Vanessa Levin: Hello everyone and welcome to the Soar to Success Summit. I’m your host for today, Vanessa Levin, and joining me for this talk is Dr. Jean Feldman.

Dr. Jean Feldman: Hi everybody! This is so exciting to be a part of this conference.

Vanessa Levin: We’re so excited to have you. So many people have been tweeting and mentioning on Facebook and Instagram how excited they are to see you. We’re just very grateful that you-

Dr. Jean Feldman: Well and it is my joy to pass some of the ideas on to new teachers.

Vanessa Levin: Absolutely. We are gonna get started. We’re just gonna jump right in because you have so much great information to share with us. The first thing I wanted to talk about since this is the Soar to Success Summit we’re gonna have the best year ever.

Dr. Jean Feldman: Absolutely.

Vanessa Levin: When we talk about the beginning of the school year, we think about kids and their attention spans and maybe they don’t listen as much as we might want them to. What does listening and paying attention in an early childhood classroom look like in the beginning of the year? Tell us about that.

Dr. Jean Feldman: Well it looks like herding cats at the beginning of the year. My best advice is go slow and be patient. I just have to share what happened when I was talking to my granddaughter who’s going into third grade about her teacher. She said, “You
know. I just want a teacher who hugs.” I think we have to remember that every child
wants to be loved. They wanna be accepted. They wanna feel capable. That’s the
bottom line. They come in, you say “I’m gonna love you. We’re gonna have a great year.”
that’s how you get started.

Vanessa Levin: I think that is definitely good advice because we as teachers often
have this incredible pressure on us. Right?

Dr. Jean Feldman: Yeah, in fact I was interviewed recently for a podcast and this
gentleman said, “Now Dr. Feldman, what one piece advice would you give to all early
childhood teachers?” I said, “Shut your door.” Shut your door and just remember they’re
little kids. A four year old is still a four year old. A five year old is still a five year old. The
world keeps changing, you’re overwhelmed by assessments and demands and
expectations. But you know what? They’re just little kids. Just remember that.

Vanessa Levin: I so agree. We often feel like we have to teach everything on our
curriculum or agenda or whatever the standards are starting the minute they walk
through the door and your example of your granddaughter just brings that home. First,
they have to learn to like you and school.

Dr. Jean Feldman: Yes, and make those connections. You are special to me. You are
important. I’m here for you. Many children now come from environments that are just
bombarded with technology. They’re living in this world of screen so for a human being
to try to make eye contact with them and connect with them, that’s a whole new
experience for some of them. I think you just have to turn everything off. If there’s an
electronic device on in your classroom, they’re gonna look at it. Turn everything off, get
down on the floor or in a chair on their eye level and just give them one hundred percent
of your attention. That’s what we all want.

Vanessa Levin: Yes, I couldn’t agree more. I think that, especially in this day and
age, like you said where children have much more exposure to a screen then they have
ever had in the past, that sometimes interacting with other humans, other children and
other adults, is going to be new to them.

Dr. Jean Feldman: Absolutely, yeah, and you know what? You’re not all glitter and
sparkle, so you’ve got to make your personality come through with your expressions and
your body language and your enthusiasm because that’s what they’re gonna pick up on.
I think the word “authentic” is very important now because there’s so much plastic and
technology going on. Just to be a real person to them. Being a good teacher is part of being an actor or part actress. You just have to be in the moment and share that enthusiasm with them.

**Vanessa Levin:** You know what they say, they say enthusiasm is contagious. Right?

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** Exactly, and you know what if you’re having fun, in fact sometimes people say, “What do you do if kids don’t sing?” I go “Well, they sing with me. I mean why would you not want to sing with me? I’m having such a good time.” I think sometimes you have to ignore the little negative things too. Don’t focus so much on what the kids are doing wrong. Try to focus on the positive ones and just be so full of energy and enthusiasm that you will just suck them in. Just pull them in.

**Vanessa Levin:** I love that, and you know that reminded me of something that Debra Stewart said in her session. She talked about how they need to feel capable, and so by acknowledging those little things that they’re doing right, and maybe ignoring things that they’re not really big right now, but you know they’re not sitting criss-cross or they’re not fully the way that you want them to be that they’re not going to be on the first day.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** Exactly and some of them have never heard teacher talk. I mean one of my favorite stories a teacher said, “We’re gonna go around the circle and say what we did this summer.” The first little child got up and said what she did in the summer and she walked all the way around the circle and then she sat down. The next child got up, said what they did, walked all around the circle. Go around the circle and say what we did. They interpret things sometimes a little differently then we do.

**Vanessa Levin:** Right exactly, and I think that just be that enthusiastic, this is so fun how could you not want to be here?

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** Exactly we’re gonna have such a great year. You are so much fun and I love you so much, and you’re the best class ever! A lot of its positive self-talk for you, as well as for the children.

**Vanessa Levin:** Absolutely, what should our expectations be? You and I talked a little bit already about this, but when it comes to that paying attention and listening it’s kinda hard to get started, right, with that? At the beginning of the year, like we said, they don’t have a lot of experience doing that, and their attention spans are going to be small.
What should our expectation be, and how can we help the children meet that expectation?

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** Well and that’s why I’m so glad that you invited me today because after almost 50 years of being around teachers and children I have to tell you the things I’m gonna share with you still work. Children are children. I wanted to tell everybody that everything I’m doing today they can find on my blog: drjeanandfriends.blogspot.com. In June, I did 25 days of SEL, social emotional learning, and then in July, I’ve got 25 days of what I call Rules of Engagement. All the things I’m going to be sharing with you today, you will be able to find there and pictures of things. Everything I do is cheap, simple, and easy. I’m not gonna do anything that’s hard.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** One of my favorite quotes is “Teachers don’t steal ideas, they harvest ideas.” I’m gonna share lots of ideas with you, and you harvest the ones and make them work for you. One day a teacher said, “Great teachers are not born. They’re made by the teacher next door.” I think that’s what Vanessa and I have in common. We want to be that teacher next door to you. We want to be the one that you come to. You need an idea? Why don’t you try this. And you know what? Everything doesn’t work, but you try and then if that doesn’t work you try something else that’s why I’ve got 10 times—100 times more things to share with you today than you could possibly ever use. But if you just get five ideas that are gonna get you through the first of the year, that’s a good thing.

I want to tell you my first year of teaching, school started at 8:30. By 9:15 I’d done everything I learned in college and everything in my lesson plan. One of my best piece of advice to new teachers is over plan that first day. Go slow, take your time, but make sure that you have plenty of backup because you never know what’s gonna work. Are you ready for me just to start going through and singing?

**Vanessa Levin:** Yes.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** Well, I’m gonna get started. First of all one way to get their attention is give me a drum roll, and then give me a Beethoven, and then give me a toot-a-roo. Aren’t those silly things? But the kids love to do them, and that way you engage them. In fact my favorite toot-a-roo story, a teacher said they took paper towel rolls cut them in half and let the children decorate them.
These were there toot-a-roos, and when they got ready to get their attention they would all get out there toot-a-roos and go, and they were all engaged and ready to do the next activity. I always think that you should start the day with a song. When you start with the song it acts like an indicator activity. Just like when grown-ups go to an athletic event, when they hear the Star Spangled Banner they get in their seats and they get ready.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** If you do the same good morning song everyday the children will respond to that and get ready. *(Singing) # Rise and, shine and welcome to school today#* I mean, I’ve got several really good morning songs. Choose one and do it every day for a month, and then that becomes an indicator activity. Another song I wanted to mention, and this is really good for mindfulness, helping children focus. They come in and they’re all wound up and all over. This is like a soft little yoga song and it gets them to move and helps them concentrate.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** I’m not going to do anymore but it’s called the morning stretch and I’ve got a YouTube with it on it. Everything I’m doing, it’s free you can find it on my website. Handshakes are another great way to start your day and I’ve got a video with these. You might start off with a thumb kiss and go around to each child and they hold up their thumb. “Good morning!” I’ve done this with toddlers, I’ve done this with primary grade kids. They love it. The hand hug, they all hold up their palm, you put your palm next to theirs.

You wrap your thumbs around and squeeze, look them in the eyes. “Good morning!” And just making that eye contact with them is so important when you do the hand hugs and the handshakes. That physical touch there’s something about that sense of touch that goes to the heart and through the brain. One thing I suggest, like I said I have a video of these, is that you introduce one new handshake each week. You might do the butterfly handshake one week. The butterfly handshake you hug thumbs and then stick out your fingers and that’s the butterfly handshake.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** After you’ve done that then you write it on a sentence strip, put a picture clue because before they read boards, they read pictures. Hang it up on your wall. You would introduce maybe five or six handshakes, and then once they’re introduced you can let the helper each day choose the handshake that they’d like to lead their classmates in. Songs and handshakes to start your day always.

I wanted to share some little attention grabbers that I’ve used. Although I’m a retired teacher, I do free concerts in the schools in Charleston where I live. These things work.
Instead of "shhh", (Singing) # Tootsie-roll, lollipop. We’ve been talking, now let’s stop. Tootsie-roll, lollipop. We’ve been talking, now let’s stop.# and you just continue doing it until everybody’s doing it with you. A secret is to do things that engage their hands. You can talk all you want, but when you get their little hands busy and you get their mouths busy, then you’re gonna pull them in and get ready to listen.

Dr. Jean Feldman:  Another one that I like to do is (Singing)# Hocuspocus, everybody focus#. Get your focus goggons on. All right. Now, look at this book. What do you think this story is about? Or who can tell me something about this shape? If you can get them to go like this and look at what you want them to attend to you’ve got a better chance of them focusing and it getting in the brain. The brain is amazing if you say to the brain “This is important.” It’s gonna pay attention and look at the brain.

Another one that I always like to do is (Singing) #How does my teacher feel about me?# and the children respond (Singing) #I’m special as special can be. Because my teacher believes in me.#. What a positive reaffirmation. I learned this one in an inner city school in Atlanta. Instead of the teacher saying, “Sit down be quiet.” She would say, (Singing) #How does my teacher feel about me?# and those little kids would all look at her with stars in their eyes (Singing) #I’m special as special can be. Because my teacher believes in me.#. A lot of these things you could put on a poster and put it on your door and then use it like all week long to engage the children’s attention. Or put it on a little cheat sheet in an index card in your pocket, and when you need it you can pull it out.

Dr. Jean Feldman:  I used to keep a book ring and when I needed an idea I could just look through there and pull it up. Another way to engage children is to do a cross lateral activity, engage both sides of their brain. I love to do the brain hug. Thumbs up, thumbs down, cross your arms, clasp your fingers, and give yourself a brain hug. When they are like this they can’t get in any trouble.

I mean you’ve got the right there where you want them. I want to tell you, I tried this with my granddaughter when she was four and she couldn’t do it, and the reason I want you all to realize that is not everything that I’m doing with you is going to work with the three and four-year-olds. Some of these things are better for 6 or 7 year olds. Try them with your class. Even though when she was four she couldn’t do the brain hug, her little brain was just firing off. That’s what you want. You want to challenge them, challenge their brains. It’s all good. It doesn’t matter if they do it right or wrong. It’s all good.
Dr. Jean Feldman: A simpler version of that for the younger children is: “Boys and girls repeat after me. Thumbs up! They say “Thumbs up.” “Across the chest.” “Across the chest.” “Pat on the back.” “Pat on the back.” “Cause we’re the best. ‘Cause we’re the best.” And you get their hands just where you want them, center them and help them get ready to listen.

Dr. Jean Feldman: All of these little chants and things are on my blog, and you can download those. Call backs are real successful too. I can be in a gym with a couple hundred kids and I can go “Hands on top. Everybody stop.” And I will repeat it a couple times. “Hands on Top. Everybody stop.” “Hands on Top. Everybody stop.” And I don’t know why it works, but like a charm they’ll all put their hands up there and they’ll look at me and get ready and get quiet.

I love some of the other chants teachers have taught me. “Macaroni and cheese.” And then the kids say, “Freeze please.” You can make it into a game. Do you see what I’m doing these things. I’m not just grabbing their attention. I’m also developing that executive function that self-regulation, self-control. We’re doing small motor skills, we’re doing oral language. You’re covering a lot of standards just by engaging their attention in some of these positive ways. I’ll tell you what, you try “Sit down and be quiet.” That doesn’t work, but this will work. (Singing) #Head, shoulders, knees, and lap. Knees and lap. Head, shoulders, knees, and lap. Knees and lap. Legs are criss cross, applesauce. And my hands are in my lap. lap. lap.# As you sing some of these things, when you get to the end, lower your voice and sing slower, and that just kind of pulls them in a little bit more.

Dr. Jean Feldman: I’ve got a couple other songs. Instead of telling children what to do, sing to them. If you want them to sit down. (Singing) #Everybody have a seat, have a seat, have a seat. Everybody have a seat on the floor. Not on the ceiling, not on the door. Everybody have a seat on the floor.# When you sing, it makes you feel better and they are much more responsive. Some people say “Oh I can’t sing.” You can all sing because they’ve never heard it before. You can sing. (singing) You know you can sound like an old cat, but they don’t care they don’t know the way somebody else sings. It’s okay. Just sing it and have a good time with it, and you can change the words. Like if you want them to sit in a chair instead of on the floor. (Singing) #Everybody have a seat, have a seat, have a seat. Everybody have a seat on your chair. Not on the window, not in the air. Everybody have a seat on your chair.#
Dr. Jean Feldman: Another thing that I do to get children quiet is something with their hands, like a little brain game like okay let’s say “Can you twiddle your thumbs? Can you twiddle your thumbs? Can you twiddle them the other way? Can you twiddle your index fingers? Can you twiddle them the other way?” And then you can make a spider. “Can you clap your pinkies together? Can you clap your ring fingers together?”

Dr. Jean Feldman: You are developing small motor skills, but you’re also energizing the brain, and a lot of people who do a lot of computer work now are interested in what they call finger neurobics, finger exercises. Because they’ll stop their work and they will do these little things with their fingers, just like we’ve always done with our young children, just to activate the brain and give the brain a little brain break. All these little finger things are good to do.

It’s also interesting to help children breathe, that again helps them become a little bit more mindful. If you tell them, “Let’s see if we can practice breathing through our noses. Put your lips together.” You will be surprised how quiet your room will get when they are breathing through their noses, and that’s quite a challenge for some of them. You can also let them make a magic bubble and “Breathe through your magic bubble and blow out those birthday candles.

Blow them all out. And then breathe in through the bubble and breathe in that nice hot cocoa, hot chocolate smell.” All these things just kind of calm children down and center them. Do you notice the more senses you engage, the more likely you’re going to pull the children in? I’ve got some props here that I’d like to share with you that help me a little bit sometimes, and I’ve used different things. One of the things that I wanted to share with you is the surprise sack. This can just be any gift bag or even an old grocery sack, whatever. You put whatever you’re going to talk about. It could be a book, it could be a natural object, it could be a shape, whatever. Put what you’re gonna talk about in the bag, and you sing. (Singing) #What's in the surprise sack? Who can tell? Maybe it's a book or maybe it's a shell. What's in the surprise sack? Who can say? Let's find out right away.# And then you can let them guess what might be in the surprise sack and that’s a good oral language thing to do.

Dr. Jean Feldman: After they’ve guessed, and you can even give some clues, “This is a very large animal. It’s one of my favorite animals, and you know, this animal even cries. Yes it does, I just love this animal.” And let them guess what it is and then you can pull out, and I do love elephants, and then “The story today is about Horton Hears a Who.”
something that will relate to what you’re talking about today that you can have in the surprise sack.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** I’ve got some other little props. This one is just a little bottle of bubbles, and you can use this to engage children. You can say, “Okay, I’m going to blow out all the bubbles and let’s see if you can be sitting quietly before all of the bubbles pop.” You just blow the bubbles and it just kind of calms them and centers them and pulls them to the ground. A lot of teachers use chimes or some fun whistle, and when they hear that they know it’s time to look at the teacher and pay attention. Music boxes are nice. Isn’t that just something sweet about hearing a little old music box sound.

One year for Christmas I got a musical card and I took it to school and every time I open the musical card they had to look at me and get quiet. It was “Jingle Bells Jingle-” you know it was so pitiful, but it worked. You just try these different things. I have some brain sprinkles, and this is just a Pringles can that I’ve covered and I’ve got some paper clips in here, and let’s see if everybody’s ready to listen. Let me give you some brain sprinkles. Oh you need a few more over here. That will engage them a little bit.

I have a magic wand and this is just a cardboard roller from a pants hanger. Dip it in glue, dip it in glitter. This works just as well with kids as some fancy-schmancy wand. Let’s say I’m getting ready for a story I take my magic wand. “Abracadabra I’m going to wave my magic over you and when you feel the magic you will be quiet and ready for story.” And if somebody is still talking you go, “Oh you don’t feel the magic? Let me wave it on you.” Or “Abracadabra I’m going to close my eyes, and when I open them all my friends are going to be sitting quietly ready for a story.” Don’t we have a fun job? I mean you’ve got to have fun doing these things don’t you? I do.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** I have a flashlight, and if everybody’s doing the wrong thing, you can find one child doing the right thing you turn the flashlight on them. *(Singing)* #If you don’t know what to do, look at Vanessa. If you don’t know what to do, look at Vanessa. She will show you what to do so you could do it too. If you don’t know what to do, look at Vanessa.# Or spotlight on a good listener, or spotlight on a good cleaner-upper. I can get a lot of mileage out of a flashlight. I have some lotion. Some calm down lotion. The child is a little bit wiggly or maybe we all need it today. You can pass it around and give them a little squirt of calm down lotion. Something about massaging your hands it really does center them and help them relax a little bit.
When I was preparing for this, I found another idea with lotion and I thought it was so good. A teacher said that she calls it awesome sauce, and she puts a label on lotion, and you can even use disinfectant lotion if you don't want to use regular hand cream or something, and if the kids do something great she'll say “Well, go get some awesome sauce. Yeah, rub it in, good job!” I have some happy-chappy.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** This is ChapStick with an aroma, and if you want everybody to sit for a story you can get out your, “Oh, Vanessa is ready for a story. She gets a happy-chappy. Jeremy is ready for a story. He gets a happy-chappy. You can use this for lineup and lots of other activities. They love this little happy-chappy. Somebody said they called it a smelly, but I kind of like happy-chappy better than smelly. Some other props that might help you to engage children's attention, I wanted to tell you about brain toys. They make a lot of stuff now. Stuff that you can buy, but you don't need to buy it.

Things like old socks work just as well as fidget toys. There’s some children who cannot keep their hands to themselves. If you give them something to hold and something to do they are more likely able to focus on you. You get a little shoebox, write “brain toys” on it, get some old socks, knot them up, and put them in there. If a child is just fidgeting, “Why don't you go get a brain toy and hold the brain toy? See if it'll help you listen.” A teacher one time at a workshop when I was sharing this said, “Well what if everybody in the room wants a brain toy?” Go get 24 old pairs of socks or 24 old socks. If they need it they’ll get it and they’ll use it, and if they don't they won't need it.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** The fiddlestick, now this is something I would use with older children. This came from a first grade teacher. Just a jumbo craft stick and a piece of 18 or 24 inch string. Just let them have the opportunity to keep this in your desk, and if your hands get a little wiggly, you can get out your fiddlestick and you can fiddle with your fiddlestick. Somebody once said, “Oh yeah, but they won't listen to you if they’re fiddling.” That’s not true. They’ve done a lot of research studies that show that some people just need more stimulus going in and it really will help them focus.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** I like this idea too, a stress button. This is just a poker chip, and I glued the hooky side of velcro to it. A really good glue, I don't work for the company, I don't make money off this, but E6000 is just like the greatest glue in the world. You can buy it at Target, Walmart, almost any store. You glue the velcro to the poker chip, and the children get to hold this or keep it in their pocket, and if you feel a little stressed, your fingers are a little wiggly, you can get this out and hold it. It’s very quiet, but it also can be comforting to children.
Another idea that you can buy or you can make. In fact, I had these in a book I wrote 25 years ago. I called them sitter spots, you cut circles out of fun foam or felt. Write the children’s names on these. When you get ready for a circle activity, you put these out on the rug where you want them to sit. This helps you disperse those children who don’t need to sit next to each other.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** This to me is a whole lot better than masking tape or assigned seats because you want them to sit with some different people. These are also good for a quiet activity. If you want them to do independent reading, they can find their sitter spot, put it where they want to sit in the classroom. Or if you are doing a partner activity, they can get their sitter spots and put them in the same space. Just little props that help you.

Also I have the quiet creature. This is just a pom-pom and glue googly eyes and a little pom-pom nose, and the feet are pieces of fun foam cut in a heart. The children each get to construct their own little quiet creature, and when you do a quiet activity they get to get their quiet creature and they get to put it out. Then if they start making a lot of noise you say, “Do I need to take your quiet creature away?” “No, no. I’m quiet.” Just kind of a little visual reminder that it’s quiet time and we need to do our work quietly.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** Oh my goodness, I have so many more things to share with you and you’re just going to have to go to my blog to find some of the rest of these. Let me tell you about lucky sticks. These are jumbo craft sticks, and you color one end red and one end green, and I would go ahead and color the ends of the sticks because the kids don’t know when to stop when you do that. Give them a stick, let them write their name on the stick. “You all get a lucky stick! Lucky you!” And put them in a cup that says “Lucky Sticks” and when you get ready to do an activity, or you need a special helper, or maybe ask a question, you twirl this can around and you pull out a lucky stick.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** That person gets to do the job for you or answer the question. After they’ve had a turn, you put their stick in the can with the red on top. I forgot to say you start with all the greens on top. You put it in with the red on top and then when all the sticks are red on top, you turn them over and they get another turn.

This really pulls them in because they’re wanting to know who’s gonna be pulled and will it be my stick or not. It’s good for the teacher too because it helps you make sure you
give everybody a turn. Sometimes we keep calling on the one that's shoving their hand in our face, and so this is a good teacher management trick.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** I've got the Jukebox, and you definitely want to make this before school starts because there are going to be times, those first couple days of school, when the kids are looking at you and you’re going, “What do I do?” Deer in the headlights. “I can't think of anything to do, anything to say.” What you do is you just get a bag and write “jukebox” on it, and then you get some CDs or cardboard and you put the titles two nursery rhymes, finger plays, your favorite song, whatever on the CDs.

You can even put games on here or whatever, and when you've got a few extra minutes and you can't think of anything to do, you give a child a pretend quarter. “Here’s a quarter, put it in the Jukebox and pull out a song or pull out a rhyme.” And then you will always have something to do and the children will feel like they're part of pulling it out. If the year goes on, and they become familiar with your songs and your nursery rhymes and fingerplays, you can let the child who pulls this out lead the class. That’s just another way to develop some of those leadership skills.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** Sometimes you just have to put on a silly prop and you do something like this, and everybody will look at you. You'll have their attention. Sometimes you can use a puppet to get children’s attention. If you cut the top and bottom off a cereal box and then you put the puppet down in here and put the puppet on your hand. “I have a little friend who wants to come out, but it can't come out until you're quiet cause he's kind of shy.”

Just wait, just wait. “Oh, it’s Pokey, the pony.” You can let Pokey talk with a silly voice if you want to or if you're not comfortable doing that, you let poke whisper to you. “Oh Pokey says that he’s got a new shape that he wants to tell you about today.” So Pokey is fun. It gets the children’s attention, and also Ralph the rag.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** I have a lot of silly ideas but this is one of the silliest. I used to have so much fun with this. You just get an old towel and you tie a knot in the top and you tell your children, “I want you to meet my friend Ralph the rag. Say hi to Ralph. Okay now Ralph wants to play a game with you.

He wants to see if you can do what he does, okay? Are you ready? Now you watch Ralph and do what he does." They will sit there and whatever Ralph does they will just be
watching Ralph, totally engaged with Ralph. You're going to have fun doing these things, you really are.

Dr. Jean Feldman: Another thing, I have little thing that I drew on my finger and I sing this song. (Singing) #Henry Hush says, "Please be quiet. Please be quiet. Please be quiet." Henry Hush says, "Please be quiet." There you go. Just a few more ideas to share with you today. State changes are a way to gauge children's attention. State change can be turning off the lights. A state change could be “Let's lay on our tummies today for the story.”

A state change can be, you have them turn around in their chairs or turn around in their seats. If they're used to facing the Smart Board a good thing to do is have them turn around and look at the back of the room where there is no Smart Board, and they will just focus on you.

Dr. Jean Feldman: I also have some things on my website. I call them interest boosters. I think you will find them on my website under fluency cards. You got a little box, and this is a little cereal box. I've got some different state changes and different ways that you can do things like the underwater version or with a cold and they hold their nose and they would say the nursery rhyme or three bears style: “Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.” And Mama Bear: “Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.” Baby bear: “Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.” Granny bear: “Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.”

They're just different silly ways that you can practice reading the words on the word wall, saying your alphabet letters, counting. You have to vary the stimulus you have to keep changing things to engage children and make them interested in doing something.

Dr. Jean Feldman: Purposeful practice for automaticity, that repetition. We are so skill-based now. There are things that children need to master and they have to master, and you're responsible for that. We've got to practice it, so let's make it fun and practice it with some of these things. Just a few more ideas. The Cheerios for the cheers. My cheers are some of the best ways to get children's attention. If you've never been to my website and you've never watched my videos cheers. You can watch me do them, but you can also download these little cheer cards, and they're free. What I tell teachers to do is get a Cheerios box or [inaudible 00:36:21] box and cut these out, put them in here. Do one each day. Introduce one each day, and they should just, “Oh we learned a new cheer today. Let's save it in our box.” When you want the children's attention, I'll just do a few of them that I will do when I do workshops with kids. “Okay let's give ourselves a
firecracker cheer." The Hamburger Cheer. "Get your hamburger put it on the skillet." "Is it done?" "Not yet." "Is it done?" "Not yet." "Is it done?" "Well done" Isn't that better than "Sit down and be quiet!"

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** Another one that's works really well is the bubblegum cheer. "Get out your bubblegum everybody. Open it up. Put in your mouth." Three cheers. "When I say give me cheer number one you can be real loud and crazy and wild. When I say give me cheer number two, do a nice little soft cheer, and when I say give me cheer number three, I want you to give me the silent cheer.

Don't make any noise at all." "Give me cheer number one." "Give me cheer number two." "Yeah." "Give me cheer number three." You see how good that is for self-regulation and that executive function?

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** I will just close with one of my all-time favorite ways to get children's attention, and that is just plain old finger plays. Somewhere along the line we have forgotten the value of finger plays for developing oral language, small motor skills, engaging children's attention, self-regulation, 21st century skills of cooperation, collaboration, communication, using their imaginations. I could go on and on with finger plays.

I've got videos that you can watch me do these little finger plays. I also have these little three-finger play cards, where you can download these and put them on cards. Again take one each week. Do it when you want to get the kids attention all week long. At the end of the week punch a hole in it, put it on a book ring, and by the end of the school year you'll have a whole brain full of rhymes that you can do.

**(Singing) #These are grandma's glasses. And this is grandma's cap. And this is the way she folds her hands and puts them in her lap. These are grandpa's glasses. And here is grandpa's hat. And this is the way he folds his arms just like that.#** Now Mrs. Myers, back in the fifties, probably hadn't heard the term engagement, or social emotional, or
self-regulation, or standards, but you know what? She was pretty darn smart because when she did that finger play she got our hands just where she wanted us to be.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** This little girl: “Show me your little girl. I’m waiting. I need everybody’s little girl.” (Singing) #This little girl is ready for bed, on the pillows she lays her head. Wrap the covers around her tight, that’s the way she spends the night. Morning comes, she opens her eyes. Off the toss, the covers fly. She jumps out of bed. She’s hungry. Let’s give her something for breakfast, something healthy. Oatmeal would be great. And a banana. Then brush her teeth and comb her hair. Get her clothes on her. And don’t forget her backpack. Now she’s ready and on her way to work and play at school all day.#

“Show me your little boy.” (Singing) #This little boy is ready for bed--” I feel like the Pied Piper when I do this with kids. ‘Cause they’re just “Haha”. One day I was in a Pre-K classroom working with the kids and this principle went by the door. He didn’t know who I was, but he looked in there and he said, “Who is that lady? They’re all looking at her and paying attention to her.” I’ve been doing these things for a long time and they still work with kids.

It’s so much more fun for you when you have these tools, and I’m just so grateful that Vanessa is doing this conference with you and sharing all of these tools with you. Many of the things are free on my website, I do want to do a little advertisement. Carolyn Kisloski and I have written a book called The Ultimate Center Guide, and if you’re a Pre-K teacher, if you are a transitional kindergarten teacher, if you are a kindergarten teacher who still believes in hands on learning, if you are a teacher of three year olds, it’s 250 pages for $14.95. Which basically breaks down to $0.06 a page, or four or five lattes. You will have this tool that you can use all year long.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** You will find these ideas many places, but look at the time you’re going to save. You’re going to save hours and hours. When you need something for the sensory motor, you can look in there, “Oh I can put magnetic letters in there, and then when they get a magnetic letter they can practice writing it.”

Or in the block center, “Oh yeah, I can make an engineer planning book. Just get a little spiral notebook and a pencil, and before you build something, draw a picture about what you want to build today. You’re doing engineering.”

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** Simple little things, like for the arts center, crayon bundles. I want to do something new, but I don’t want anything nasty that takes a lot of time. You take three
or four crayons, wrap a rubber band around them, put a big sheet of paper on the table. They've got their crayon bundles, and I tell you what, they will just talk and go to town with the crayon bundles.

"Oh I need something for writing. You know what, I'm going to go to the dollar store and get some seasonal napkins. I'm going to staple some paper in here and they get to write a book about winter or signs of winter."

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** Just tons of practical ideas. Play-Doh plates where you get plastic plates and you put the letters on there and then they roll the Play-Doh and put it on top of the letter or make some [inaudible 00:43:20]. I hope you'll check it out because there are lots of good things there. I just wanted to mention that Vanessa and I have a friend that we admire greatly. His name is Sam Williams. He's a teacher.

He has sold his house, he has sold his car, he's giving up everything, and he's moving to Honduras to work in a school there and teach children. Vanessa and I want you to know that this is free and all of us just feel so honored to be able to share with you and pass these ideas down, but if there's any money that's made in something like this we are going to give part of it to Sam because he certainly represents something that all of us believe in and all of us would like to do. This is kind of our vicarious way of helping Sam and his mission.

**Vanessa Levin:** Absolutely, I agree. Yay!

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** I've talked a lot. I hope I haven't overwhelmed you, but again go to my blog, download these ideas, there's 25 ideas. You can go back. If you want to know how to do something, put it in the search engine. You can probably pull it up. Videos all of those things are free.

**Vanessa Levin:** Thank you so much Jean. I think that your book that you showed us, it's called I am Only Four. Is that what it's called?

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** I'm only Four.

**Vanessa Levin:** I'm only Four. That would be the ultimate new teacher guide kind of. Right?
Dr. Jean Feldman: Absolutely, in fact we would love for every Pre-K classroom to have this. When you think about the money that they spend on technology and things, but for $14.95, we can put this in your room and you’ve got a tool that you’re going to be able-- These things are not gonna go out of style. Blocks are not gonna go out of style. Play-Doh is not gonna go out of style. They’re good examples of playful and challenging for four year olds, but also for five year olds, for three year olds, for six year olds. It’s [inaudible 00:45:13] like with Play-Doh.

Vanessa Levin: Exactly it’s like any book. When you buy a book at the teacher store, if those things still exist. If teacher stores still exist, you buy a book you don’t expect every single page in that book to apply to you, but if you get some really great gold nuggets out of that book then that book was totally worth it.

Dr. Jean Feldman: Yeah, you’re gonna have centers in your room, and you’re gonna run out of ideas. How many times can I just have plain blocks over there. We’ve got lots of ideas for integrating skills and the [inaudible 00:45:52]. Thank you for allowing me to share today.

Vanessa Levin: We are thrilled that you were here. We have so many great ideas to start the year off, and like you said, I don’t think anyone should feel overwhelmed because you’re gonna pick and choose the ones that you feel that resonate the most with you.

Dr. Jean Feldman: Exactly, and I tell people coming to my workshops is like a buffet, or like going to the big box store. You pick and choose what you want to put in your cart. That’s why I do so many things. I’ve been to workshops where they’ve taken one idea and beat it in the ground, and I don’t like that idea to begin with. I hope you’ve each gotten at least five good ideas you can use to help you soar through the first day, the first week, and the whole year.

Vanessa Levin: I have a little story to tell about your flashlight if that’s okay. When I was coaching teachers, I was observing a teacher in her classroom, and she did the flashlight thing just like you did. I’ve seen you present so many times, I had no memory of ever learning about the flashlight from you.

When we did her debriefing after her observation I was just like, “That was the most wonderful thing I ever saw. How creative. How original. That was just fantastic. Can I use
that idea?” She was just glowing at the end of our conversation. She said, “Thank you, but I just want you to know that’s Dr. Jean’s idea.”

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** Well, you know what? all of these ideas are not Dr Jean’s ideas. Everybody's given them to me. That's what we do as teachers. We take these things and we pass them along and keep them alive. It's all about the kids, it's all about the kids.

**Vanessa Levin:** It is. I really want to thank you Dr. Jean for joining us today, and thank you to all of those who tuned in. If you'd like to spend a little time with the ideas and suggestions we discussed in this session or any of the others, don't forget you can bring those sessions home with you along with some terrific bonuses. Just click on the link below this video, and don’t forget the prices on the conference go up the day after it ends. As Jean said, a portion of the proceeds from today’s sessions are going to go to Sam who is moving to Honduras, to Tegucigalpa, to further the education of children and families and teachers there. We thank him for his dedication to the field of early childhood education, and thanks to all of you for watching until next time-

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** Well just one more thing. Teachers who love teaching make children who love learning. Sometimes you just have to tell yourself I’ve got the best job in the whole wide world. Look in the mirror and say that to yourself, and it’ll work and you’ll have a great year. (singing) Take care, God bless, have a great year.

**Vanessa Levin:** Thank you everybody. Bye.

**Dr. Jean Feldman:** Bye.