Child-Adapted RDI Activity to Strengthen Feeling Lucky & Grateful

Instructions

Introduce the Idea

- Explain in simple language: "Sometimes our brains collect special memories that help us feel strong, loved, and lucky. Today we are going to find some of your lucky treasures—things that make your heart feel warm or grateful."
- You might say: "Feeling lucky doesn't mean everything is perfect. It just means noticing the good things that help your heart feel strong."

Create the Lucky Treasure

- Invite the child to think about:
  - A time they felt lucky
  - Something or someone they feel thankful for
  - A moment when they felt happy, proud, loved, or peaceful
- Helpful prompts:
  - "When did you feel lucky this week?"
  - "Who makes you feel glad they are in your life?"
  - "What is something small that makes you smile?"
- You can have the child:
  - draw the memory
  - pick a small toy or object to represent the special moment
  - create the special moment in the sandtray

Strengthen the Feeling

- Once the child identifies the memory/resource, ask gentle noticing questions:
  - "When you think about that, what do you notice in your body?"
  - "Where do you feel the lucky feeling?"
  - "What color or shape would that feeling be?"
- You might say: "Let that lucky feeling grow a little bigger, like a warm light."

Reference: Shapiro, F. (2008). Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing: Basic principles, protocols, and procedures (3rd ed). Guildford Press.

Install the Resource (Playful Bilateral Stimulation)

- While the child holds the feeling:
- Use slow bilateral stimulation such as:
  - gentle butterfly hugs
  - squeezing play-doh left and right
  - rocking side to side
- Say things like:
  - "Let that lucky feeling spread."
  - "Your brain is saving this lucky treasure."
- Add 8-10 slow back-and-forth movements (3-6 sets to strengthen the resource!)

Create a Lucky Anchor

- Invite the child to imagine: "Where could we store this lucky treasure so your brain can find it anytime?"
- Ideas:
  - A Gratitude Treasure Chest
  - A Rainbow Luck Bubble around them
  - A Magic Backpack of Good Things
- Reinforce with 8-10 slow back-and-forth movements of child's choice.

Future Use

- Help the child practice retrieving it: "If a tough moment happens, how could you remember your lucky treasure?"
- Possible responses:
  - take a butterfly hug
  - think of the drawing
  - imagine opening the treasure chest

Optional Creative Extension Activities because Children often deepen installation through play:

- Lucky Jar: Write or draw grateful moments and put them in a jar.
- Lucky Map: Draw a map of people, places, and things that make life feel good.
- Gratitude Detective: Find three tiny lucky things each day.

Child-Friendly Closing Script

"Your brain just practiced remembering good things. The more we notice lucky and grateful moments, the easier it is for your brain to find them again."

Reference: Shapiro, F. (2008). Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing: Basic principles, protocols, and procedures (3rd ed). Guildford Press.