there is an online course called Effective Classroom Interactions, Supporting Young Children’s Development given by the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia at the following link:

https://www.coursera.org/course/earlychildhood