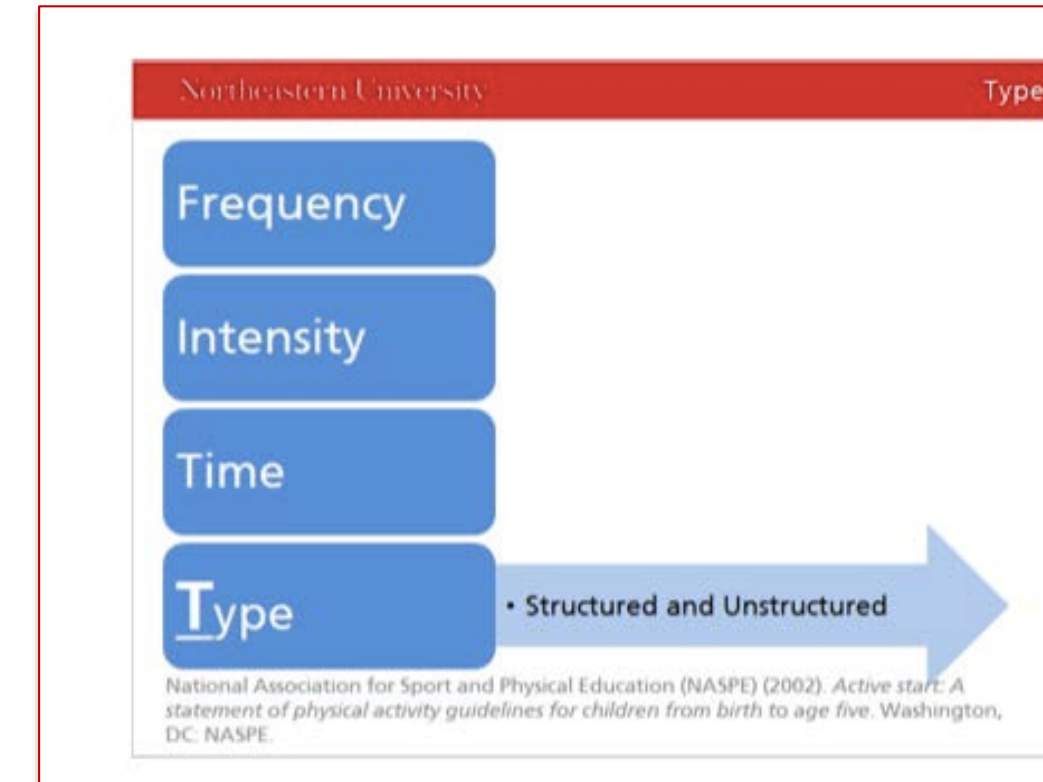


## Background

- Research indicates that in general, preschoolers do not engage in sufficient physical activity (PA), especially in child care (Pate et al., 2015; Reilly, 2010).
- PA guidelines recommend that 90-120 minutes are allotted for moderate to vigorous activity per 8 hour day in child care (AAP et al., 2011)
- Providing daily opportunities for PA is consistent with the National Association for the Education of Young Children's accreditation standards.
- Preschool teachers are often provided with minimal guidance on how to promote PA among children, though training in this area is predictive of teachers' PA promotion (Cox, 2014). Teachers also face barriers including limited space, equipment, time, and competing priorities (Copeland et al., 2012).
- To respond to these problems, our team developed WE PLAY (Wellness Enhancing Physical Activity for Young Children), an online professional development system that is available free of charge.
- WE PLAY was developed with input and feedback from Head Start administrators and preschool teachers.
- Tenets of implementation science were considered to facilitate program implementation using the Quality Implementation Framework (Meyers, Durlak, & Wandersman, 2012).
- The Know-See-Do-Improve Framework for professional development was used to enhance teacher knowledge and skills (Early Educator Central).

## WE PLAY Intervention Components



### Online Training

- Impact of PA on multiple areas of child development (behavior, executive functioning)
- Role of teachers & programs in promoting PA
- FITT model of PA
- Activities: reflect on current practice, goal setting



### Video Library

- 15 short clips of a preschool teacher leading simple, developmentally appropriate active games
- Indoor/outdoor games that require minimal equipment
- Warm up games, group games, parachute games

### School readiness links:

- Following directions
- Early numeracy
- Spatial sense
- Gross & fine motor
- Cooperative play

### Game Handouts

- Purpose of game
- Set up, instructions, and equipment needed
- Modifications for older and younger children (3-5 years)
- Links to school readiness

### Self Assessments

- Reflect on practices following structured and unstructured active play sessions
- Determine whether best practices reviewed in online training were followed

- Structured Play (sample items)
- *I modeled/demonstrated how to play the game*
  - *I reinforced, redirected, and refocused children throughout the game*
  - *I monitored safety*

### Supervisor Observations & Feedback

- Supervisor conducts observations and completes form parallel to self-assessment
- Feedback session to discuss teacher strengths and areas for improvement for promoting PA

- Unstructured Play (sample items)
- *Teacher provided equipment to promote PA*
  - *Teacher joined in play as a collaborator*
  - *Teacher moved throughout play space*

### Teacher Recognition

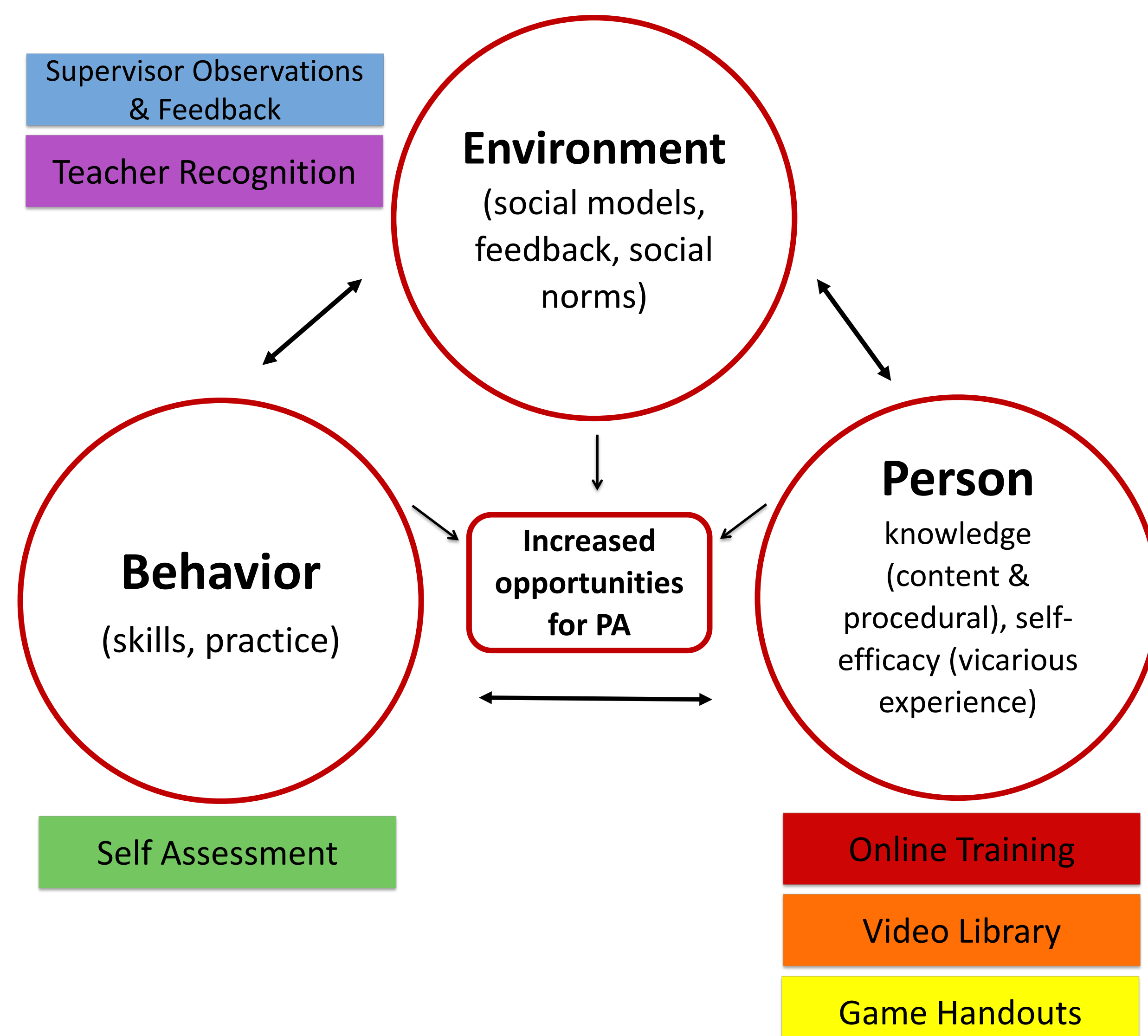
- Supervisors recognize teachers' efforts to promote PA among children
- Select methods that are consistent with school culture, such as write-ups in weekly staff emails

Bulletin Boards

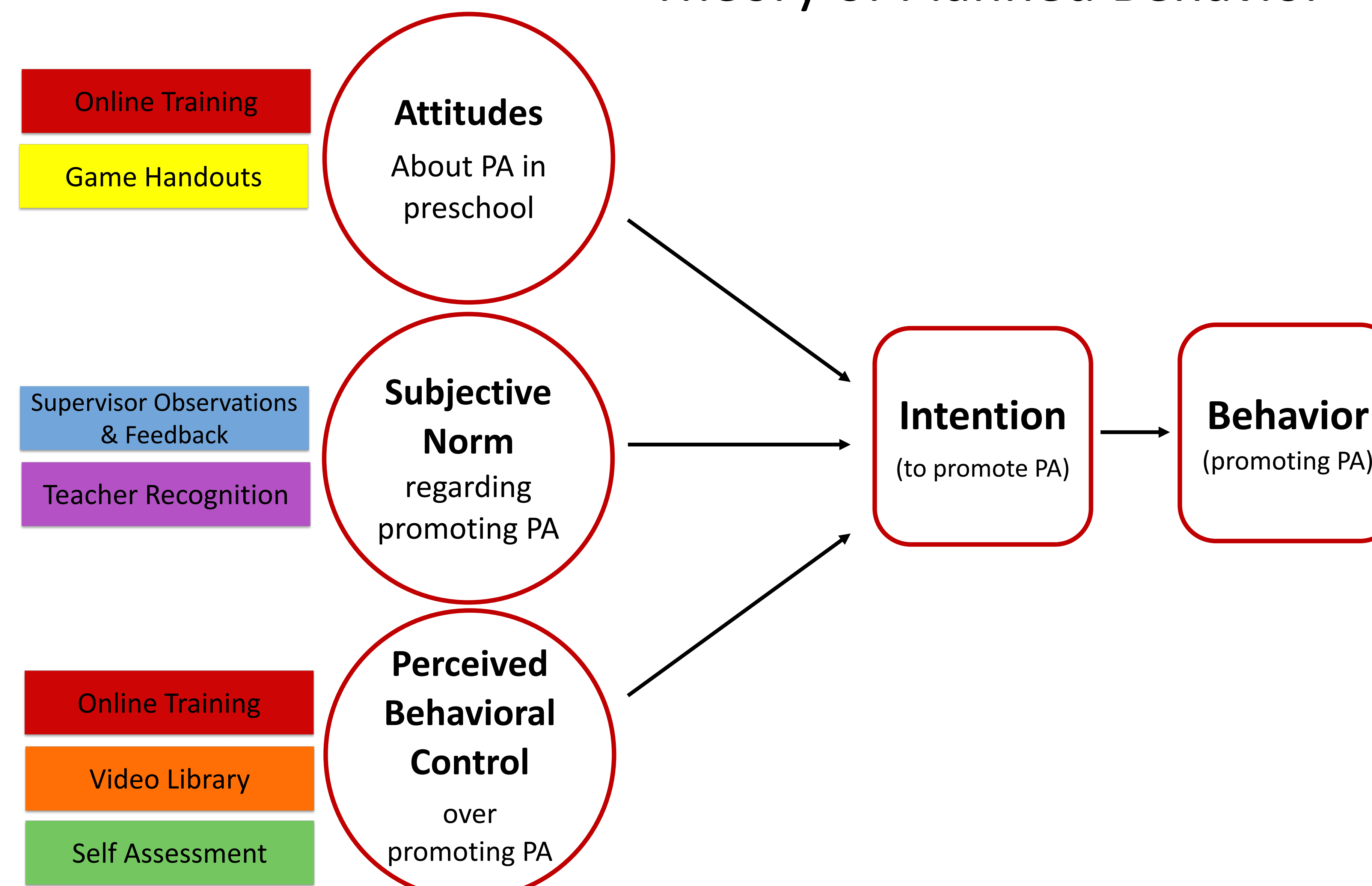
Staff Meetings

## Grounding in Theory

### Social Cognitive Theory



### Theory of Planned Behavior



## WE PLAY Learning Objectives

1. Increase preschool teachers' knowledge of the national recommendations regarding PA in preschoolers and the benefits of PA on multiple areas of child development
1. Increase preschool teachers' confidence and skills leading PA with preschoolers

## Future Directions

- A cluster randomized controlled trial is underway to evaluate:
  - The impact of WE PLAY on teachers' knowledge about, attitudes toward, and confidence for leading PA
  - Children's activity levels, measured through accelerometry
  - Implementation and usability of WE PLAY among teachers
- WE PLAY is offered online, free of charge; therefore, it has the potential to be disseminated nationally as an approach to help teachers to provide sufficient opportunities for preschoolers to be physically active in child care.

## Acknowledgements

- We are grateful to the teachers and preschool administrators who provided feedback related to the development of WE PLAY.
- References available upon request.
- Address correspondence to Ellyn Schmidt at [weplay@neu.edu](mailto:weplay@neu.edu)
- To access WE PLAY go to: <https://www.northeastern.edu/iuhrp/we-play/>