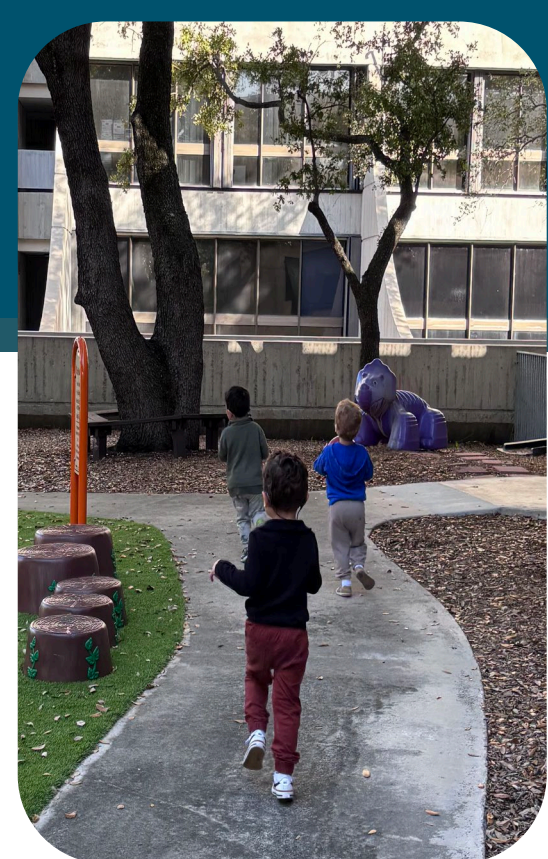


# Utilizing Play to Promote Theory of Mind, Social/Emotional Development, and Cultural Awareness

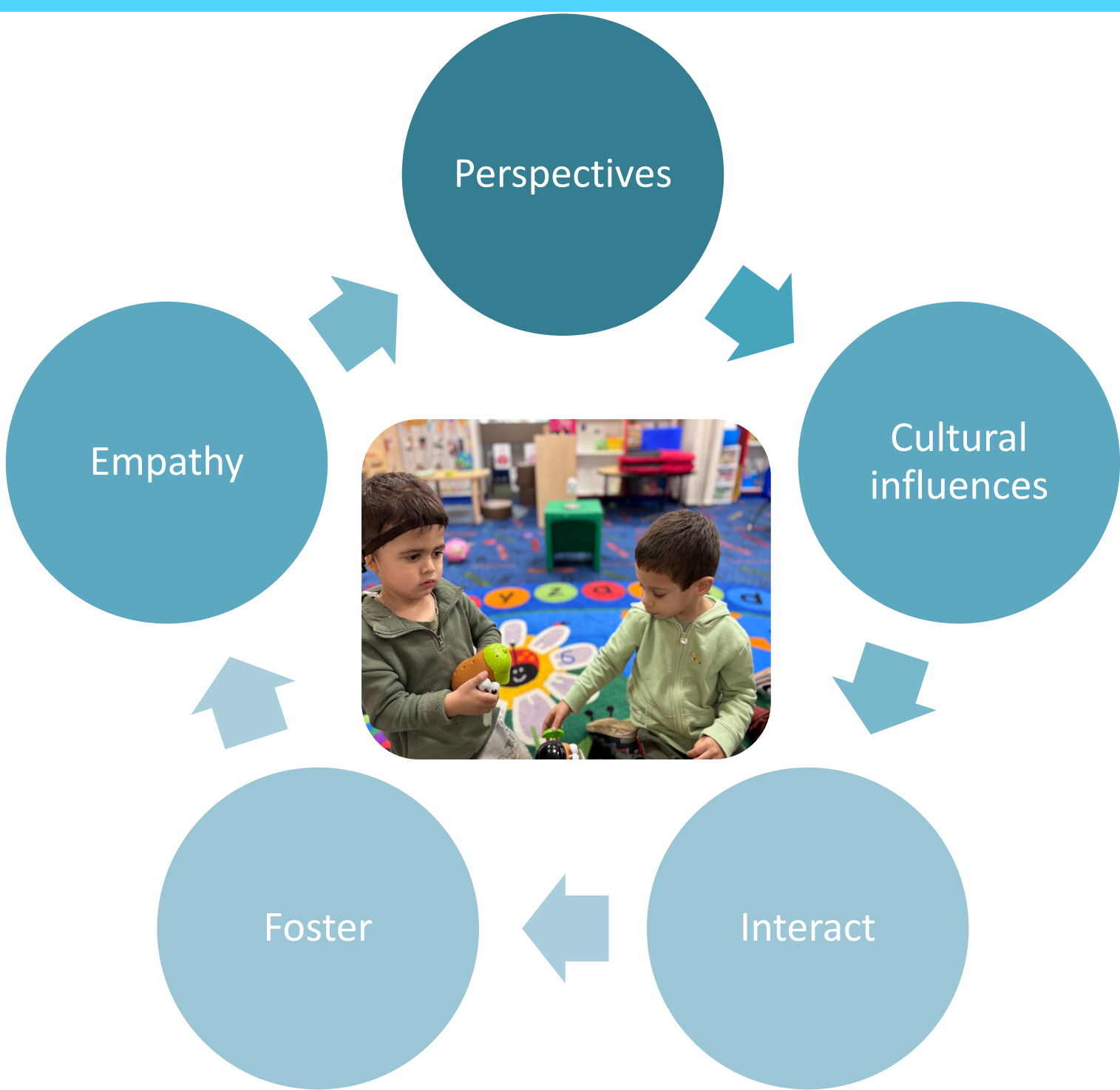


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## Abstract

Play is a meaningful context in which deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) children learn language, engage with cultural influences, learn the perspectives of others, and develop social skills. Through play, children learn critical skills through peer interaction, which can help build cultural awareness (Miskiel et al., 2023, Ray et al., 2022). Additionally, children learn Theory of Mind (TOM) through play. Understanding these nuances is important for teachers to create immersive play experiences and help children develop the skills they need to successfully interact with peers and understand cultural differences. Research shows that teachers can foster the development of social and emotional skills through play, including the development of empathy for others, listening for understanding, and sharing their own points of view (Miskiel et al., 2023, Ray et al., 2022).



## Learner Outcomes

1. Identify ways to develop cultural awareness through play experiences
2. List three strategies for developing social/emotional skills through play experiences
3. Explain how Theory of Mind (TOM) can be developed through play experiences

## Developing social and emotional skills through play

- Three strategies** to help foster social and emotional skills through play include:
1. Learn appropriate ways to *identify* and *label* emotions and acceptable actions to deal with their own and their peers' emotions.
  2. In the classroom, provide *opportunities* for cooperative and parallel play with peers.
  3. Demonstrate *strategies* for children to develop their emotional knowledge.



## Strategies to develop emotional knowledge

Provide toys and set up centers for play that are universally common to use themed toys such as multicultural baby dolls.

**Food is a way cultures express themselves. Provide diverse foods in a toy kitchen for children to explore.**

Welcome parents to **expand** their understanding of their cultures.

**When the classroom is inviting children feel more comfortable to play in the same ways they do at home.**

## Cultural Awareness and Play Experiences

**Play is a crucial social activity for all children. Factors that impact children who are DHH include their culture and social awareness. Culture is a source of development.**



## Conclusion

DHH children need interaction with rich cultural environments that show them how to play with peers. Teachers can provide models of play that DHH children can replicate. Children can feel confident about new forms of play. Culture plays a key role in how children play together. Understanding the impact of culture can give educators, parents, and providers a perspective of how to make culturally relevant toys accessible to DHH children and their peers.

## Development of Theory of Mind through play

Theory of Mind is defined as the ability to attribute mental states to oneself and to others. When it comes to DHH children TOM can develop differently:

### Perspective taking

Created an ice rink for skating and the students changed it to a hockey rink.

### Contextualization

The students discussed the rules of hockey.

### Perception

When the students decided to play hockey, they divided into two teams and then played the game.

### Predicting

Once the game began, the students predicted that someone would score a goal.

### Social Learning

The students learned about winning and losing, observing and interacting with people around them, and how to navigate social situations effectively.

## References



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