

K N O W N

WHITE PAPER FOR SCHOOLS AND ORGANIZATIONS

# Children thrive when they are known.

One framework for every adult in a child's week: the conditions children need, the practices that provide them, and the capacities that grow as a result, with the strength of the evidence stated plainly.



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01 SUMMARY

# One shared understanding of what children need.

KNOWN is a research grounded framework for schools, health care practices, youth programs, and every organization that serves children and families. It rests on a single premise: children thrive when the adults around them understand what they need and provide it consistently.

The framework separates two things that are often blurred together. **Developmental conditions** are what adults provide in a child's environment. **Human capacities** are what grow within the child when those conditions are present. Six **adult practices** connect the two, and one method, **Regulate, Read, Respond**, makes the framework usable in the moment.

Every claim KNOWN makes carries an evidence label, so leaders know exactly how much weight each one can bear. The result is one vocabulary that teachers, clinicians, coaches, caregivers, and parents can all use, so a child meets the same steady understanding wherever they spend their day.

| At a glance                |                                                               |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7 developmental conditions | What adults provide around a child                            |
| 6 adult practices          | How adults provide those conditions day to day                |
| 8 human capacities         | What grows within the child over time                         |
| 1 method                   | Regulate, Read, Respond: the same three moves in every moment |
| 3 evidence labels          | Established, Supported, KNOWN synthesis                       |

02 THE GAP

# We measure what children know. We rarely measure who they are becoming.

Organizations that serve children track academic progress, attendance, and health milestones with great precision. They track almost nothing about whether a child understands themselves, steadies under stress, relates well to others, thinks independently, or makes meaning of their experience. A child can meet every standard and still struggle in each of these areas.

Most organizations already invest here, through wellbeing initiatives, social and emotional learning, counseling, family engagement, and staff training. These efforts are real and well intended. What they usually lack is a shared model that connects them, so each program speaks its own language and children meet a different approach from every adult.

KNOWN supplies that model: one coherent account of what children need, which every program and every adult can work from.

### 03 WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

## Decades of converging evidence point the same way.

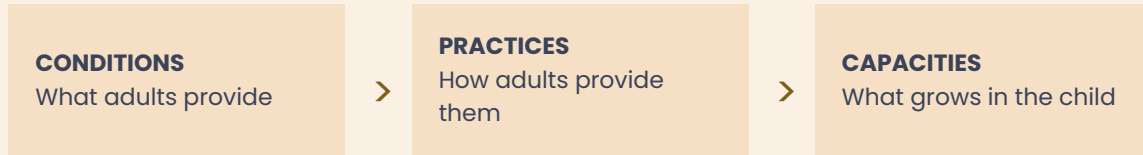
KNOWN draws on developmental psychology, attachment science, neuroscience, public health, and motivation science. The findings below form the foundation of the framework; together they make up the KNOWN synthesis, which brings established research into one practical model.

| Finding                                                                                                                          | Label              | What it means for your setting                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Responsive, consistent relationships with adults support healthy development.                                                    | <b>Established</b> | Every interaction is part of the work. Consistency across adults matters as much as any single program. |
| Stress without the buffer of a supportive adult can disrupt attention, learning, and health.                                     | <b>Established</b> | Adults who buffer stress protect the conditions for learning and growth.                                |
| Children learn to regulate through steady adults nearby (co regulation).                                                         | <b>Established</b> | Adult regulation comes first. Staff wellbeing is part of child wellbeing.                               |
| Autonomy, competence, and relatedness support lasting motivation; controlling rewards can weaken motivation a child already has. | <b>Supported</b>   | Offer real choices and meaningful challenge. Use reward systems with care.                              |
| Well implemented social and emotional learning programs improve social, emotional, and academic outcomes.                        | <b>Supported</b>   | Skills grow fastest when the adults who teach them practice them too.                                   |
| A sense of belonging is linked to engagement and wellbeing.                                                                      | <b>Supported</b>   | Belonging is a condition adults provide through daily practice.                                         |
| Relationships strengthen when ruptures are repaired.                                                                             | <b>Supported</b>   | Repair is a skill every adult can practice, and it models accountability.                               |

#### 04 THE KNOWN FRAMEWORK

# Conditions, practices, capacities.

You cannot demand a capacity while neglecting the conditions that grow it. The framework names what adults provide, how they provide it, and what grows as a result.



## Seven developmental conditions

Each condition is written from the child's point of view, because that is where it is felt.

|                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Safety</b><br>"I am safe here." Physical and emotional safety, so the nervous system can settle and attention is free for learning. | <b>Connection</b><br>"Someone is with me." Warm, reliable relationship with the adults in a child's day.                      |
| <b>Attunement</b><br>"Someone sees what I feel." An adult meets the child's emotional state and names it, without rushing to fix it.   | <b>Belonging</b><br>"I am part of this." A secure place in the group, valued for who they are.                                |
| <b>Autonomy</b><br>"I have a say." Real choices and a voice in what affects them.                                                      | <b>Appropriate challenge</b><br>"I can stretch, and I am supported." Work that is hard enough to grow on, with help close by. |
| <b>Contribution</b><br>"What I give matters." Room to help and add value, freely given, from the child's own drive.                    |                                                                                                                               |

## Six adult practices

The practices are the same for a teacher, a coach, a clinician, a caregiver, and a parent.

### Model and lend calm

Adults steady themselves first and lend that calm to the child.

### Hold the boundary

Calm, kind, and firm. Boundaries protect safety, health, and other people.

### Talk it through

Name what happened and what was felt, once everyone is steady.

### Make room

Space for the child's ideas, feelings, pace, and way of being.

### Hand over

Gradually give responsibility to the child as readiness grows.

### Repair

After a rupture, the adult reconnects, owns their part, and restores trust.

## Eight human capacities

Capacities grow from within when the conditions are present. Adults provide the conditions; children do the growing.

### Self understanding

Knowing one's own strengths, feelings, and way of being.

### Self regulation

Returning to steadiness under stress.

### Agency

Acting with intention from an inner compass.

### Adaptability with integrity

Meeting change while staying true to one's values.

### Relational capacity

Connecting, collaborating, and repairing with others.

### Discernment and independent thought

Weighing information and thinking for oneself.

### Generative capacity

Creating, imagining, and bringing new things into being.

### Meaning making

Finding purpose and coherence in experience.

## The method: Regulate, Read, Respond

A framework says what children need. A method says what to do in the moment. Every KNOWN tool runs on the same three moves, in the same order.

| Move            | What the adult does                                                                  |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Regulate</b> | Steady yourself first. A child settles more readily when the adult nearby is steady. |
| <b>Read</b>     | Treat behavior as information. Ask which condition is thin right now.                |
| <b>Respond</b>  | Meet the need first, hold the boundary, then guide once both of you are steady.      |

## Our position

Children are valued for who they are. Every KNOWN practice serves the child's own growth, so children never have to perform to be valued. Boundaries exist to protect physical safety, emotional safety, health, and other people. Contribution comes from the child's own drive, offered freely.

*“Children do not need to be managed. They need to be known.”*

### 05 THE KNOWN EVIDENCE STANDARD

## Every claim carries its weight.

KNOWN states the strength of the evidence behind every claim, so leaders can make decisions with confidence and explain them to staff, boards, and families.

| Label                  | Meaning                                                                       |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Established</b>     | Substantial converging evidence. The core finding is not in dispute.          |
| <b>Supported</b>       | Credible, consistent evidence within the ages and contexts studied.           |
| <b>KNOWN synthesis</b> | Established and supported research brought together into one practical model. |

Each claim is recorded with its sources, the ages and contexts it applies to, and its known limits. Any change to a label is dated and explained. The full standard is public at [knownlife.co/evidence](https://knownlife.co/evidence).

## 06 KNOWN IN PRACTICE

# One lens across the programs you already run.

KNOWN works inside your existing programs as a shared way of understanding children. It gives every adult the same language, so a child meets one steady approach across classroom, clinic, studio, and home.

## Adults first

Children learn regulation and relationship mostly by watching the adults around them. KNOWN begins with the adults: staff learn the practices for themselves before they use them with children. Teachers and parents learn from the same guides and courses, so school and home reinforce each other.

## By setting

### **Schools, micro schools, and co ops**

Teachers read behavior through the conditions and respond to the need first. Leaders bring wellbeing, counseling, and family engagement under one model and one vocabulary. Classroom tools carry the practices into group settings.

### **Pediatric and health care practices**

Pediatricians, obstetric teams, and psychologists use the framework in family conversations, giving parents a clear account of what their child needs from the first months onward.

### **Studios, coaches, and youth programs**

Dance and gymnastics instructors, coaches, and program staff use the same practices in practice and performance, where challenge and belonging are felt most.

### **Families and caregivers**

Parents, grandparents, nannies, and babysitters use KNOWN guides built on the same framework: Lifelines for the hard moment already happening, and Roots for providing the conditions over time.

## 07 QUESTIONS FOR YOUR TEAM

# Before you begin.

Leadership teams use these questions to see where KNOWN would make the greatest difference. They make a strong agenda for a first conversation with us.

- 1 Which of the seven conditions are strongest in your setting, and which are thinnest?
- 2 Where do your current wellbeing, counseling, and family programs overlap, and where do they pull in different directions?
- 3 Do the adults in your organization share one language for understanding behavior?
- 4 How consistent is the experience a child has from one adult to the next, and between your setting and home?
- 5 One year from now, what would tell you that children are better known here?

## Bring KNOWN to your organization

Every engagement is tailored to your setting, size, and goals. Write to us and we will arrange a conversation with your leadership team.

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## 08 ABOUT KNOWN

# An institution built to last.

KNOWN is a child development company. It brings research from developmental psychology, attachment science, neuroscience, public health, and motivation science into one framework and a growing library of practical tools for families and organizations. The framework, the evidence standard, and the tools are designed to stand on their own and to serve every adult who is consistently present in a child's life.

Our measure of success is simple: whether children develop differently, and whether the people who care for them experience something different.

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