

# Developing Responsive Interactions for Learning



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
OISE | ONTARIO INSTITUTE  
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION





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Emphasize and discuss why *responsive interactions for learning* are a key ingredient for children's learning and development.

②

Identify practices that can increase *responsive interactions for learning*.

③

Identify and reduce challenges to implementing *responsive interactions for learning* in everyday practice



# What are Responsive Interactions for Learning?

# Theories About What's Important for Child Development: Attachment

- Long, enduring, emotionally meaningful tie to a particular individual
- Is the foundation for the ability to form relationships
- Highlights the importance of the quality of interactions
- More recent research highlights the importance of sustained interactions that involve back-and-forth interactions for child development

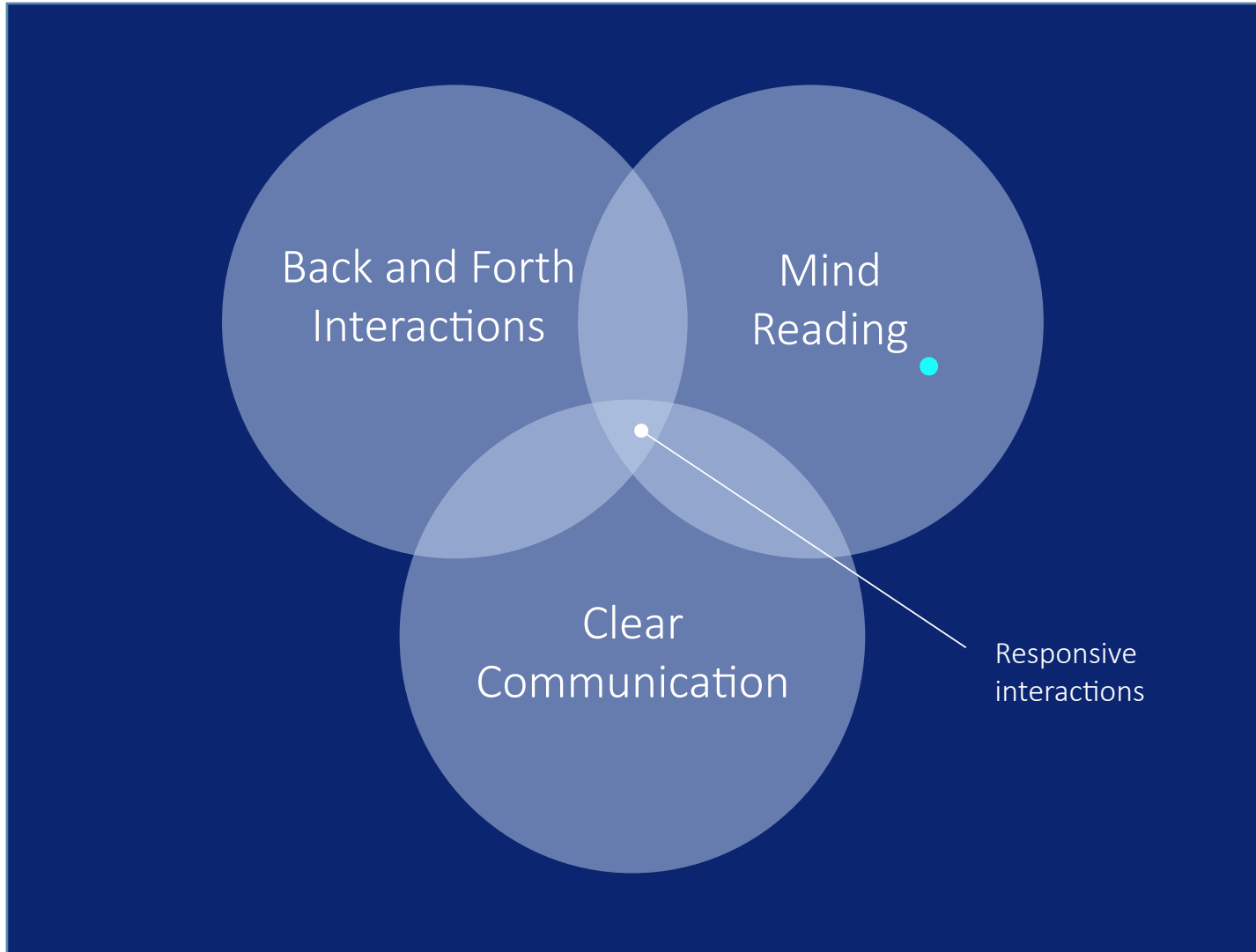
# Responsive Interactions for Learning: Combines *Stimulation* and *Sensitivity*



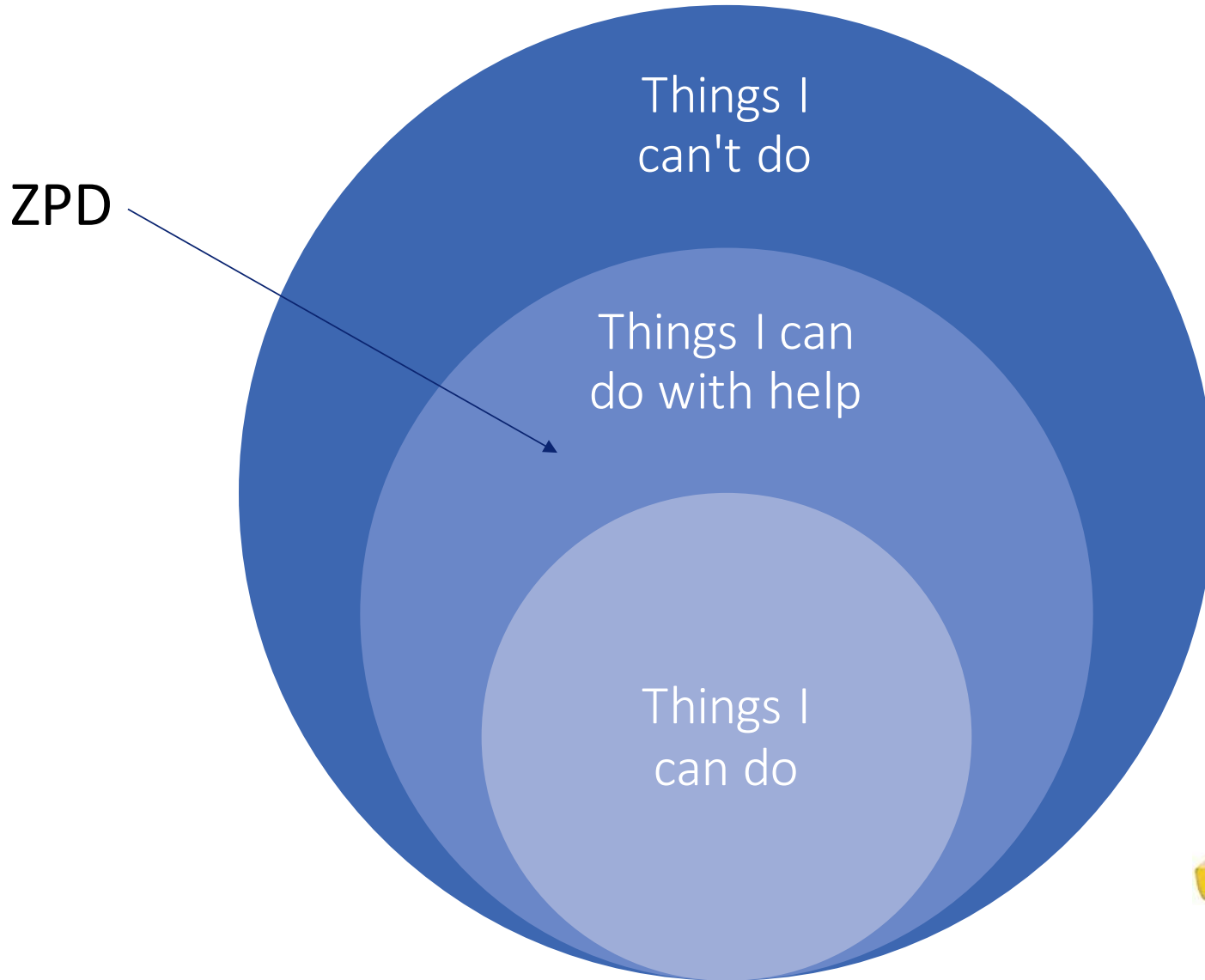
**Stimulation**: Building on the child's interests through attention and language

**Sensitivity**: Warmth, paying attention to and picking up on children's cues

# Three Core Processes of Responsive Interactions for Learning



# Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)



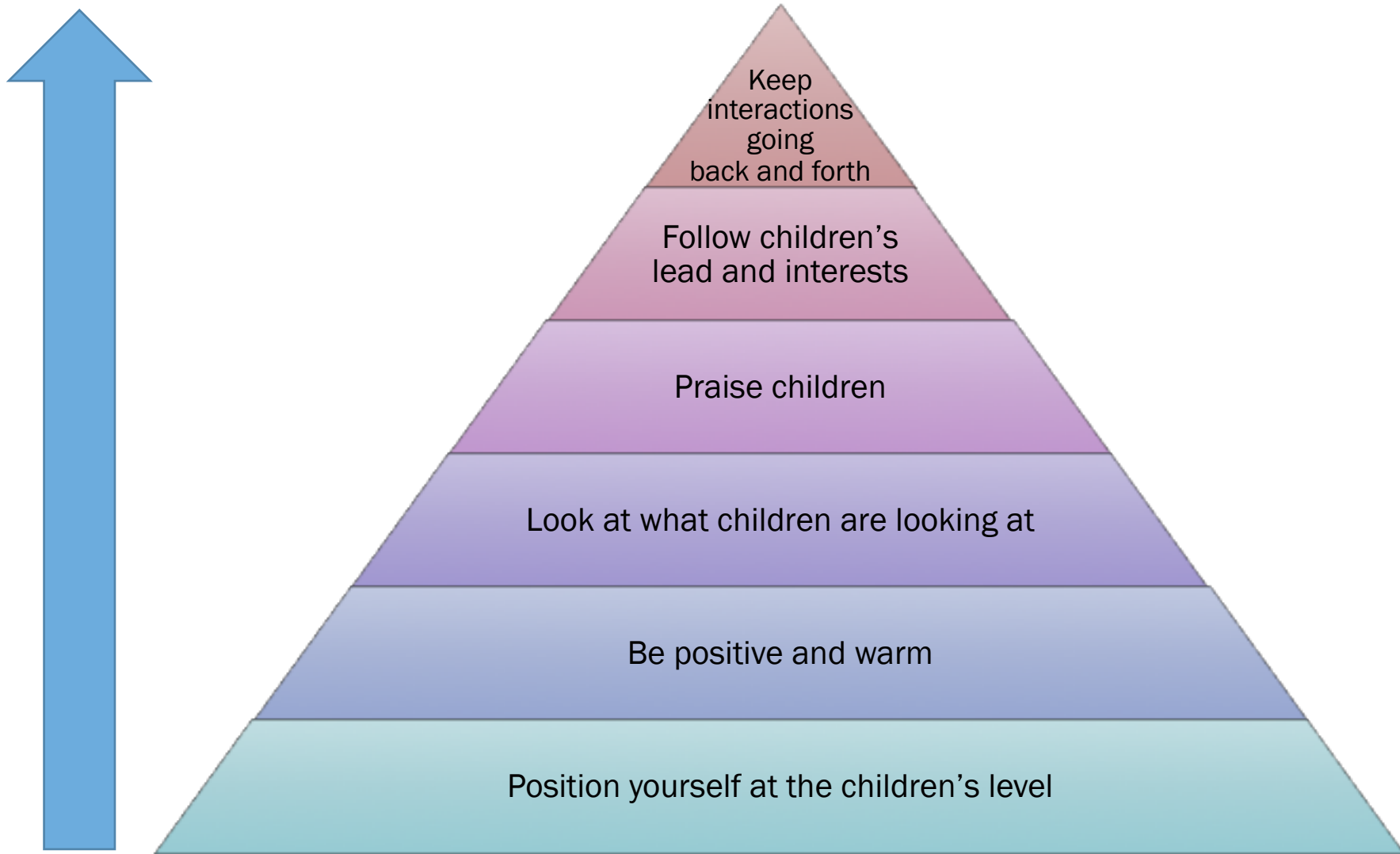
# Back and Forth Interactions

**Facilitating turn-taking interactions by being attentive to and responding to one another's cues.**





# Back and Forth Interactions

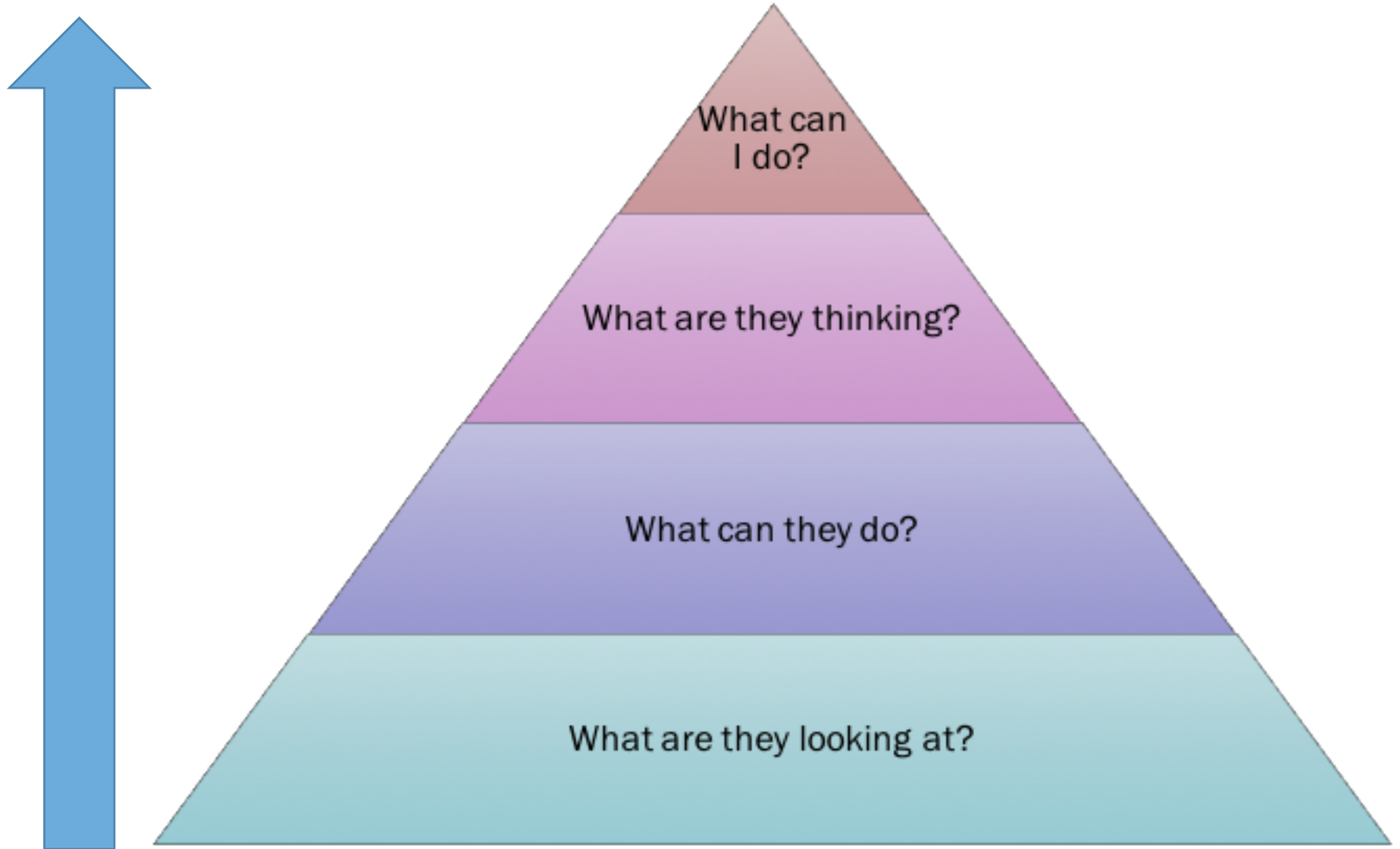


# Mind-Reading

**Taking the child's perspective and modifying behaviour to match their developmental level.**



# Mind-Reading

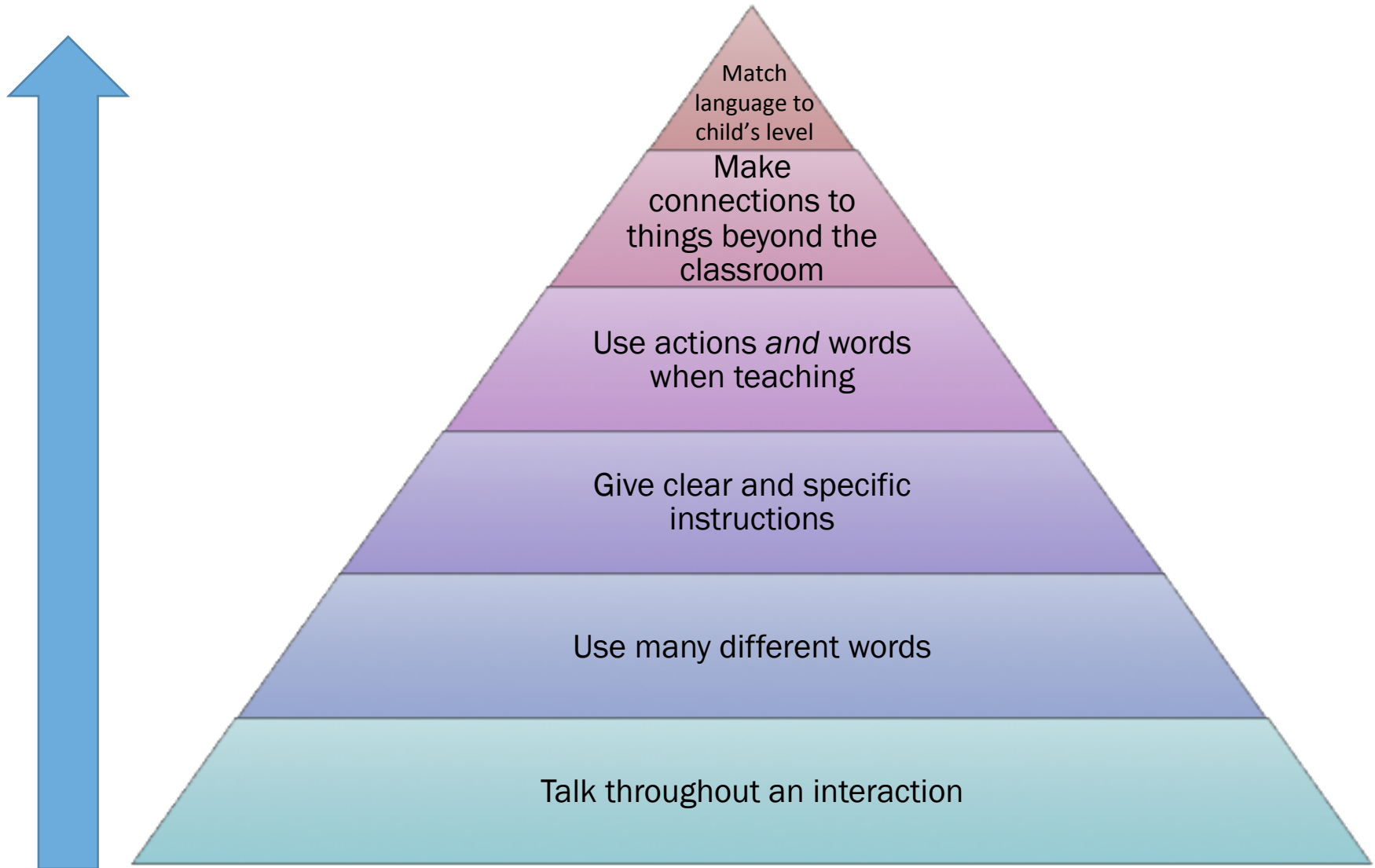


# Clear Communication

**How we communicate information about goals and rules of activities. This type of communication promotes attention and emotion regulation.**



# Clear Communication

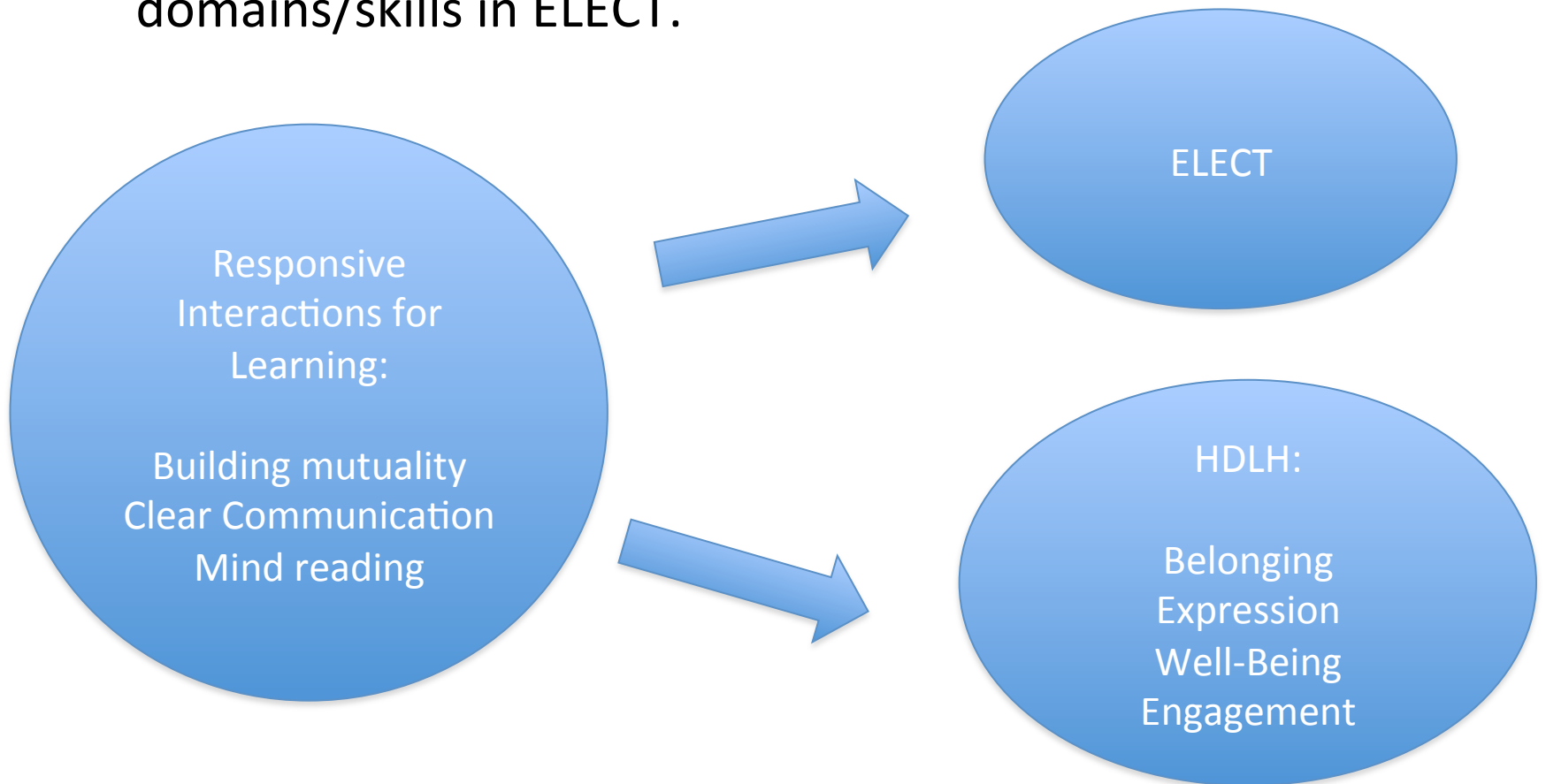


## Of note!

- Responsive Interactions are a *practice* rather than a *tool*
- This means we can incorporate them into our daily practice and not just when completing activities

# Connection with HDLH and ELECT

The three components of Responsive Interactions for Learning support the four foundations of HDLH and the domains/skills in ELECT.



# Early Learning for Every Child Today

## Early Learning for Every Child Today

A framework for Ontario early childhood settings



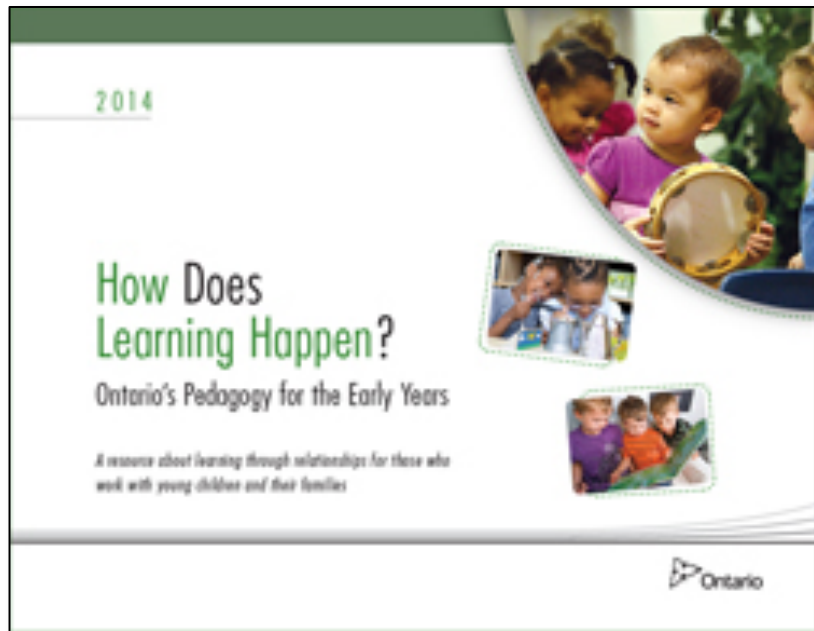
Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning

January 2007

- “[ELECT] is a guide to support curriculum and pedagogy in Ontario’s early childhood settings, including child care centres, kindergarten classrooms, home child care...and other family support programs and early intervention services” (ELECT, 2007, p.3).



# How Does Learning Happen



- “[HDLH] is a key component of Ontario’s vision for the early years. It demonstrates our commitment to strengthening the quality of early years programs by ensuring these programs are centered on the child and the family” (HDLH, 2014, p.2).

# What we know...

Increasing responsive interactions improves the quality of early childhood education settings

Improving the quality of these interactions may in turn improve child outcomes

# Why is what we are doing so important?

Although there is clear evidence of the impact of high-quality child care on child development, many children do not receive this care

We know from research that in general the quality of child care is in the **middle range** on established measures of quality

# Quality of Child Care Centres

Large scale study in North Carolina:

Less than half of infants and toddlers in regulated care were in centres/homes with the highest ratings (4 or 5 stars under the state's 5-star rating system)

(Carpenter, Martin, & Russell, 2005)

# Quality of Toronto Child Care Centres

In 2013 our research team at U of T (Perlman et al.) assessed quality in 240 randomly selected Infant and Toddler classrooms in Toronto

We used the **Classroom Assessment Scoring System** (CLASS - a classroom-level measure of the quality of interactions).

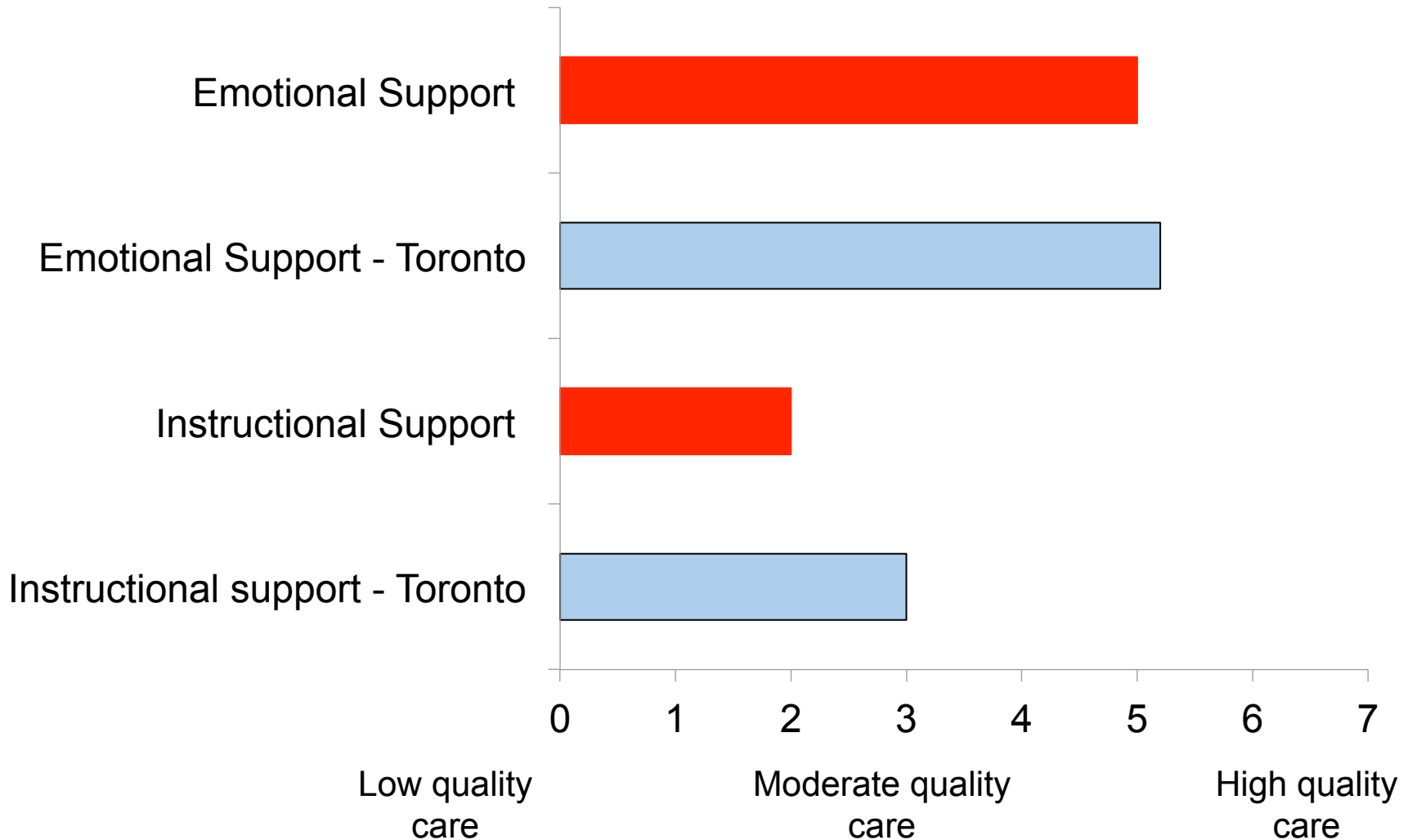
# Defining CLASS Terms

**Emotional support:** assesses how teachers establish and promote a positive climate in their classrooms through interactions.

**Instructional Support:** assesses the ways in which teachers implement curriculum to promote cognitive and language development.

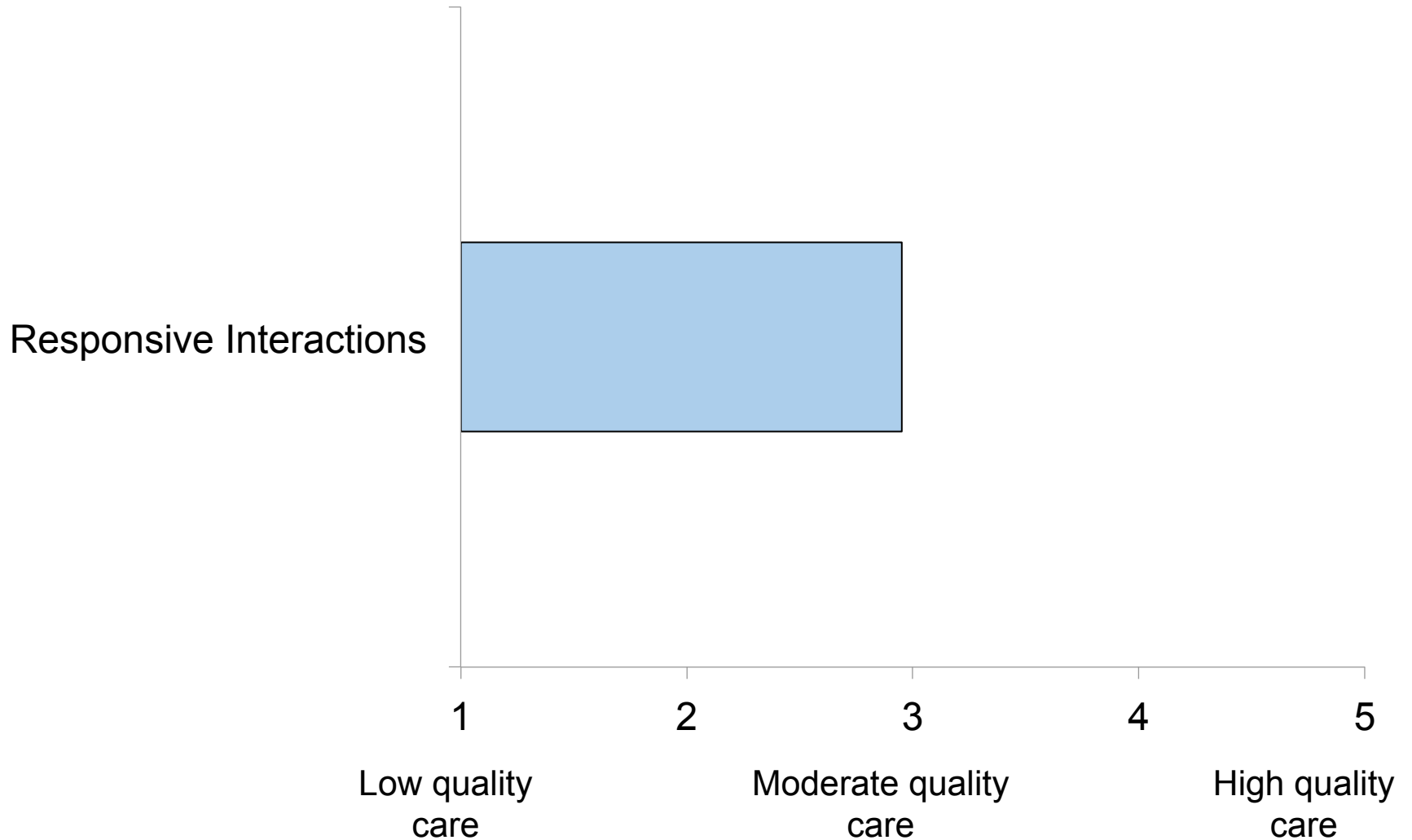
# Quality of Toronto Infant & Toddler Rooms

## Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)



# Quality of Toronto Infant and Toddler Rooms

## Educator Responsive Interactions for Learning





# What does this all mean?

Overall, educators appear to be providing warm, nurturing environments.

There is room to grow in developing children's cognitive, social and emotional development through increasing responsive interactions for learning.

# Emphasizing elements of responsive interactions for learning...

## What would these teaching practices look like with young children?



# Barriers to Implementation

Based on exit interviews with educators, the following barriers to implementation were identified:

- 1 Demands of the day (Time, Paperwork)**
- 2 How to Incorporate/Integrate these practices into daily practice**
- 3 Meeting the needs of multiple children**
- 4 Time and support in pursuing Professional Development**



**What are some realistic,  
small suggestions to help  
increase cognitive  
sensitivity in your day to  
day practice?**

# Final thoughts

- Importance of focusing/re-focusing on responsive interactions for learning as these are linked to positive child outcomes
- Investing in professional development as a way to increase these practices
- Using evidence-based practices/programs to develop these practices
- Creating a way to make these practices more explicit/standardized, as a way to increase engagement

# Thank you to our partners:



SSHRC  CRSH

