

Understanding Your Child

A practitioner's guide to the Solihull Approach





Introduction



Well done for completing the Solihull Practitioners Training Programme.

- This guide has been created to support with reminders of how to keep the programme fresh in your mind and to allow you to make the most out of every interaction.
- It also includes examples and suggestions for use with families and other professionals.



The Solihull Approach

- The Solihull Approach is all about emotional health and well-being.
- It provides a framework, and a foundation for thinking about parenting, and all human relationships - including adult relationships at home and at work
- As professionals, we know that if both parent and child feel contained and there is a reciprocal relationship where all cues are understood, there is less need for behaviour intervention.
- It is our job to clearly advocate the key messages of the Solihull Approach to families and professionals.

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Feelings!

- Everyone feels differently in different situations and that's ok!
- Ask - how do you feel right now?
- Ask - how does your child feel right now?





Suggestions...

Ask parents and carers to look at the feelings map and discuss with their child how they make them feel physically. Trying to put feelings into words can help to understand children and young people better.

Think about emotional vocabulary. There is good evidence that when children have a wide emotional vocabulary, this helps them understand and express their feelings effectively, and leads to better outcomes.

What other emotions can parents and carers come up with, how do they feel? Parents might not get it right every time but it's the trying to understand that is helpful.



Tuning into children's development!

- Remind parents that we all grow and learn at different rates, as this encourages realistic expectations
- Remind parents that the love, safety, security and nurture they show provides the building blocks for their babies'/child's brain development
- Encourage parents to take time to observe their children and to tell you what they have noticed
- Support parents to think about how they can encourage their child/young person



Suggestions...

- Ask parents and carers to praise all achievements, no matter how small or insignificant they may seem. For example, 'you tried so hard with that, well done'.
- Ask them to think about age appropriate praise.
- Encourage parents and carers to ensure their child knows they have their full attention when they praise them.
- Support parents and carers to make praise specific.



Responding to feelings!

- Let parents and carers know we all express our feelings differently but how we are supported by others around us can make a difference to how we respond to situations.
- Support parents and carers to think about how they feel when their child is upset and how they respond.
- Ask parents what they could do differently and what would help them to do this



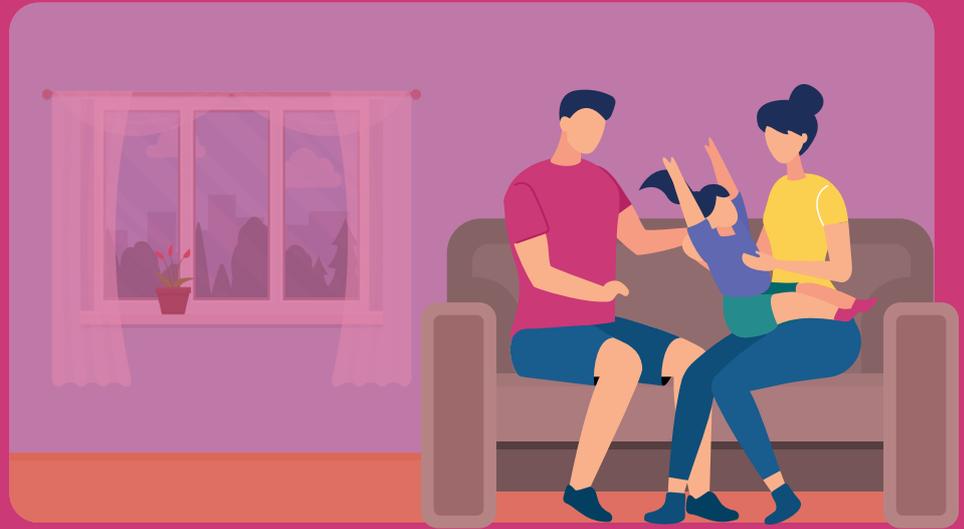
Suggestions....

- Encourage parents to identify a safe space for their child to be alone, and give time for them to calm down.
- Suggest or provide calming activities.
- Discuss putting their child's feelings into words e.g. "It looks like you are upset/sad/angry, do you want to talk about it?".



Different styles of parenting!

- Explain that experiences, both positive and negative, of how we were raised influences how we then raise our children.
- Ask how they would describe themselves as a parent? Would they like to be different and if so, how/what would that look like? Is that different from their experiences of being parented?
- Ask - what do you want to pass on to your children?



Suggestions...

- Remind parents to lead by example, and that they are their child's first teacher and children will learn from your behaviour.





Parent / Child Partnership – having fun together!

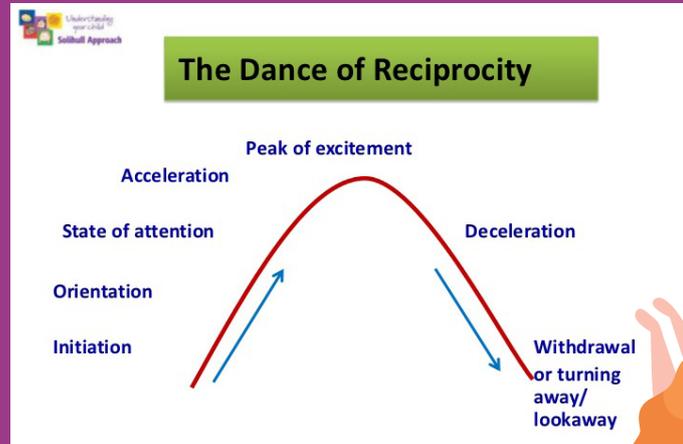
- Encourage parents to have fun, by doing this they are building better connections and supporting and encouraging development.
- Ask - how do you praise your child's creative fun?
e.g. painting.
- Ask - how do you support your child's curiosity?
- Reminder - it is ok to get things wrong.

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Suggestions...

- Encourage parents to put aside some time to join in with their child's interests or hobbies. Or find something new that they can learn together.
- Remind parents to praise when a new skill is learnt or something goes well.



The rhythm of interaction and sleep!

- Explain -the way we interact with our child is a rhythm/dance with a start, middle and end. The more you practice your dance the better you will become.
- Ask - can you think how your interaction helps your child sleep
- Ask - how does your child express their needs? (hunger, thirst, tiredness, boredom)

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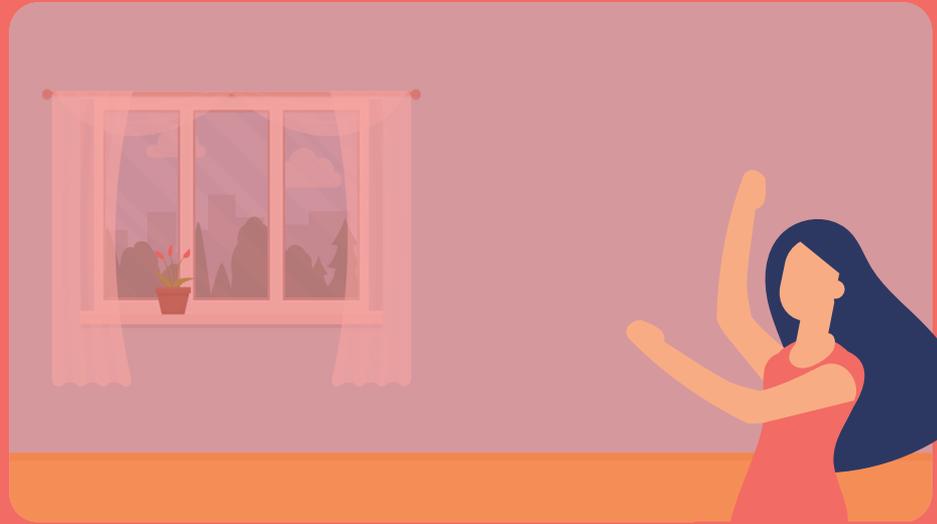


Suggestions...

- Encourage parents to watch how other people interact, this can be adults or children, can they recognise the 7 steps in the dance of reciprocity?
- Ask - can they see when their child is ready to end the interaction.



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Self regulation and anger!

- We all need to offload. Remind parents it's ok to be angry, how situations are dealt with is what's important.
- Ask - what does the word anger mean? Is it always unhelpful?
- Ask - when can it be helpful?
- Ask - what things make you angry?
- Ask - what helps calm you down?

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Suggestions...

- Suggest next time you are getting angry find an activity that calms you down, this could be as simple as walking away and putting the kettle on.
- Support parents to understand what it feels like when they get angry and how they can lengthen their fuse.
- Encourage communication -depending on the age of your child you can discuss what calms them down.
- Advise parents -allow your child and yourself to calm down before trying to resolve the issue that made you angry in the first place.
- Remind parents that repair is really important in a relationship but it can only happen when all parties have regulated and become calmer.



Communication and attunement – **how to recover when things go wrong!**

- Explain sometimes we are out of tune with others and we can get lost in our own thoughts and emotions. Our children are just the same.
- Ask - can you think of a time when you and your child have been out of tune?
- Ask - how did you get back in tune with your child?

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Suggestions...

- Remind - it is ok to not be in tune all the time, in fact your child will learn a great deal about how to resolve issues when you fall out of tune.
- Remind - as a parent it is vital that you are the person to repair the break in attunement, even if you feel you are in the right and your child is wrong. Try words like “ I am sorry I got cross with you, I felt that....”. Often using ‘when, then’, or an ‘I’ message works well instead of ‘but’, however this takes practice.
- Remind parents that all behaviour is a communication.

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Make Every Contact Count!

- Remind parents - you are Amazing and so is your child!
- Remind parents - enjoy your child!
- Remind parents - make the most of every interaction!



Quick Reminder!

Containment is where a person receives and understands the emotional communication of another without being overwhelmed by it and communicates this back to the other person in a way that can be tolerated.

Reciprocity is the interaction between two people, where both are involved in the initiation, regulation and termination. Remember the dance?

Behaviour Management is the process in which adults teach their children self-control, enabling them to participate in society. This will include boundary setting.

Three Key Questions:

1. What is the exact age and stage of development of your child?
2. What changes have taken place in your child's /your life recently?
3. How well is your child able to communicate his/her needs to you?



Further support and guidance



You can contact us in the following ways:



parentingreferrals@tameside.gov.uk



Grow in Tameside or
Successful Families in Tameside.



www.tameside.gov.uk/Early-Help/Professional/The-early-help-access-point

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