



# Making the Most of the Toolkit: Community Partners

## Who are Community Partners?

In our current research and implementation efforts, we have a range of individuals using FYBS outside of school and home settings. We refer to these individuals as **community partners**. Some examples of community partners we have engaged with are:

- Speech-language pathologists working in community settings (e.g., clinics, hospitals, private practice)
- Religious educators (e.g., Sunday school teachers)
- Psychologists and mental health counselors
- Community arts (e.g., theaters, art classes)
- Occupational therapists working in community settings (e.g., clinics, hospitals, private practice)
- Family-school partnerships programs

These individuals are using FYBS in a variety of ways, from large group lessons to small group and individual interventions. In this guide, we offer some ideas and examples to support implementation across a variety of settings and contexts.

To help you easily and effectively use FYBS in your setting, we recommend aligning with the recommended practices you likely already have in place. Pulling from evidence-informed best practices (e.g., High Leverage Practices<sup>i</sup>; Low-Intensity Strategies<sup>ii</sup>), consider the following to set up for success:

Recommended Practice	Examples
Maximize structure and predictability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Let children know what strategy you are practicing and when and where they can expect practice to happen.</li><li>• Let them know in advance what practice sessions will look like.</li><li>• Use a similar structure in each FYBS lesson. Our facilitator guides can support you with this.</li></ul>
Teach and encourage positive expectations and routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Let children know the expectations for FYBS practice.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Are these expectations different than other routines? If so, these expectations should be taught and encouraged.</li><li>○ If not, tie the expectations back to familiar routines.</li></ul></li></ul>
Provide precorrections and reminders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Before the start of FYBS times/practice sessions, remind children of expectations.</li></ul>
Reinforce use of the strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• During initial teaching and practice sessions, reinforce using the strategies by providing behavior-specific praise (e.g., "Jayden, great job practicing our new strategy!").</li><li>• If you have a reinforcement system in place, consider providing (e.g., tickets, points) when children practice these new skills.</li></ul>

Most importantly, we know that one-and-done initiatives are unlikely to have a lasting impact. Repetition and multiple exposures to new content or a new skill are essential; this goes for the FYBS skills as well! Here are some of our ideas for integrating FYBS into your current interventions, programming, etc.:

1. **Find ways to build in practice.** In your existing schedule or routine, look for places where you can have children spend 5 minutes practicing a strategy. For example, you might start each session with an opportunity to practice or use their favorite strategy and share ways that they tried out a strategy since the last session.
2. **Pick a “strategy of the month.”** When first introducing a strategy, you may choose to introduce that strategy and then spend focused time practicing before introducing a new strategy. For example, during your first session of a month, you might choose to introduce a strategy and then find ways to practice that strategy each session during the month. When children can independently demonstrate the strategy, or you notice children using the strategy without prompting, you might introduce a new strategy and repeat the process.
3. **Plan for generalization and maintenance of use.** Having children practice strategies in various locations can help to promote generalization – meaning they will learn how to use the strategies in other settings. You can extend practice beyond your setting by connecting with families or other important adults to share information about FYBS strategies and suggestions for practice. See resources like our Tips Sheets for materials that can be easily shared.

To make sure that children continue using the strategy after you are done actively teaching and practicing – in other words, they maintain the skill – add unexpected or random reminders to use a strategy. For example, a few weeks after you have shifted to focus on a new strategy, remind or ask children to practice the previous strategy. This will communicate that even though we have moved on, we can and should continue to use and practice what we have previously learned.


Tip: To make reminders or prompts more fun, once you have taught all planned strategies, you can incorporate a “mystery motivator” to encourage the child(ren) to practice a strategy of focus each session. At the start of the session, pick a strategy out of a hat/container/etc. The child(ren) will be tasked with practicing the strategy at least once during the session. If, at the end of the session, you've seen the child(ren) practice the strategy, they can have a chance to earn a reward (e.g., prize from the prize box, 5 minutes of a fun game at the end of the session).

4. **Integrate with an existing program or intervention.** If you are already using a program or intervention, you can add FYBS instruction to enhance skill building. For example, if you are using an existing social skills curriculum, you might use selected FYBS strategies and materials to reinforce skills like initiating social interactions. You can also teach children how the “language” of FYBS aligns with other teaching. For instance, if you have been using the cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) triangle to teach the connection between thoughts, feelings, and behavior, you might have children identify the thought, feeling, and behavior that a character had in a strategy video.

# How Do I Choose Which Strategies to Use?

To help you select strategies, we have created resources to help guide decisions as to which strategies will best align with your goals for the child(ren) with whom you are working.

Our **Guiding Decisions Chart** can help you select strategies based on the skills taught in each strategy relative to the goals of the children with whom you work.



**Guiding Decisions - Selecting Strategies to Use**

	Setting Your Situation	Refocusing Your Attention	Shifting Your Thoughts	Settling Your Body
<b>CALM YOUR SELF</b>	Belly Breathing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Shake Out the Yuck	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Ground it Down	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Chillax in my Head	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>CATCH YOUR FEELINGS</b>	Float Your Boat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Turn the Dial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Push the Clouds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Smell the Roses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>CONNECT WITH OTHERS</b>	Feel it Together	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bring a High 5!	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Be a Kind Helper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3 Friendly Wishes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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**Setting Your Situation** means taking actions to proactively increase the likelihood of experiencing positive emotions or to modify a situation to change its impact.

Strategies that target **Refocusing Your Attention** teach children to shift their focus from an undesired or negative emotion towards more desired emotions by using distraction or concentration.

Strategies that support **Shifting Your Thoughts** demonstrate how to change one's interpretation of a situation to change how one feels, or to allow one to think differently about how they can manage a difficult situation.

And finally, strategies that focus on **Settling Your Body** teach children how to change their emotional response to a challenging situation by altering their behavior or physiological response.

**Reminder:** teaching emotion-regulation strategies is not a replacement for broader actions to support and advocate for kids. For example, if a child is upset because they are being teased, bullied, or discriminated against, adults have a responsibility to address the issue with others. To

more deeply consider responsible and responsive use of FYBS, please see our briefs entitled, [Considerations for Responsive and Responsible Use of FYBS: Brief 1](#) and [Considerations for Responsive and Responsible Use of FYBS: Brief 2](#).

### Maggie makes decisions about how to use FYBS


Maggie, a speech-language pathologist working at a community-based clinic, decides to use all FYBS components with a 6-year-old client who struggles with social communication and emotion regulation. She knows that this client will benefit from learning strategies that promote positive social relationships, so Maggie knows they will focus on Connect With Others strategies. She also wants to teach strategies that focus on settling the body when faced with difficult situations.

Maggie decides that it would be reasonable to focus on one strategy per week, as she meets with this client twice each week. After reading the strategy descriptions and reviewing the Facilitator Materials, she decides to teach all the Connect With Others strategies, along with Belly Breathing, Shake Out the Yuck, and Ground it Down. This way, the student can learn strategies to set their situation through positive social relationships, which is a goal they are working on in sessions, along with some options for settling the body.

We also offer a **Planning Worksheet** to use in your lesson planning. This worksheet provides a space to record which components you are going to include, what resources (e.g., computer, printer with colored ink, puppet-making supplies) you might need, logistics – meaning when and where you are going to teach – and any adaptations needed based on the children with whom you will work (e.g., increased font size on materials to support a child with visual impairment).

#### Pick a Strategy

- Intro: Feel Your Best Self
- Belly Breathing
- Shake Out the Yuck
- Ground it Down
- Chillax in my Head
- Float Your Boat
- Turn the Dial
- Push the Clouds
- Smell the Roses
- Feel it Together
- Bring a High 5!
- Be a Kind Helper
- 3 Friendly Wishes



#### Guiding Decisions - Planning

Relevant state standard(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**What components are you going to include?**

Videos    Strategy Cards    Tip Sheets    Reflection Sheets

Puppet-Making

**What resources do you need to teach the strategy?**

**When and where are you going to teach the strategy?**

**Consider your setting and kids. What adaptations do you need to make?**


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### Maggie completes the Planning Worksheet

To help with planning, Maggie prints the Guiding Decisions – Planning worksheet to complete for the first strategy, Feel It Together. She decides to include the videos, strategy cards, and puppet-making. She will also print copies of the tip sheets for each strategy to send home with the client. Before getting started with strategy instruction, Maggie and the client complete a puppet-making activity during a session. She then decides that initial teaching of the strategy will take place during the first session each week, and their second session each week will include opportunities for practice in her office and other locations. She has a large monitor in her office to show the videos, and she has a color printer she can use to print the strategy cards. In terms of adaptations, Maggie decides to write out social scenarios that have been challenging for this client on index cards. She and the client will then act out the scenarios using their puppets, and they will work together with their puppets to identify when the strategy could have been used in each scenario.

Finally, we offer an **Implementation Checklist** to help you reflect on your implementation. We have intentionally not numbered the steps, as we want you to use FYBS as flexibly as you'd like. However, once you've selected steps you intend to incorporate, it can be helpful to monitor your actual use of those steps. Feel free to cross off or circle N/A for any steps you aren't using.

### Feel Your Best Self Implementation Checklist



**Directions:** Write the name of the strategy you are evaluating in column 2. Circle the number that represents your implementation of each step used, or N/A if steps are not used. Write the number you circled in the 3<sup>rd</sup> column, then sum the numbers in the "Total" box. Calculate the % of implementation by dividing the total by the number of steps implemented, then multiplying by 100.

Date: _____ Setting: _____	<b>Key for Scoring:</b> 0 = Step was not used 1 = Step was partially used 2 = Step was used N/A = Step was not applicable				<b>Step Total (row)</b>
Strategy Name: _____					
<b>FYBS Steps</b>					
Did I introduce the strategy?	0	1	2	N/A	
Did I show the corresponding video?	0	1	2	N/A	
Did I check for understanding?	0	1	2	N/A	
Did I provide the strategy card?	0	1	2	N/A	
Did we practice the strategy?	0	1	2	N/A	
Did we reflect on how the strategy worked and how we might use it in our own lives?	0	1	2	N/A	
Did we fill out the reflection sheet?	0	1	2	N/A	
<b>OPTIONAL:</b> Did we use our puppets to practice the strategy?	0	1	2	N/A	
<b>Total:</b>					
<b>Percent:</b> (Total/(Steps Implemented x 2)) x 100 =					
<b>Comments/Notes:</b>					

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### Maggie uses the Implementation Checklist

After making decisions about which strategies to teach and planning for implementation, Maggie decides that she wants to make sure she teaches each strategy as intended. She

prints a checklist for each strategy and writes the strategy name above the scoring column. Since she is starting with Feel it Together, she knows she will be filling out the sheet at the end of the first session.

After the initial teaching, Maggie completes the first column of the checklist. She feels confident that she fully implemented the first four steps and gives herself a rating of 2 for each of those steps. They also did a great job of practicing Feel it Together, including with their puppets, and talking about how it could apply to their own lives, so she gives herself a 2 for those steps. Finally, Maggie writes herself a note to build in more movement breaks going forward to help the student sustain their attention.

### Feel Your Best Self Implementation Checklist



**Directions:** Write the name of the strategy you are evaluating in column 2. Circle the number that represents your implementation of each step used, or N/A if steps are not used. Write the number you circled in the 3<sup>rd</sup> column, then sum the numbers in the "Total" box. Calculate the % of implementation by dividing the total by the number of steps implemented, then multiplying by 100.

Date: <u>5/18/23</u> Setting: <u>Clinic</u>		<b>Key for Scoring:</b> 0 = Step was not used 1 = Step was partially used 2 = Step was used N/A = Step was not applicable			<b>Step Total (row)</b>
Strategy Name: <u>Feel It Together</u>					
<b>FYBS Steps</b>					
Did I introduce the strategy?	0	1	2	N/A	2
Did I show the corresponding video?	0	1	2	N/A	2
Did I check for understanding?	0	1	2	N/A	2
Did I provide the strategy card?	0	1	2	N/A	2
Did we practice the strategy?	0	1	2	N/A	2
Did we reflect on how the strategy worked and how we might use it in our own lives?	0	1	2	N/A	2
Did we fill out the reflection sheet?	0	1	2	N/A	
<b>OPTIONAL:</b> Did we use our puppets to practice the strategy?	0	1	2	N/A	2
<b>Total:</b>					<b>14</b>
<b>Percent:</b> (Total/(Steps Implemented x 2)) x 100 =					<b>(14/14) x 100 = 100</b>

**Comments/Notes:**

When I introduce Bring a High 5!, I'll build in more movement breaks.

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We welcome your feedback as you use the toolkit so that we can make it the best that it can be. We have an [online form](#) where you can give us feedback any time!

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<sup>i</sup> McLeskey, J., Barringer, M-D., Billingsley, B., Brownell, M., Jackson, D., Kennedy, M., Lewis, T., Maheady, L., Rodriguez, J., Scheeler, M. C., Winn, J., & Ziegler, D. (2017, January). High-leverage practices in special education. Arlington: Council for Exceptional Children & CEEDAR Center. [https://highleveragepractices.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/SEBfinal.pdf?\\_gl=1\\*1itdy04\\*\\_ga\\*MTc3NTEzNTUwNj4xNjQ0NTE1NDQ3\\*\\_ga\\_L4ZFTNESGT\\*MTY4NDUxNTQ0Nv4xLjEuMTY4NDUxNTQ1MC4xMi4wLjA](https://highleveragepractices.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/SEBfinal.pdf?_gl=1*1itdy04*_ga*MTc3NTEzNTUwNj4xNjQ0NTE1NDQ3*_ga_L4ZFTNESGT*MTY4NDUxNTQ0Nv4xLjEuMTY4NDUxNTQ1MC4xMi4wLjA).

<sup>ii</sup> Lane, K. L., Menzies, H. M., Ennis, R. P., & Oakes, W. P. (2015). Supporting behavior for school success: A step-by-step guide to key strategies. Guilford Press.