

Resources to Support
early childhood educators'
Partnership with Parents



Talking with parents

About listening



Chinese symbol for listening



聽 Listen

耳 Ear
眼 Eye
心 Heart
一 One (whole body undivided attention)
王 King

聽



Deep Listening



“Deep listening as listening in reciprocal relationships without judgment just try to understand.”

Judy Atkinson, 2017

Try to engage in regular deep listening activities with your child, write about what happened and what you learnt.



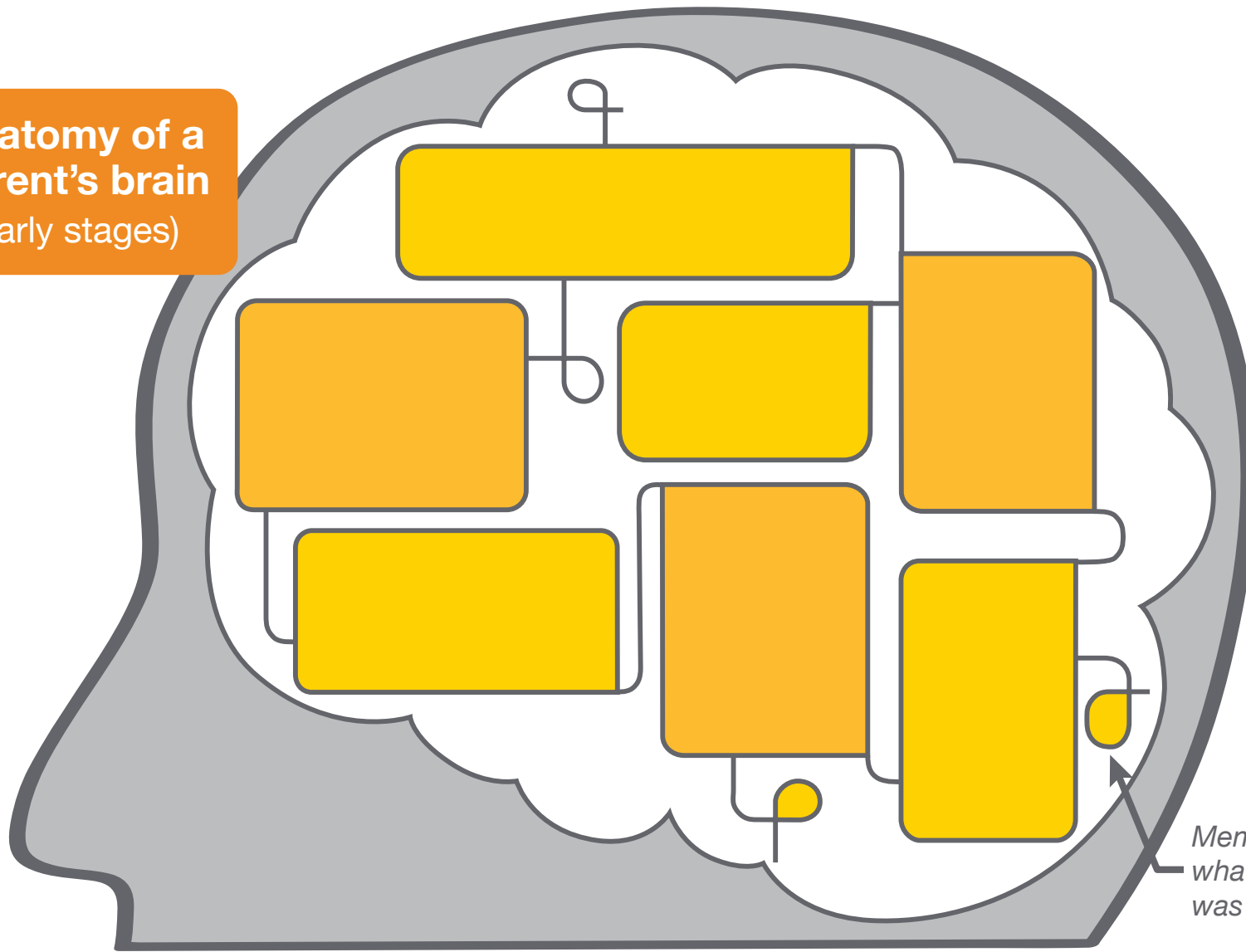
Listening *with* parents



Incomplete Parent Brain



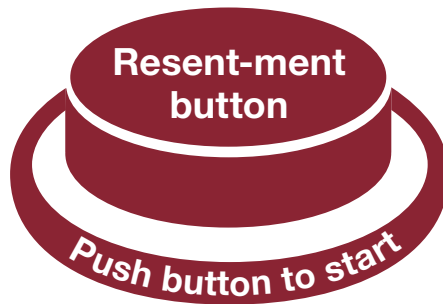
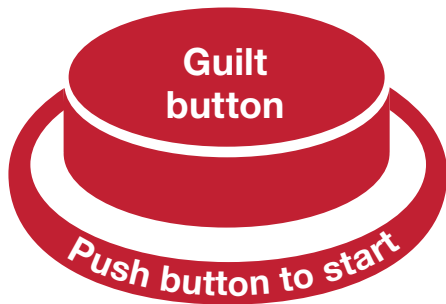
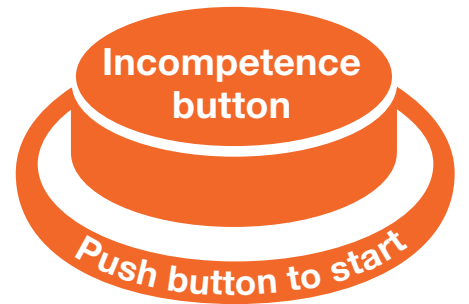
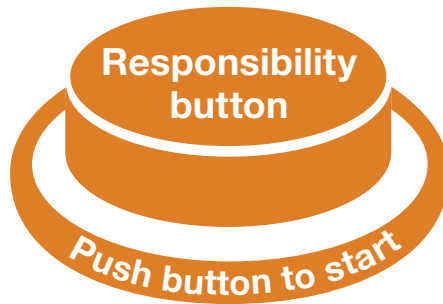
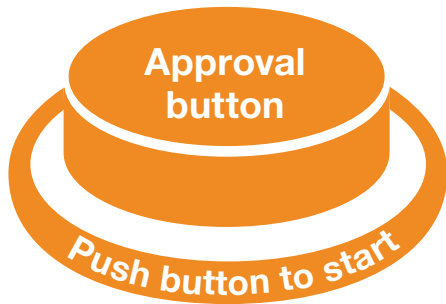
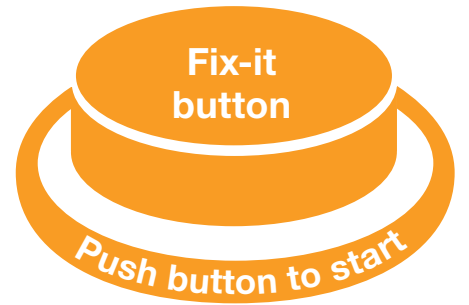
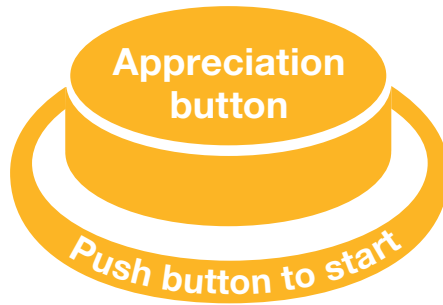
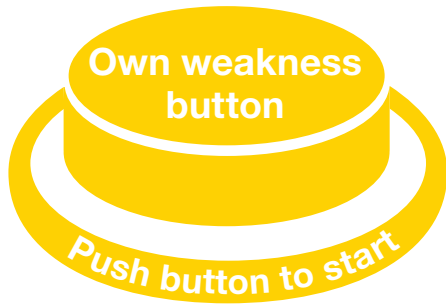
Anatomy of a Parent's brain (early stages)



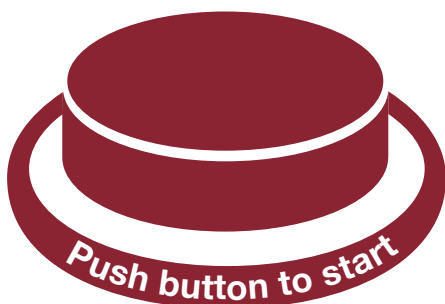
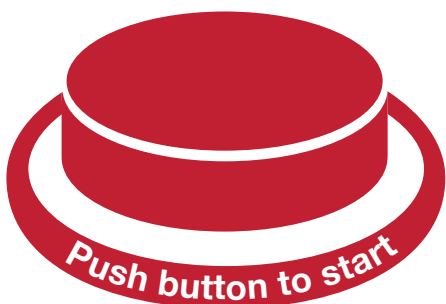
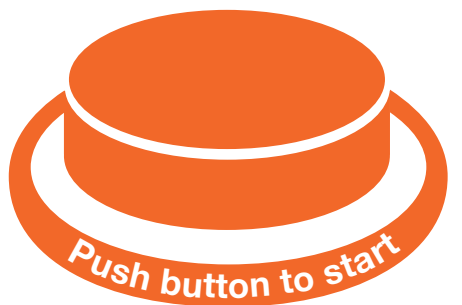
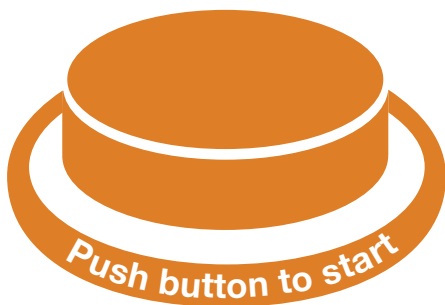
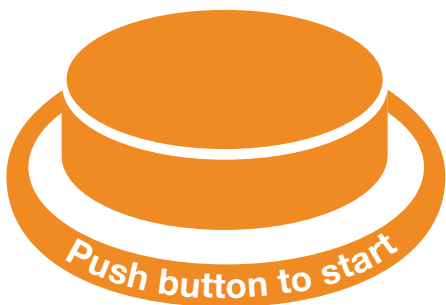
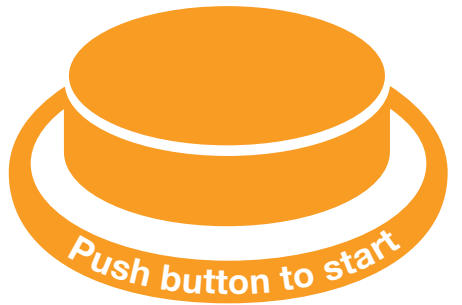
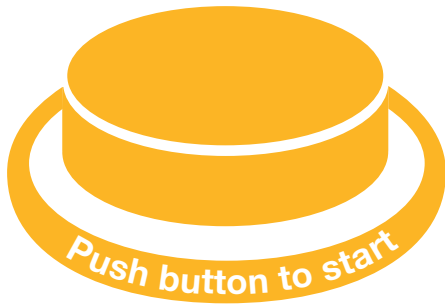
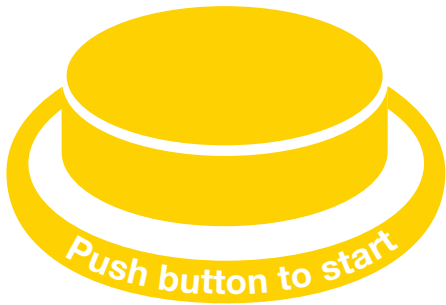
Memory of what life was like



Pressing your buttons



Pressing your buttons



Pause on Positives



★ My favourite moment with my kids this week was...

★ One way that I stayed in touch with friends this week was...

★ One way I was kind to myself this week was...

One of life's secrets:
Learn to pause
Emerge positive

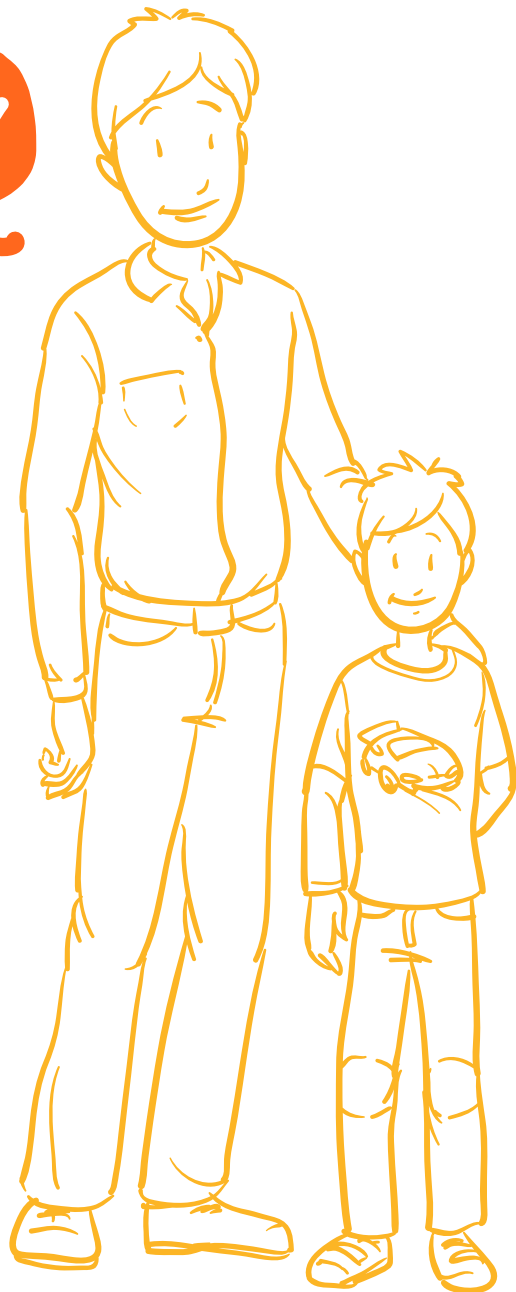
★ One person who supported me this week that I feel grateful for is...

★ One way I could connect more with my kids next week is...

★ A simple pleasure I could treat myself to next week is...



'Daddy Cool'



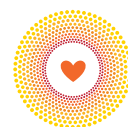
- ★ How do you feel about becoming a Dad?
- ★ What are you excited about?
- ★ Who will you talk to about these feelings?
- ★ What are some of your fears?
- ★ Who will you talk to about these fears?
- ★ What kind of dad do you think your kids would like you to be?



Floral Frame



How do you take care of yourself? Poster of self care triggers and prompts to remind you to take care of yourself.

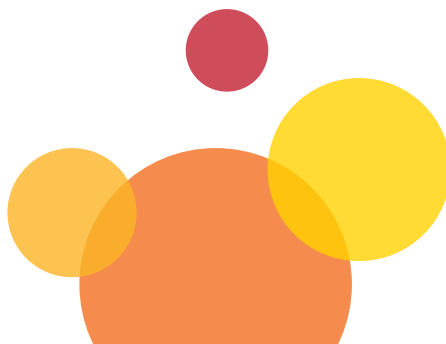
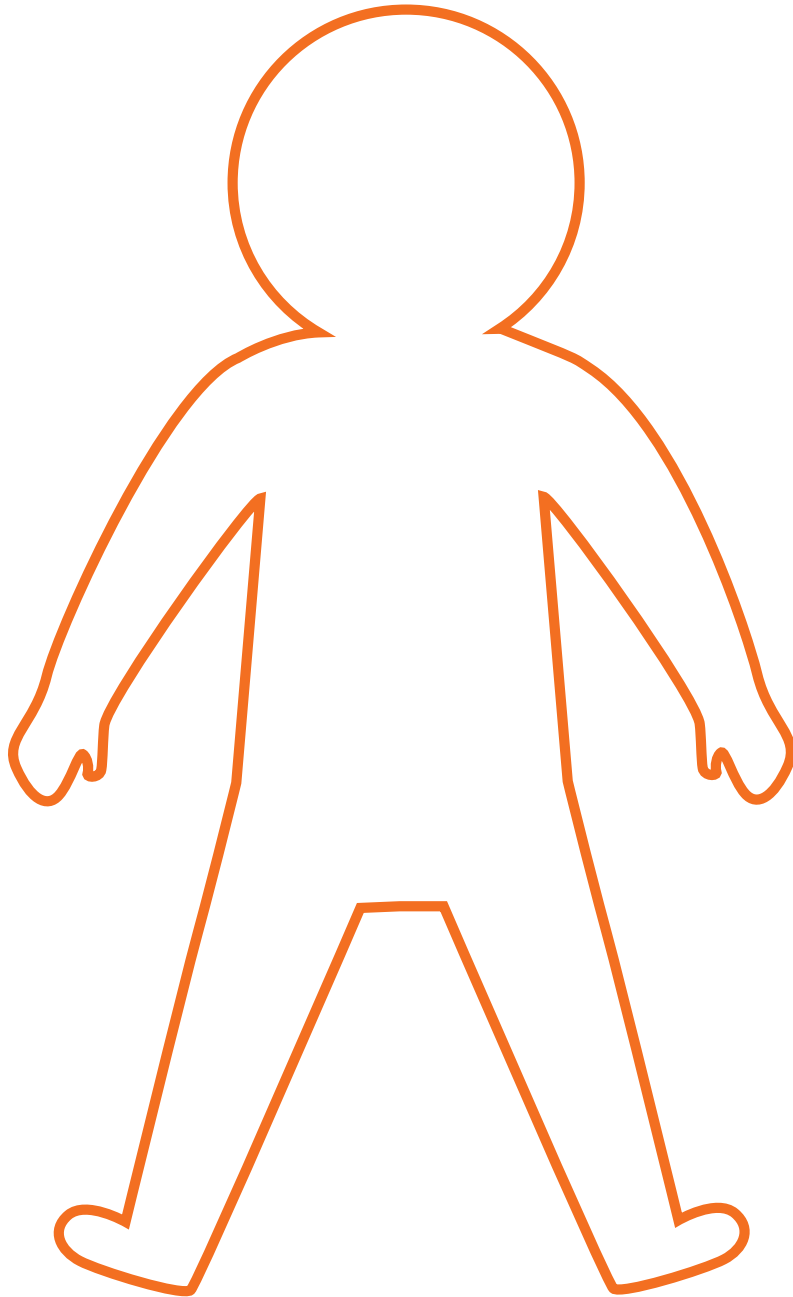


Picture of figure



Expressing Emotions

Choose an emotion and think about how you felt and responded as a child when your parents expressed that emotion.



Reflections on Culture



Name three values you have learnt from your family.

1

2

3

Then ask yourself:

- Do you still hold these values today?
- How might they have influenced the way you/ your grandparents/ parents raised their children?
- Are they something you intend to pass on to your own children?

Name three customs that you and your family have around events such as birthdays, Christmas, weddings or funerals.

1

2

3

Then ask yourself:

- Are they different from what other people do at these times?
Think about your friends, people you work with, or people from a different culture.
- How are they different?
- Where do these customs come from for your family?



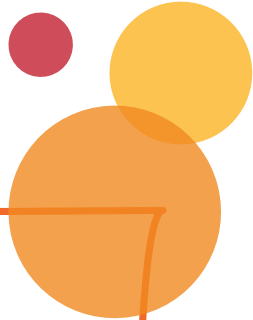
Reflections on Culture



Draw a visual representation of your own culture.

Try to include some aspects of:

- your beliefs, values and philosophies and ambitions
- your symbols, languages
- your customs, traditions, dress, food, home, lifestyle, behaviours, health practices

A large, empty rectangular box with a hand-drawn orange border, intended for drawing a visual representation of one's culture.

Share your drawing with another participant from a different culture (is possible).
Talk about how different or similar your culture is from that of the other person.

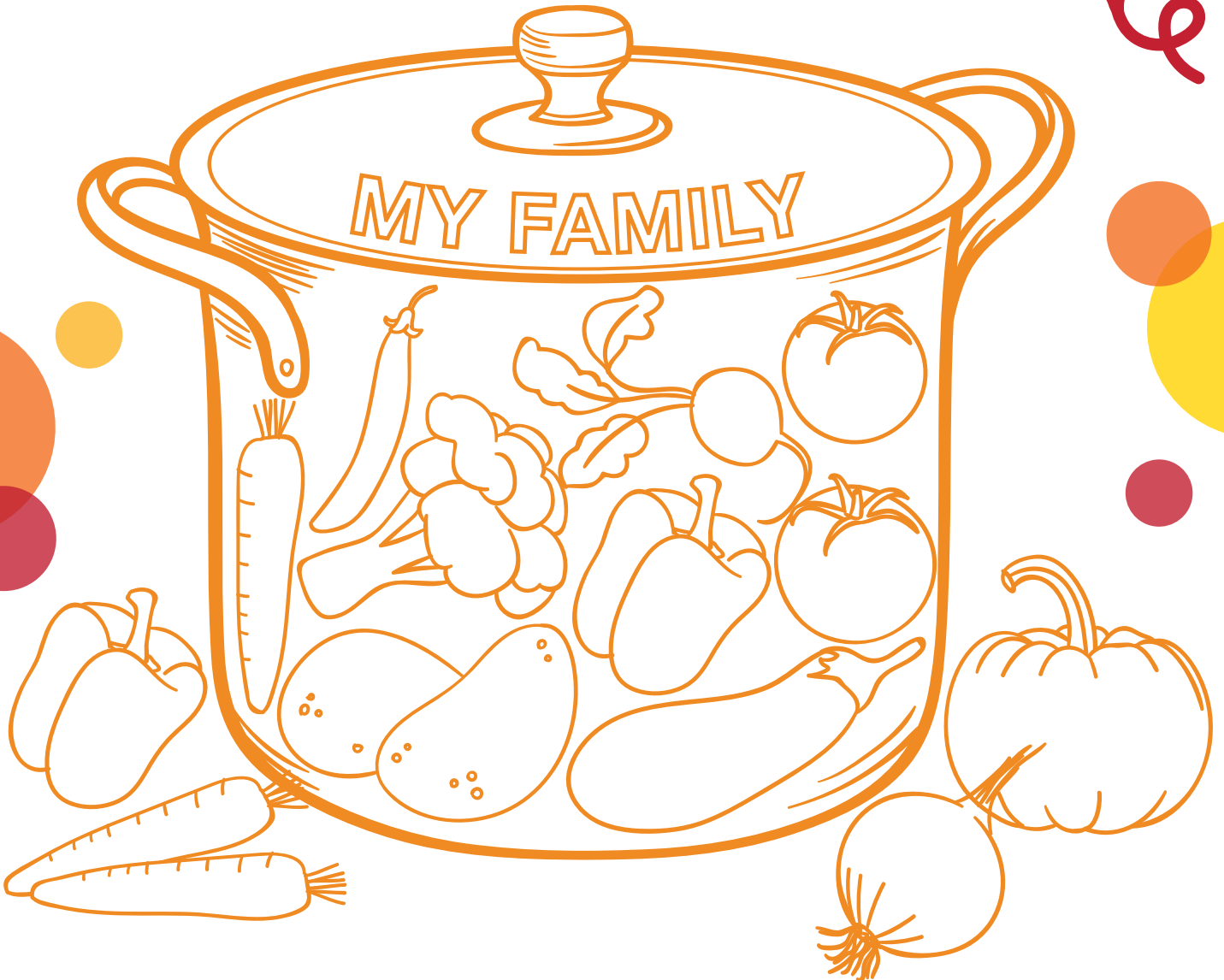


Talking with parents

About themselves



Family Soup



Notes _____



Stress Thermometer



Example:

Example:

Example:

Example:



Toxic Stress

intense, frequent and sustained stress experience that targets the child directly

High Impact Stress

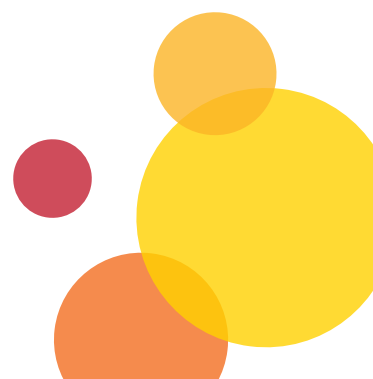
intense adverse experiences that may be sustained over a long period of time

Tolerable Stress

can be managed with the support of caring and trusted relationships

Positive Stress

can promote growth, is manageable and builds resilience



Asking for help



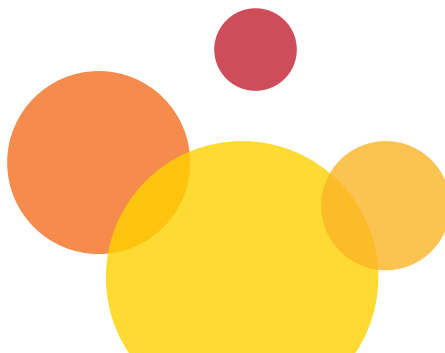
1 How easy do you find it to ask for help?

2 When you are upset or having problems, are you more likely to go away by yourself to try to solve the problem, or talk to someone else?

3 How do you feel when you leave your child in the care of someone else?

4 How well do you think your cries for help were answered when you were a child?

5 What might have got in the way of people meeting your needs as a child?



Asking for help



6 How do you feel about these statements?

“It’s my job to look after my children, no one else’s job.”

“It takes a village to raise a child.”

“Every parent needs help at times.”



7 Who do you feel comfortable to ask for help with your children?

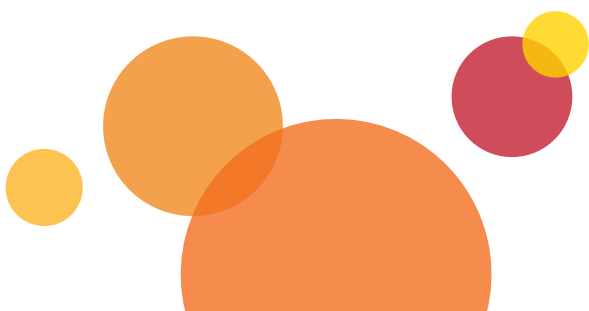
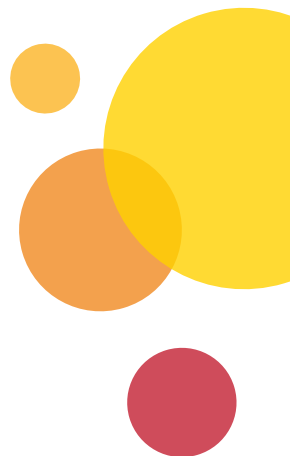


Dad T-Shirt



★ If you had a slogan or logo that said something about the kind of dad you'd like to be, what would that look like?

Add your own personalized Dad logo or slogan to this T Shirt outline.

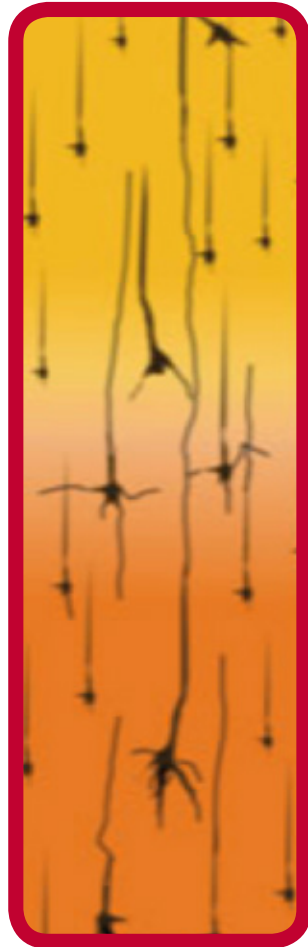


Talking with parents

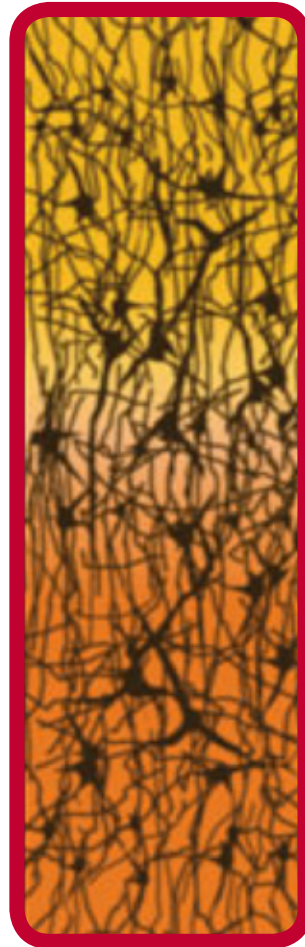
About parent-child relationship



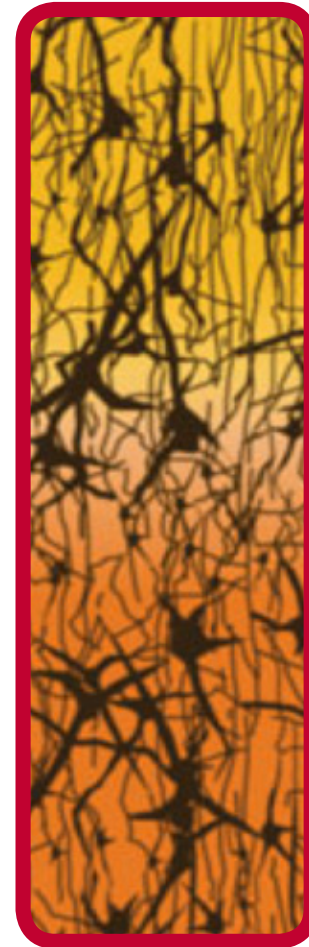
Neuronal Connections



Newborn



2 Years



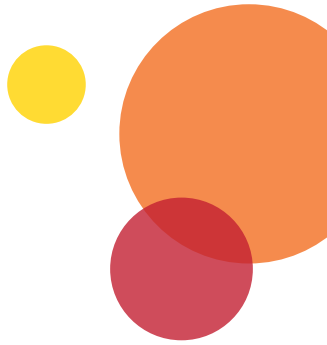
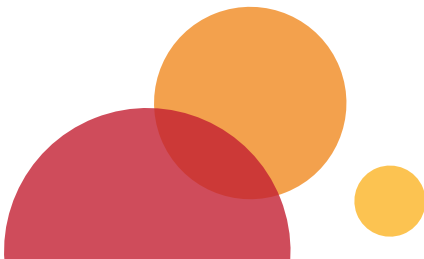
Adult



My children



If you had three wishes for your children 20 years from now, what would they be?

A large red thought bubble with a scalloped edge, containing five horizontal lines for writing.A large red thought bubble with a scalloped edge, containing five horizontal lines for writing.A large red thought bubble with a scalloped edge, containing five horizontal lines for writing.

You are not your behaviour

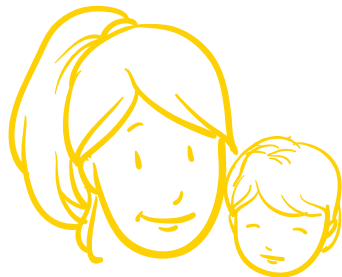
Discuss possible responses to each of these children in ways that help the child understand that:

What you did is not ok.

But you are not your behaviour.

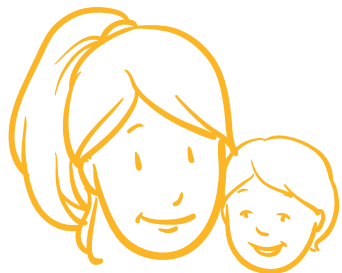
You are still a good person and I still love you.

18 Month Old



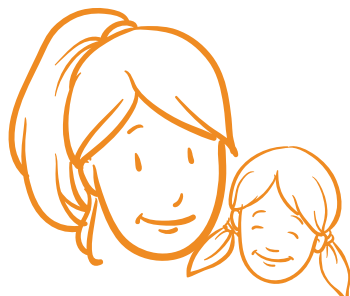
The child feels thirsty. Walks after her mum, pulls her dress and screams.

3 Years Old



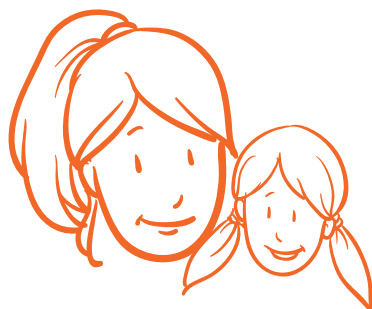
The child has been watching one of her favourite DVD's, when Mum turns off the TV as dinner is ready on the table. The child has already been asked twice to turn off the TV and come to dinner. The child screams, runs to her mother and bites her arm.

5 Years Old



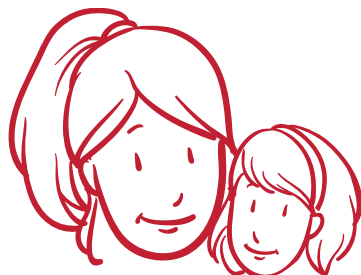
The child is playing with Lego on the floor. Dad comes into the room and tells the child it is time to go to bed. The child cries and throws a piece of Lego, knocking an ornament off a shelf. It falls to the floor and breaks.

7 Years Old



Dad and his child have been out for a ride. On arriving home the 7 year-old child leaves his bike in the driveway and rushes inside. The boy has been asked several times before to put away his bike at the end of a ride.

9 Years Old



Nine year old daughter runs to her mother crying because her older brother has pulled her hair. The two were fighting because each wanted to watch a different show on TV.

Life Tree



The Fruits

represent your children.

★ Draw them on your tree in a way that says something about each child.

The Leaves

represent your values and your skills.

The Branches

represent your hopes and wishes for your children.

The Trunk

represent your strongest supports.

The Earth

represent all those things which keep you 'grounded' and make you feel stable and strong.

The Roots

represent where you have come from, your family history and important places and people from your past.



Life Tree



The Fruits

If you think about your children as gifts that you will pass on to the next generation what are some of the messages you would like them to take with them?

The Leaves

What are your values and your strongest skills? Who did you learn these from? Think about how you are passing those values and skills on to your children.



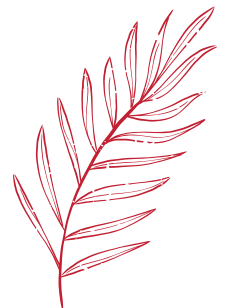
The Branches

What are your hopes and wishes for your children? Where did they come from?



The Trunk

Who are the people or organisations you feel comfortable to turn to for help when you need support?



The Earth

Write about the things that you do to nurture yourself to make you feel good and to keep you calm.

The Roots

Think about the people from your childhood who were most important to you. Who were they and what are some of the most important messages they gave you? Name some things from your childhood that you would like to pass on to your own children and some you would choose to leave behind.



Daddy's Little Baby



What can you do to connect with your baby?

Have you tried this?

1. With your partner's permission, place a hand on your partner's belly. Maybe use some slow firm strokes to rub some oil on her tummy.

How does your baby respond to that?

What do you think your baby might be saying to you when you do that?

2. With your partner's permission, have your face close to her tummy and talk or sing to your baby

How does your baby respond to that?

What do you think he/she might be feeling when you do that?

What do you imagine your baby would like to say to you when you do that?

Do you think your baby knows you? How?



Daddy's Little Baby



Do you think your baby has feelings? What do you think he/she can feel?

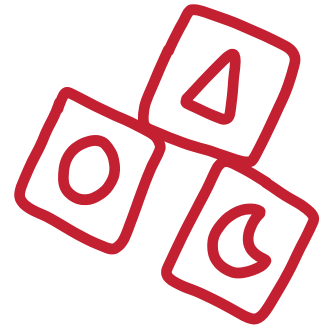
3. How do you think it might feel for your baby when:

- you and your partner are being affectionate with each other?

- you talk and sing to your baby?

- you feel your baby moving?

- you and partner are fighting or angry?



4. Imagine meeting your baby for the first time after he/she is born.

- What might it be like for you?

- What might it be like for your baby?

- What are the first words you'd like to say to your baby?



Talking with parents

About communication



The rights of all children & young people



Almost all of the countries in the world came together and agreed that all children and young people have an important set of rights that can never be taken away from them. It does not matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is and whether they have a disability.

They all have the right to be loved, be cared for, be safe, have an education and be special. All adults should try their hardest to make sure that children are supported to grow up free from being hurt.



All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

You have the right to give your opinion, express your view, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.



You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others.

You have the right to live with and be raised by your parents, unless it is harmful for you.



You have the right to practise your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose.



You have the right to your own nationality (to belong to a country).

You have the right to help if you have been hurt, neglected or abused.

You have the right to be protected from being hurt or abused.

You have the right to the best health care possible.



No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way.



Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.



You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and is bad for your health and education. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.



You have the right for your personal information to not be given out to anyone without your agreement.



You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability.

You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should be able to do many of the things other children can do.



You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country).



If you live in care or in other situations away from home, you have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are ok and right for you.

You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.

You have the right to choose your own friends.



You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.



You have the right to play and rest.

You have the right to special care and protection if you cannot live with your parents.

You have the right to legal help and fair treatment by police, judges and magistrates.



All these rights and more are written down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

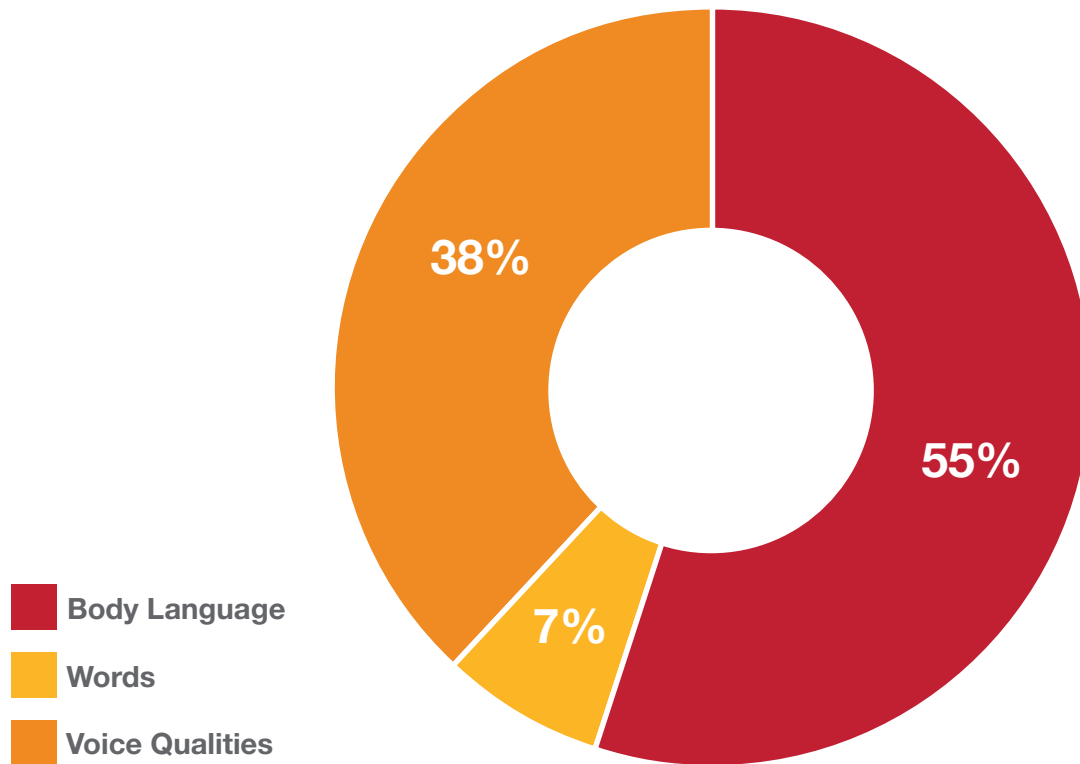


Are we missing anything?



When parents have a new baby they learn about the baby through their body language “cues”. Some examples would be when your baby is tired they might rub their eyes or when their tummy hurts they pull their little knees up to their tummies.

Communication Pie



Somehow when children become verbal, parents forget to use the skill of reading body language and only listen to the words. We are only using 45 percent of the communication pie and missing 55% of opportunities to tune into our children “missing cues”.

Are we putting up communication barriers by not embracing all elements of the communication pie?



Barriers to Communication



‘Waht tnihgs get in the way of us cmomiuntcanig celalry wtih our clihrdn?’

‘Yuor bairn is so pfworeul, taht it can raed sntcenecs wtih mexid up wrdos as Inog as the frsit and lsat lterets are in the rgiht pacle.’



Ideas for Reflective Discussion with Children



★ Hold a Family Meeting:

- Choose a time when everyone is at home, when you are rested and when you won't be interrupted.
- Choose a topic or issue for discussion which interests the children. Choose something that will give each person a chance to express his or her opinions, thoughts and feelings.
- Each person may choose whether they prefer to speak or to listen.
- To help children with taking turns to speak, you might like to have a small object which is held by the speaker, and then passed on to the next person who has something to say: eg a 'talking stone'. Others are encouraged to listen to the holder of the 'talking stone' without interruption.

★ Story-making:

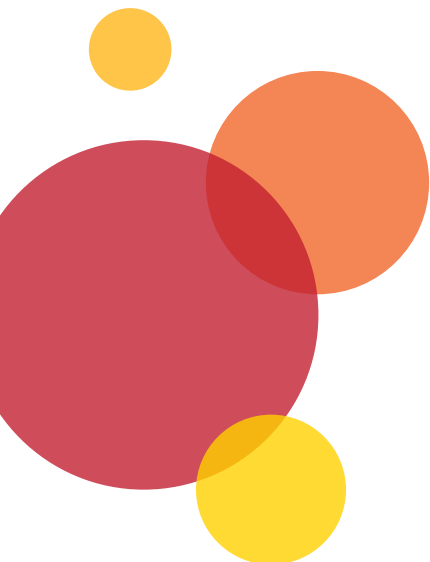
- This activity could be kept for special one-to-one time spent with each child individually.
- Sit down with your child and talk about an experience you have shared together.
- Encourage your child to lead the discussion. Notice how each of you has a different focus and memory of the same experience.
- Reflect back to him/her, what you have each experienced so that you develop together, your shared story about the experience.

★ Family Book:

- Help each child to use eg a scrapbook with drawings, photos, pictures cut from magazines, words... to record a story about him/herself.
- Each family member could have a section of the book so that together, the separate stories make a family album.

★ Play and Pets:

- Play can provide opportunities for children to develop empathy and to think about the minds and experience of others. Children can project their feelings onto pets, dolls, figurines or toy animals.
- Asking questions like 'I wonder how the black guinea pig feels when the brown one pushes him away/eats all the food/gets more cuddles.....' can open up discussion about the feelings of others.




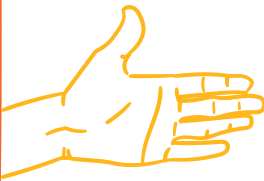



Have I told you lately that I love you?



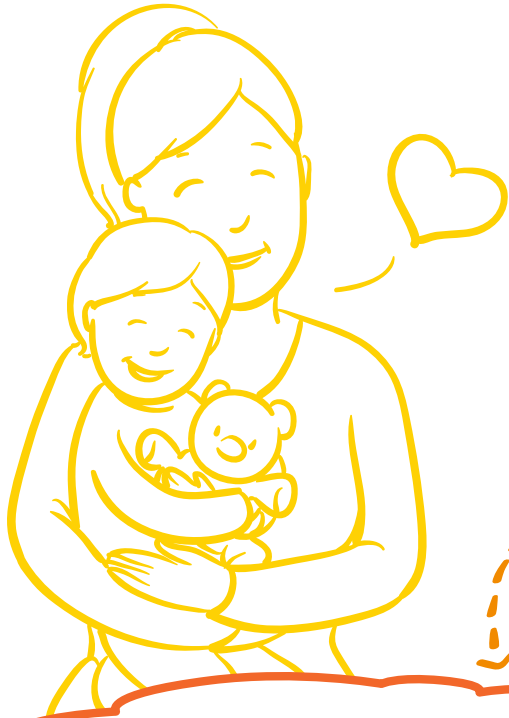
Each of us has our favourite ways of receiving messages of love.

Use the chart below to show how you and your partner prefer to receive love. Then wonder about what you can do for your baby so that he/she gets the message, 'I am loved'.

	My Preferences	My partner's preferences	Wondering about our baby
Kind Words 			
Quality time 			
Gifts 			
Doing helpful things 			
Loving touch 			

Adapted from Chapman, G. (2010), *The Five Love Languages*

Playtime Fun Grows Healthy Brains



Parent smiles at baby while playing
'This little piggy' with his toes

Parent's eyes light up with pleasure

Baby looks at parents happy face

'Feel good' hormones are
released in the baby's brain

Baby feels good and more
connections grow in his brain

With hundreds of repetitions of playtime fun with people who love him, baby becomes better able to manage big feelings and to relate to other people

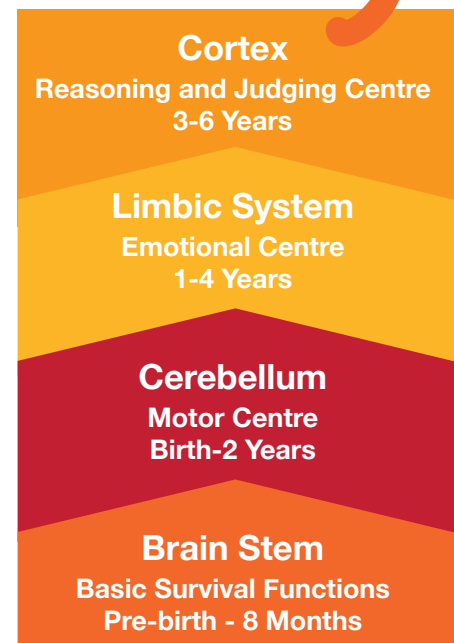


Talking with parents

About brain development



Bottom-Up Brain Development



The brain is comprised of different structures that grow and develop at different rates and different times.

The **brain stem** area of the brain develops first and is responsible for basic functions that **keep us alive** such as heart rate, breathing and regulating our body temperature. The brain stem is fully developed at birth. It is the part of the brain that is 'hard wired' and least susceptible to change.

Connected to the brain stem is the **cerebellum** or motor centre of the brain. This area is responsible for **movement** and develops over the first few years of life. Development in this area is seen in babies gaining head control, sitting, crawling and walking. In the next few years, children will gain greater co-ordination, learn to skip, kick a ball, ride a bicycle, cut, draw and eat with cutlery.

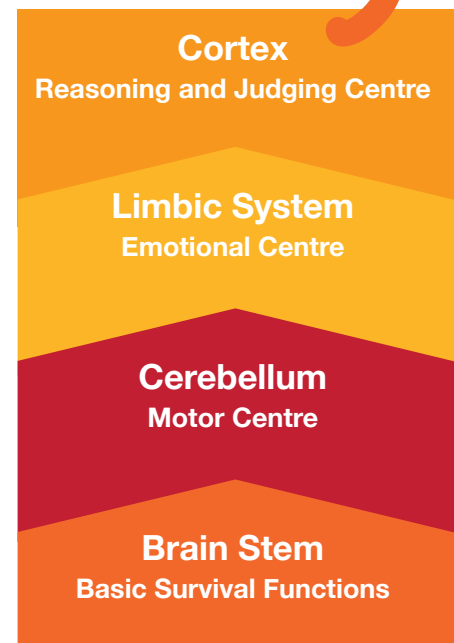
The **limbic system** is the **emotional** centre of the brain and rules the lives of young children up to around four years. During the toddler years, the limbic system goes through a period of rapid development. This helps explain their bursts of irrational behaviour and tantrums. Toddlers need our help to manage their **strong** feelings. Young children **feel** then **act**, they **can't think** then **act**. This is due to the emotional centre of their brain developing before the cortex, or the thinking part of their brain. Young children basically view the world through an emotional lens.

The **cortex**, or thinking part of the brain, is the last part to develop. This is the part of the brain responsible for reasoning, planning and problem solving. This is the part of the brain that enables humans to **think** before they **act**. As children grow and develop, the cortex is gradually able to help us to pause when we are flooded by **strong** emotions, thus allowing us to **feel, think, then act**.

Unlike the brain stem, the limbic system and cortex are highly susceptible to change due to experience and the environment in which the child lives.



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The brain is comprised of different structures that grow and develop at different rates and different times.

The **brain stem** area of the brain develops first and is responsible for basic functions that **keep us alive** such as heart rate, breathing and regulating our body temperature. The brain stem is fully developed at birth. It is the part of the brain that is 'hard wired' and least susceptible to change.

Connected to the brain stem is the **cerebellum** or motor centre of the brain. This area is responsible for **movement** and develops over the first few years of life. Development in this area is seen in babies gaining head control, sitting, crawling and walking. In the next few years, children will gain greater co-ordination, learn to skip, kick a ball, ride a bicycle, cut, draw and eat with cutlery.

The **limbic system** is the **emotional** centre of the brain and rules the lives of young children up to around four years. During the toddler years, the limbic system goes through a period of rapid development. This helps explain their bursts of irrational behaviour and tantrums. Toddlers need our help to manage their **strong** feelings. Young children **feel** then **act**, they **can't think** then **act**. This is due to the emotional centre of their brain developing before the cortex, or the thinking part of their brain. Young children basically view the world through an emotional lens.

The **cortex**, or thinking part of the brain, is the last part to develop. This is the part of the brain responsible for reasoning, planning and problem solving. This is the part of the brain that enables humans to **think** before they **act**. As children grow and develop, the cortex is gradually able to help us to pause when we are flooded by **strong** emotions, thus allowing us to **feel, think, then act**.

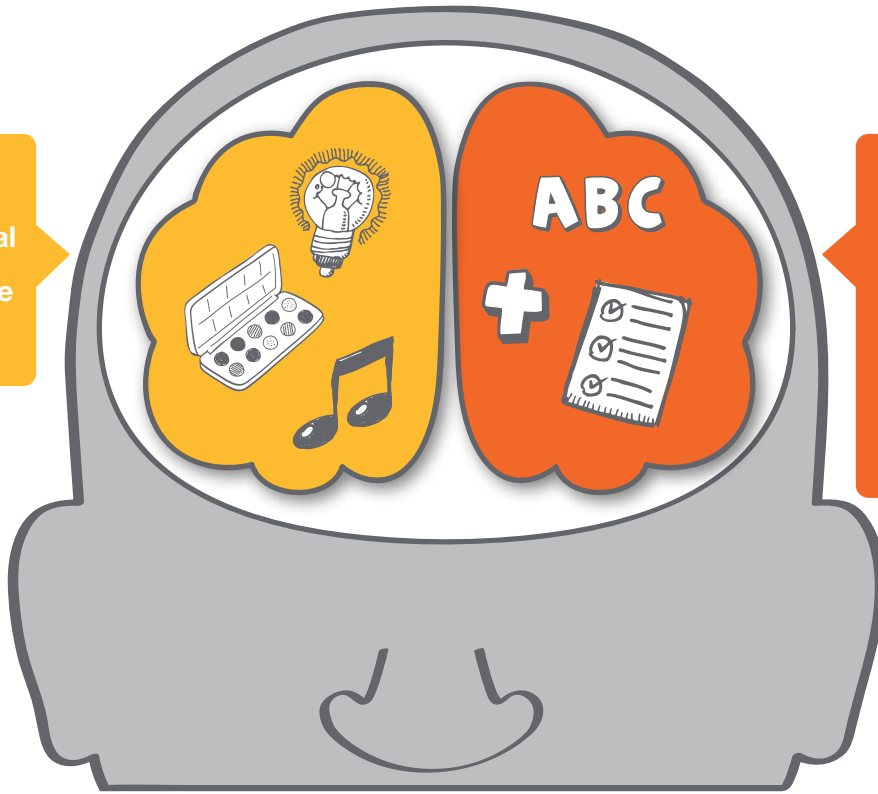
Unlike the brain stem, the limbic system and cortex are highly susceptible to change due to experience and the environment in which the child lives.



Left and Right Brain

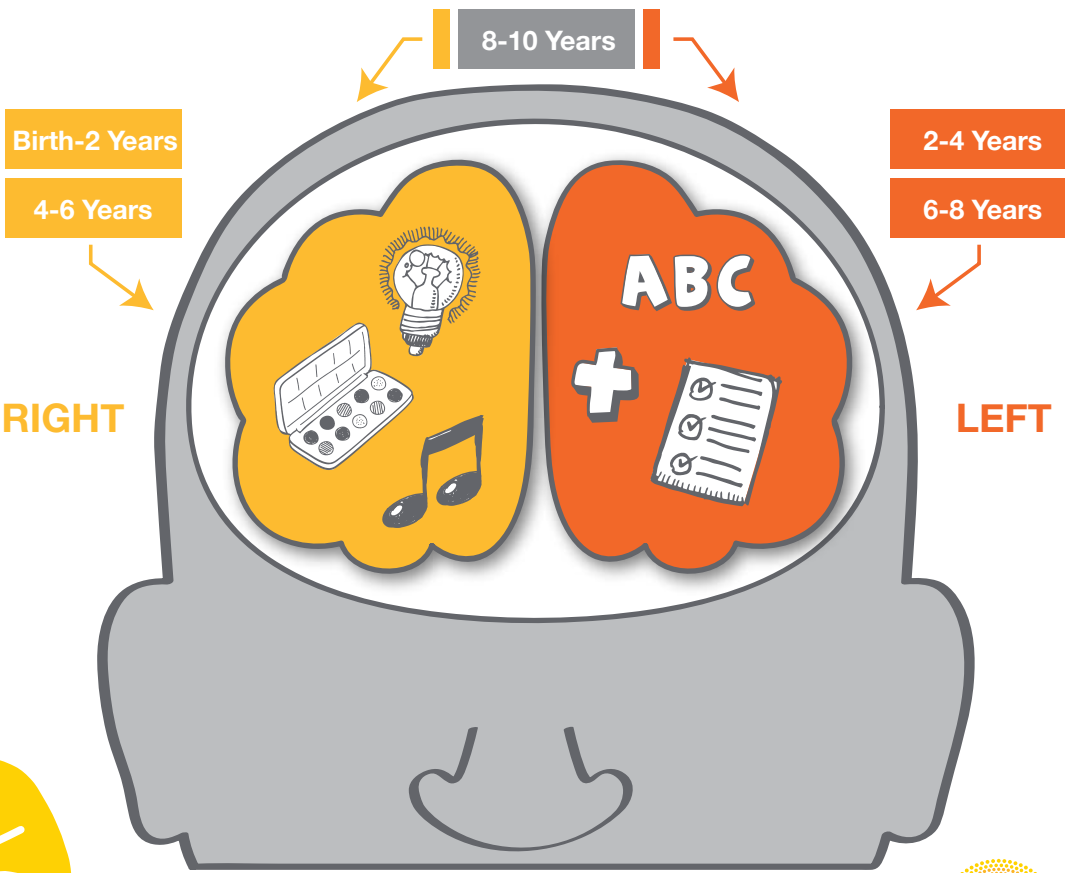


RIGHT
Non-Verbal
Big Picture
Sensory



LEFT
Logical
Language
Lists
Linear
Literal

Lateral Brain Development



Brain Food Fun for Kids



The following activities are suggested to enable parents and children to have fun together whilst also assisting brain development in their children through play.

Babies and Toddlers

Baby Aerobics:

These are fun to practise at nappy change time. With baby lying on the floor:



Hold baby's ankles and 'march' her legs-gently bending alternate knees up to her tummy as you sing:

*The Grand old Duke of York
He had ten thousand men
He marched them up to the top of the hill
And he marched them down again.*



Hold baby's ankles as above but bend both knees together up to her tummy as you sing:

*Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream.*



A variation for older babies with good head control:

Hold your child firmly with both hands and raise him overhead as if he were a flying aeroplane. Look at him and smile as you sing:

*Fly, fly, fly your plane,
Fly your plane up high.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
High up in the sky!*



Hold one of baby's ankles with one hand and baby's opposite hand with your other hand. Gently cross and uncross baby's arm and leg over her tummy as you sing:

*Hot cross buns
Hot cross buns
One a penny, two a penny
Hot cross buns.*



Pick up baby so that she is facing you. Hold baby firmly with your hands under her armpits and wrapped around her body. Lift baby up and down looking at her face as you say:

*Up, up in the air like this
Down, down, for a great big kiss (kiss baby here)
Up, up
Down for a kiss (another kiss)
You're my very special baby (give baby a cuddle here)*



Brain Food Fun for Kids



Baby Aerobics:

- ★ For a young baby, practise this while he is lying on his back looking up at you. For a toddler, you could sit him on your knee with his back leaning against your chest. Hold both baby's hands and alternately stretch his arms wide open and bring them back to cross over his chest, as you sing or say:

*Open, shut them
Open, shut them
Lay them in your lap.
Open, shut them
Open, shut them
Give a little clap! (clap baby's hands together here)*

*Open, shut them
Open, shut them
Don't get in a muddle.
Open, shut them
Open, shut them
Give yourself a cuddle! (wrap your arms around baby here)*

Clap and Bounce Knee Games:

- ★ With baby sitting or lying on your knee facing you, hold her hands and clap them together rhythmically in time to this rhyme:

*Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man
Bake me a cake as fast as you can
Pat it and prick it and mark it with B
And put in the oven for Baby and me!*

- ★ With baby sitting on your knee and facing away from you with baby's back resting against your chest, hold baby's legs around the ankles and cross her legs back and forth in time to this rhyme:

*Leg over leg
As the dog went to Dover
When he came to a stile,
JUMP, he went over! (holding baby's thighs, lift him up towards you)*

- ★ With baby sitting on your knee and facing away from you, hold baby's body under his arms as you bounce your knees up and down in time to the rhyme:

*Father and Mother and Uncle Tom,
Got up on a pony and rode along
Father fell off (lift baby off your knee to one side of your body)
And Mother fell off (lift baby off your knee to the other side of your body)
And Uncle Tom rode on, and on, and on (bounce faster and faster)*



Brain Food Fun for Kids



Books to share together:

★ The soothing rhyme, rhythm and repetition of these stories can be calming for babies and parents too!

Campbell, R. (2010) **Dear Zoo**, Pan Macmillan

Martin, B. and Carle, E. (1997) **Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?** Penguin Books Ltd

Holt, H., Martin, B. and Carle, E. (2007) **Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?** Henry Holt and Company

Williams, S. and Vivs, J. (2005) **I Went Walking**, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Wise Brown, M. and Hurd, C. (2008). **Goodnight Moon 1 2 3: A Counting Book**, HarperCollins

Fox, M and Dyer, J. (2005) **Time for Bed**, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Raffi, (1998) **Wheels on the Bus**, Random House Children's Books

Fox, M. and Horacek, J. (2004) **Where is the green sheep?** Harcourt

Rowe, J. (2001) **Whose Belly?** ABC Books

Children 3-6 years

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

★ Sit on the floor with you and your child facing each other. Stretch your legs out in front of your and hold your child's hands. Rock backwards and forwards together as you sing:

Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream

Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily OR *If you see a crocodile*
Life is but a dream. *Don't forget to scream!*

A Smooth Road

★ Sit on the floor with your legs together and stretched out in front of you. Sit your child on your lap facing you. Hold your child securely with both hands as you:

sway gently from side to side as you repeat 4 times

A smooth road

bounce a little faster as you repeat 4 times

A bumpy road

bounce even faster as you repeat 4 times

A rough road!

Then hold your child securely as you part your legs and lift, then lower him or her onto the floor, saying as you do so...

A ditch!

Hand stack

★ Sitting at a table with your child on your knee, place one of your hands flat on the table in front of you both. Help your child to place one of her hands on top of yours then alternate the hand stack with one of your hands then one of hers..... You will each need to pull out a hand to place it on top of the stack when you've used both hands.



Brain Food Fun for Kids



Books to share together:

Rosen, M. (2009) **We're Going on a Bear Hunt**. Walker Books.
 Lloyd, S. (2003) **What Colour Are Your Knickers?** Gullane Children's Books.
 Horá ek, P. (2009) **Silly Suzy Goose**, Candlewick Press.
 Dodd, L. (2010) **Hairy Maclary Series**, Penguin Group.
 Crebbin, J. (2003) **Cows in the Kitchen**, Candlewick Press.
 Dr. Seuss (2005) **Miniature library: ten classic tales from Dr. Seuss**, Collins Publishers.

Children 6-10 years

Children at this age will be able to teach you clapping games they know but here are some more suggestions:

Mary Mac:



Standing close together and facing each other chant this rhyme together as you do the actions: one action for each syllable of the rhyme.

<i>Mary Mac</i>	slap both hands on both your knees, clap hands, clap your hands on child's outstretched hands
<i>dressed in black.</i>	... as above
<i>Silver buttons</i>	hands slap on knees, clap your hands, clap your right hand with child's right hand, then clap left hands together
<i>down her back.</i>	... as first line
<i>She likes coffee.</i>	... as first line
<i>I like tea.</i>	... as first line
<i>She likes sitting</i>	on hands slap on knees, clap hands, right hands together, then left hands together
<i>Grandma's knee!</i>	... as first line

Waddley Archer



Waddley Archer, Waddley Archer

Doodley-doo, Doodley-doo

Waddley Archer, Waddley Archer

Doodley-doo, Doodley-doo

It's just a simple song and there's nothing to it

All you have to do is doodley-do it.

I like the rest but the part I like best is

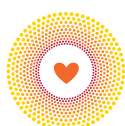
Doodley, doodley-doo!

Move hands horizontally across one another, left hand on top, then right hand on top
 Right thumb and forefinger hold nose while left thumb and forefinger hold right ear, then swap hands
 Repeat as above
 Repeat as above

Roll hands forward, then backwards
 Roll hands forward then do the Doodley-doo nose holds
 Horizontal hand crosses as above
 Nose holds as above

Books to share together:

Read together any books your child chooses and enjoys.



**Australian
Childhood
Foundation**



Talking with parents

About child's development



Children's Emotional Development: Birth – 10 Years



Birth - 18 Months

Babies and toddlers live in an emotional world. They are particularly sensitive to the non-verbal aspects of communication: the way they are looked at, spoken to and touched by the most important people in their lives: you! Babies are not able to talk about how they feel, they are not able to calm themselves down and they are not physically able to do much to change things in their environment. It's no wonder they often get frustrated and have big feelings! During this stage, babies are learning about TRUST.

Each time you pick him up and comfort him when he is upset and every time you have fun playing together he is getting messages that strengthen his template for healthy relationships. These messages include: 'When I need help, someone will be there for me.' 'It's fun being with other people' 'The world is a safe place.'

What babies need:

- A few special adults who will love me, enjoy me, meet all my needs and keep me safe every day
- A consistent and predictable world
- To be held close, gently rock me and talk to me calmly in a soothing tone. I can't settle myself when I'm upset or over-stimulated.
- A calm environment. Please don't fight. Angry or frightened voices and faces feel dangerous to me. Seeing and hearing fighting is as bad as having it done to you.
- An adults touch
- Opportunities to explore and practice a range of movements
- Someone to talk/read/sing with me every day

What parents can do:

- Provide loving care
- Learn to understand what his body language is telling you he needs
- Respond to his needs
- Help him to manage his feelings and settle his body
- Arrange back-up support for yourself for those times when you need it.

An example of how babies communicate: Feeding time.

- Get to know your baby's body language signs that say 'I'm hungry' (signs like mouthing/hand to mouth...) Feed him when you see his hungry signs.
- Hold and stay with him, while you feed him.
- Get to know his signs that say, 'I've had enough now' (signs like turning away/pushing away/back arching...)
- Stop feeding him when he shows his 'I'm full' signs.



Children's Emotional Development: Birth – 10 Years



18 months - 3 years

In the first 2 or 3 years of life, the emotional centres of a child's brain is developing more than the 'thinking, planning, reasoning and talking' centres. This explains why toddlers often get very emotional and 'act without thinking'. It also helps us to understand that very young children are not capable of behaviours such as planning to cry just to annoy you or to get back at you.

A toddler's brain is still growing rapidly at this stage with the most growth occurring in the feeling, emotional centres and in those areas relating to physical skills like running, jumping, balancing, feeding and dressing themselves.

To learn and master a new skill we all need to practice that skill over and over again. Toddlers are just starting to enjoy the sense of power that they get from being able to do things by themselves. They need lots of opportunities to practice these new skills – repetition is important. It is important for a toddler to feel good about himself.

At around 18 months children begin to develop a sense of self- of 'me' and 'mine.' Commonly, toddler talk includes phrases like, 'Me too!' 'Wait for me!' 'Me do it!' 'Mine!'

With an awareness of what belongs to 'me' it is often difficult for toddlers to share toys with others. This is an important stage in the child developing a sense of identity and independence. Toddlers have more trouble stopping an action than starting a new one so it is more effective to say to a toddler 'Walk slowly!' than it is to say 'Stop running! Toddlers can be very determined and assertive when they decide they want to do something. They often get frustrated when it doesn't work out the way they'd like. This often happens when they are not physically able to do what they want or when rules/limits don't allow it.

Because the toddler's emotional brain centres are so active, a toddler who is frustrated is likely to react in an emotional way. That's why "big feelings" are common at this stage and why it can be difficult for toddlers to cope with not being able to have what they want.

From about 18 months of age, the centres of the brain which help us to control our impulses are just beginning to develop. At this stage he may 'know' that it is not acceptable to bite people but at times he may not be able to hold back his desire to do it. As the frontal areas of the brain mature children's ability to control their impulses increases. The left side of the brain is starting to grow faster at this stage too as shown in children's language development. While they are still learning to use words toddlers have difficulty expressing their feelings using language. Toddlers who are practicing the new skill of speaking often experiment with the word, 'No!' as they enjoy the feeling of power it gives them.



Children's Emotional Development: Birth – 10 Years



18 months - 3 years

What toddlers need:

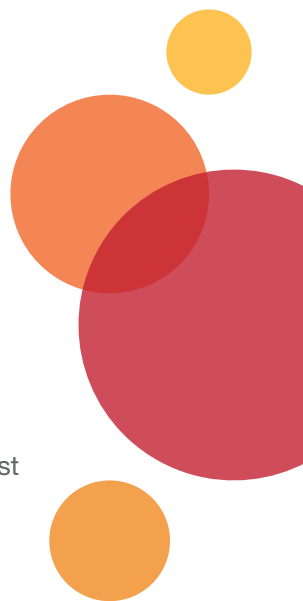
- To feel good about myself when I can do things by myself
- To practice doing new things over and over again
- To try to do new things
- To be kept safe while I explore and experiment. "I might test the boundaries but I need to know where they are"!
- To understand and comfort me when I get frustrated

What parents can do:

- Understand that toddlers have limited control over their emotional responses
- Support his development of self-control by modelling appropriate responses eg. 'It's not ok to hit Marcus, but you can tell him you don't like it when he takes your truck'
- When he does something that is inappropriate, let him know that what he did is not ok, but that you still love him.
- To help a toddler cope with change provide predictable routines and prepare him for what is about to happen next
- Make opportunities for your child to be successful-give only as much help as he needs
- Show your interest and delight in him as he practices the same skill over and over again
- Accept accidents/spills as a normal part of learning something new
- Provide reasonable, consistent boundaries
- Calm yourself before you respond to your toddler
- Have a support network in place so that you can arrange to have a break when you need it most

A mealtime example:

- Encourage him to feed herself.
- Serve food in a way that allows him to be successful at feeding himself eg cut food into bite-sized pieces
- Provide a child-sized fork, spoon etc.
- Accept that meal times will be messy.
- Accept that he might say "No!" to some foods
- Allow him to help you with cooking eg stirring, cutting out biscuits, washing dishes.



Children's Emotional Development: Birth – 10 Years



3-6 years

When older children and adults get very emotional, the reasoning or thinking part of their brain gets shut off, and they too, might 'act like a baby' or 'act without thinking'!

Children at this stage still need to practice new skills. Now they have more physical and language skills children have the ability to start making more decisions themselves. To do this, they need to be given more freedom to try new things, while parents still ensure they are safe. During these years, growth of connections in the left side of the brain will speed up. This is the side of the brain that organises and recognises speech and language. Children's use of language increases rapidly, especially when they are included in conversations with other people. At the same time, there will also begin to be more rapid growth in the thinking and reasoning areas of the brain. They will begin to ask lots of questions as they try to work out why and how things happen.

What children need:

- Opportunities to practice new skills
- Play with children of the same age
- Opportunities to use my imagination and try new things
- Encouragement to make my own suggestions and decisions

What parents can do:

- Provide opportunities for children to play with their friends
- Give children praise and encouragement for trying, not just for success
- Provide opportunities for him to make decisions about everyday things that concern him
Eg which clothes to wear

A mealtime example:

- Allow him to decide how much food to put on his plate.
- Accept his decision to stop eating when he says, 'I'm full.'
- Accept spills as normal.
- Allow him to decide whether he will try new foods.
- Respect that he may dislike a new food.



Children's Emotional Development: Birth – 10 Years



6-10 years

Sometime between the ages of 8 and 10 years developmental growth in both sides of the brain begins to even out, as the 'bridge' between the left and right hemispheres strengthens. Generally this means that children at this stage become better able to manage their feelings, are better able to make decisions for themselves and to understand the reasons and consequences for actions and behaviour.

What children need:

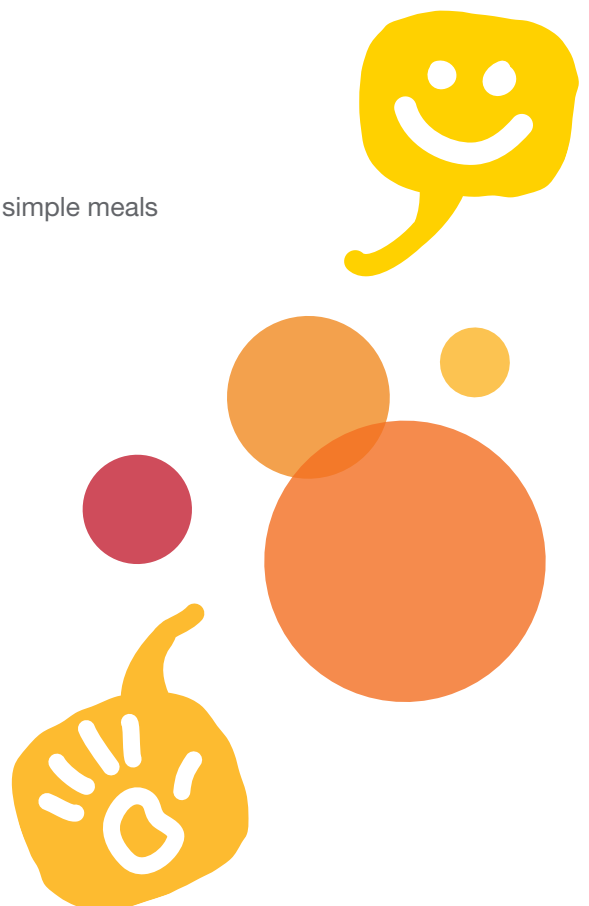
- To be able to achieve something they can feel good about
- To enjoy friendships with children their own age
- To learn how to get along with friends and adults

What parents can do:

- Provide opportunities to develop special interests and practice skills eg sports/music/games/hobbies.....
- Provide opportunities for socialising with friends eg joining clubs/free play at home
- Offer children choices – within limits
- Support children in their attempts to solve their own problems
- Help children to make and learn rules eg in games
- Celebrate the child's achievements

A mealtime example:

- Allow children to decide when they are hungry or full.
- Provide food and utensils so that children can prepare snacks or simple meals for themselves and their friends.
- Allow children to make suggestions for family meals.
- Allow children to help with shopping for and cooking meals.



Family Case Scenario



Shalini and Jack Murphy have four children:

Darren, their sensitive 10 year old son, attends the local primary school; Kieran, their sociable 6 year old son, is in his early years at school; Three year old Kevina their only daughter, is known as the comedienne of the family and has started an early years program this year; and their placid baby boy, 8 month old mason.

The family has recently moved to the country from their home of the last 10 years in the inner suburbs of a capital city, to a rural area where they now live on a small farm property.

While the family was living in the city, Jack went out to work for 5 days each week. Since the move to the country, he works from home.

Shalini has not returned to the workforce since Mason's birth.

Group Discussion

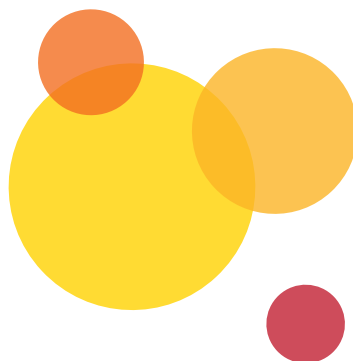


Consider the child in your 'age group' and what the family's change of circumstances might mean for him or her. Take into account, the child's:

- Stage of development
- Personality
- Gender
- Position in the family

Consider possible impacts on the child's:

- Feelings
- Sense of security
- Friendships
- Behaviour



Family Case Scenario 2



James, a single dad, cares for his three children.

Adam, aged 6 who demonstrates some challenging behaviours and has recently been diagnosed with ADHD. Sarah, aged 10, is a very nervous child who struggles to make friends. Sam, aged 3, is a very sociable and friendly child.

The only support James gets each week is from his mum who lives nearby and looks after the children two afternoons a week.

The house James has been renting for five years has been sold and will no longer be available for rent. There are no other houses in the nearby area within James's budget so he no choice but to move to the other side of town to where he can afford to rent. The move will mean a change of schools and finding a new day care for Sam.

Group Discussion



Consider the children in the scenario and what the change of circumstances may mean for each one, take into account each child's;

- Stage of development
- Personality / Temperament
- Gender
- Position in the family

Consider possible impacts on the child's:

- Feelings
- Sense of security
- Friendships
- Behaviours



Personality



Every child's personality is unique to them. Personality helps explain why a child reacts to the world the way he does.

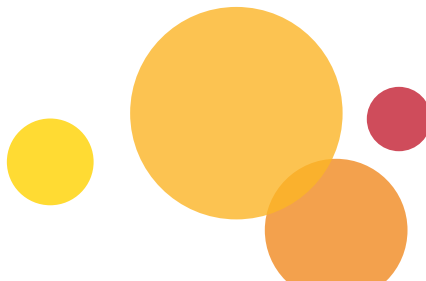
Below are scales from 1 to 10 for a range of different aspects of personality. Think about your child. Mark a cross where you would place him/her of each scale.

 **Complete the scales for each of your children.**



 **Now repeat this exercise for yourself.**

Using a different coloured pen, rate yourself against. Compare your ratings with those of your child. Do you find it easier or more difficult, to relate to a child who has a similar personality to your own?



Every Child is Unique



For each of your children:



Name 4 words to describe him or her.



Name 4 words to describe you.



Who does your child remind you of?



In what ways is he or she different from you?



In what ways is he or she the same as you?



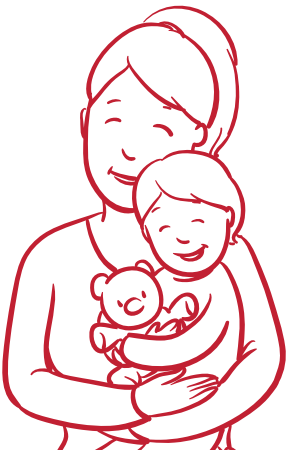


Talking with parents

About child's behaviour

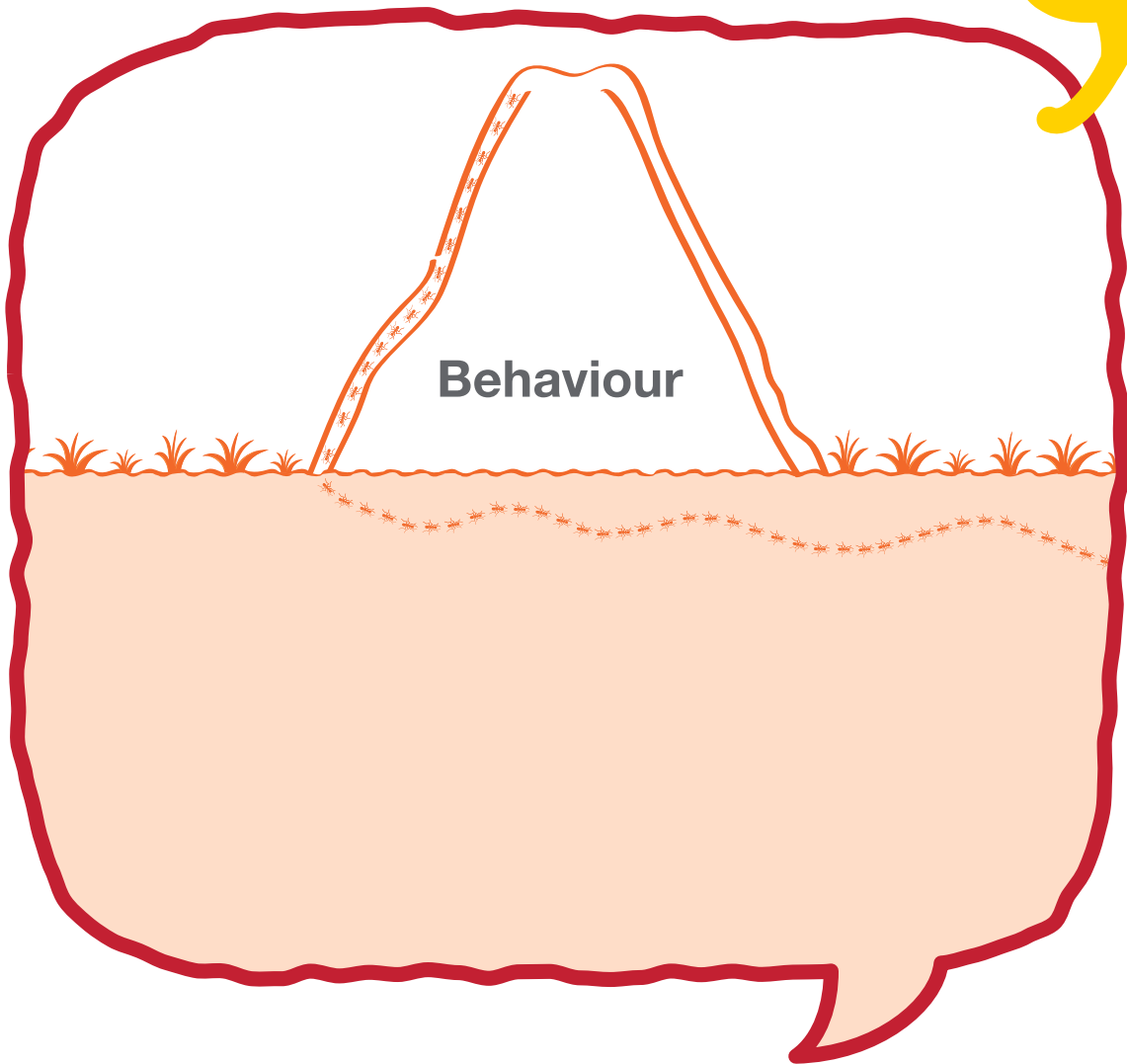


Children's Behaviour



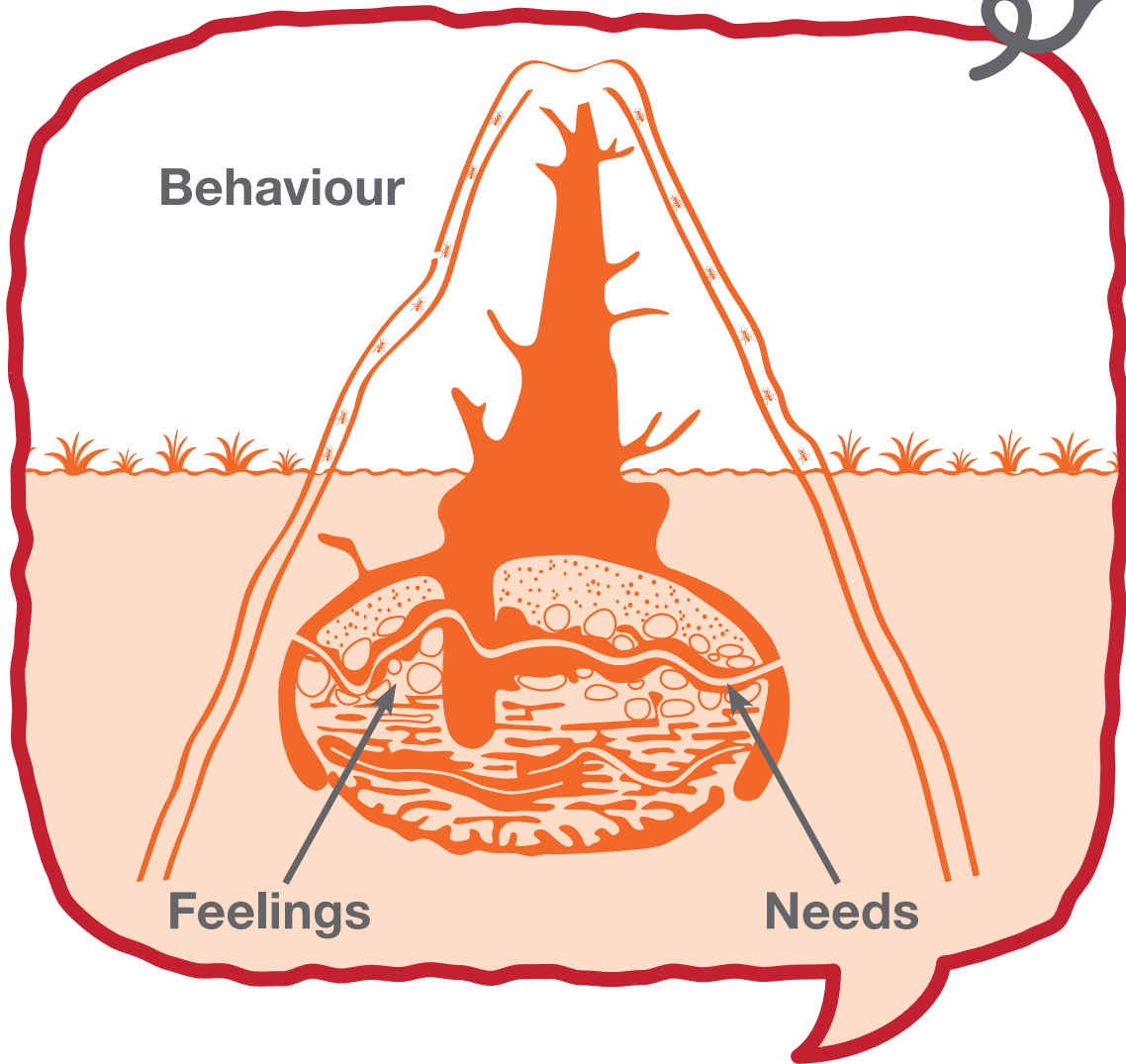
Situation	Behaviour	Understanding (emotion, reason, intention)
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Behaviour Ant Hill



Notes

Behaviour Ant Hill




Notes _____

Anthill Scenarios



My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...



My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...



My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...



My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...



My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...



My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...



Anthill Scenarios



7 month old

Cries loudly when left at Childcare and when put in cot for sleep.

My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...

2 year old

Screams, throws them self on floor and kicks, when taken off coin-in-slot ride at shopping centre.

My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...

4 year old

Cries loudly when left at Childcare and when put in cot for sleep.

My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...

6 year old

Stares at the window during class time, leaves work uncompleted.

My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...

8 year old

Hits other children and disrupts other children's games.

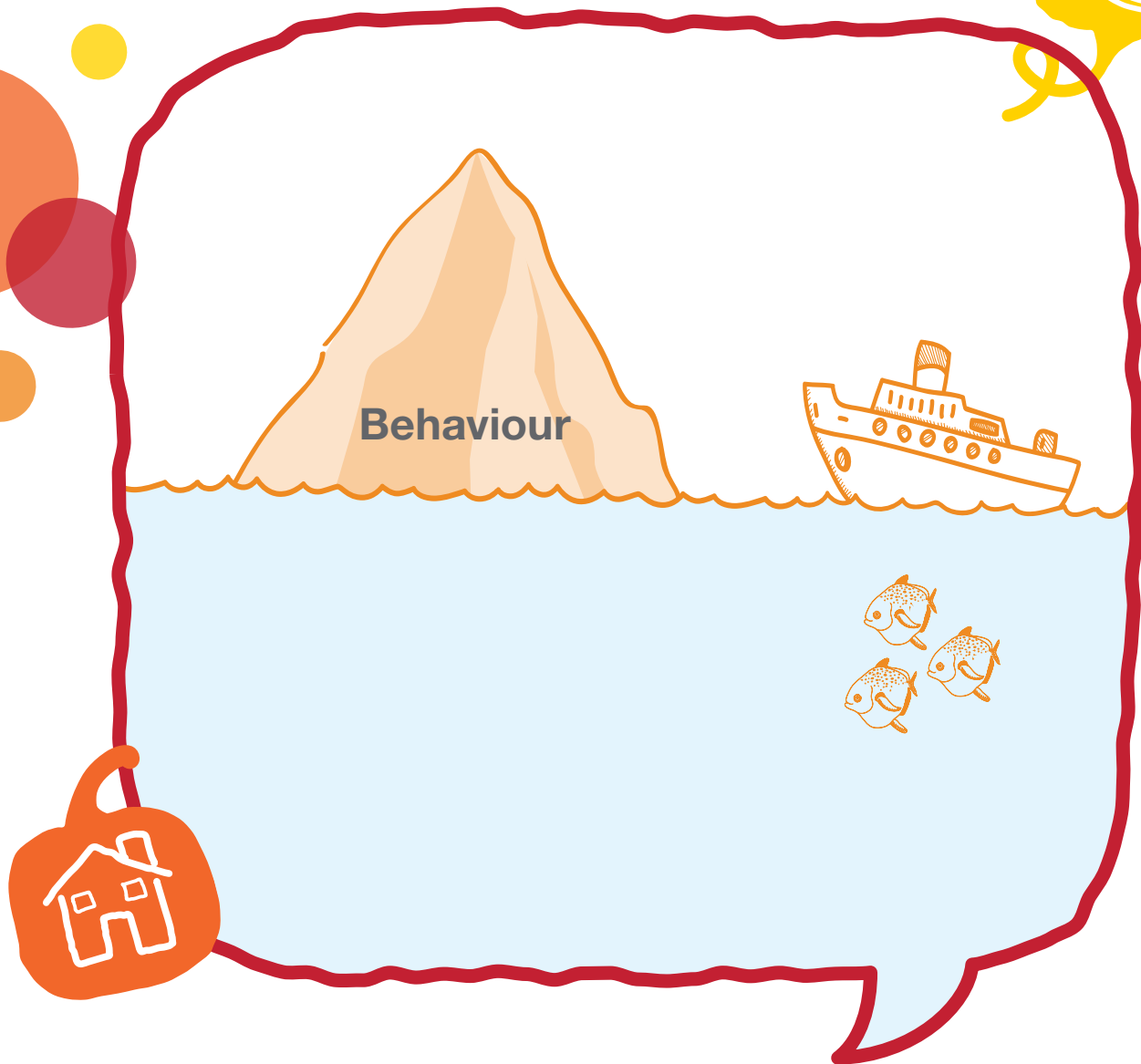
My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...

10 year old

Very quiet, with a blank expression on their face. Never asks for help. Chooses to stay in the library at lunchtimes.

My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...

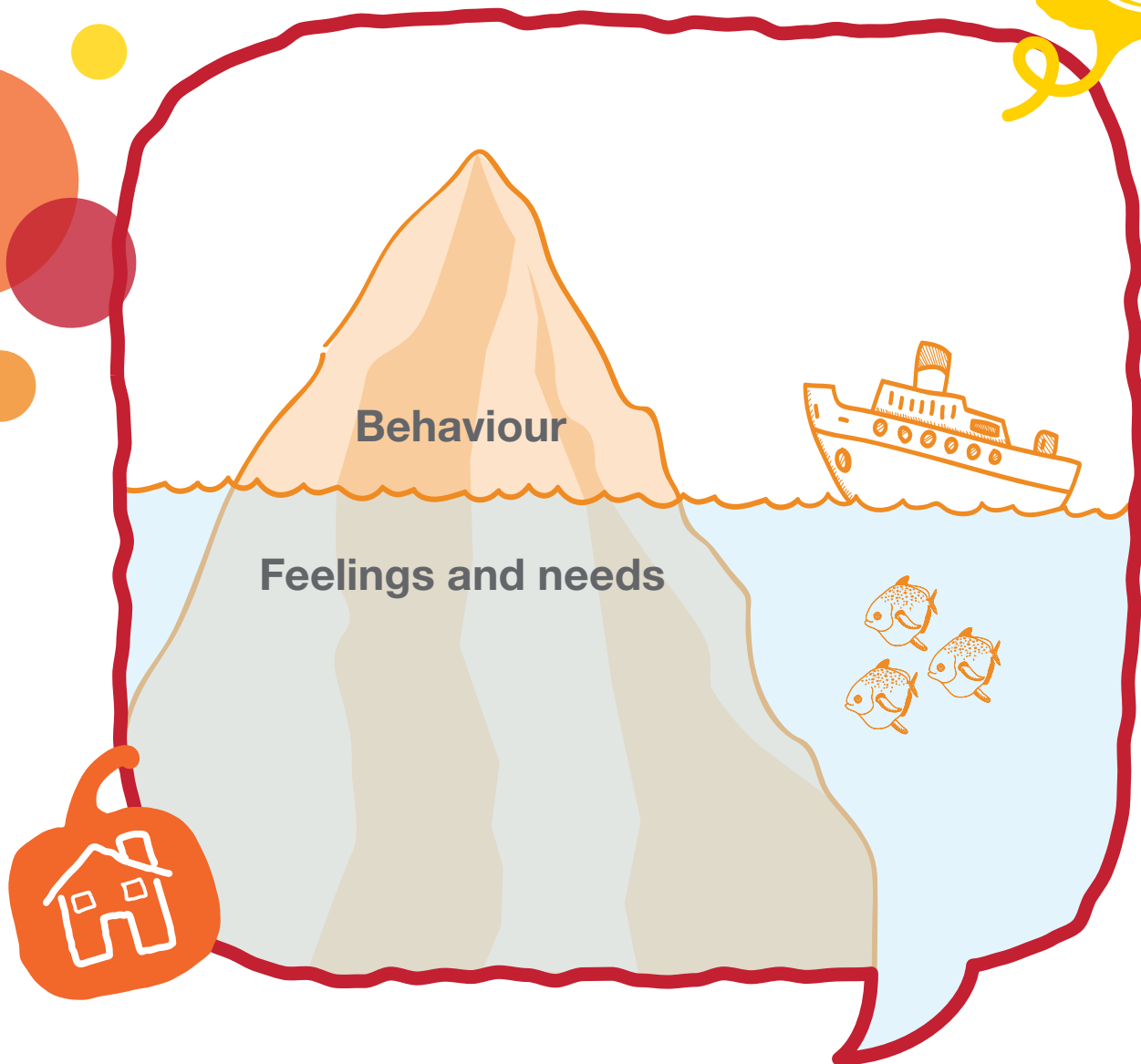
Behaviour Iceberg



Notes _____



Behaviour Iceberg



Notes _____



Iceberg Scenarios







My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...





My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...





My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...





My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...





My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...





My child does that because he is feeling...
What he needs is...
When he does that I feel...
... because I need ...



Iceberg Scenarios



7 Months

Cries loudly when left at childcare and when put in cot for sleep.

My child does that because he is feeling...

What he needs is...

When he does that I feel...

...because I need...

2 Years

Screams, throws herself on floor and kicks when taken off coin-in-slot ride at shopping centre.

My child does that because he is feeling...

What he needs is...

When he does that I feel...

...because I need...

4 Years

At Pre-school concentrates well with stories and puzzles. Recovers quickly when upset.

My child does that because he is feeling...

What he needs is...

When he does that I feel...

...because I need...

6 Years

Stares at the window during class time, leaves work uncompleted.

My child does that because he is feeling...

What he needs is...

When he does that I feel...

...because I need...

8 Years

Hits other children and disrupts other children's games.

My child does that because he is feeling...

What he needs is...

When he does that I feel...

...because I need...

10 Years

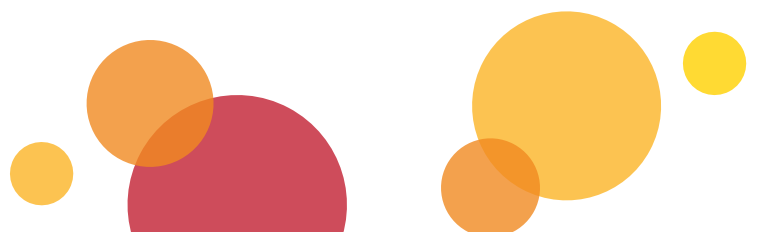
Very quiet with a blank expression on his face. Never asks for help. Chooses to stay in the library at lunchtimes.

My child does that because he is feeling...

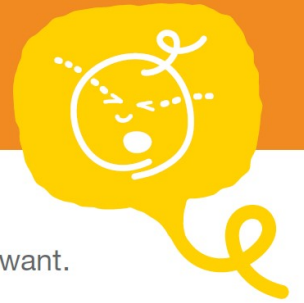
What he needs is...

When he does that I feel...

...because I need...



Feelings and Needs Cards



Cut out each card and fold them in half. You may choose to laminate the card if you want.

bringupgreatkids.org

rest/sleep safety shelter touch

play creativity hope belonging

empathy love nurturing respect

security trust comfort support

Needs

Feelings

calm	happy	proud	playful
curious	enthusiastic	angry	mad
sad	frightened	lonely	scared
bored	excited	fulfilled	relaxed

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rest/sleep safety shelter touch

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Helping Children to Manage Big Feelings



1 Listen to the child's feelings with your whole body

- stop what you're doing
- get down to your child's level
- look at child (their focus is on the expression on your face)
- speak using a calm voice (their focus is on the tone of your voice)

2 Put your child's feelings into words

Eg: "It looks like you're pretty angry/sad/scared about that."
"You sound pretty cross."

3 Help him to notice what's happening in his body

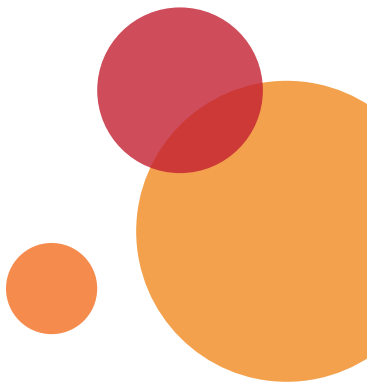
Eg: "How does that feel in your tummy/head?"
"Your arms look stiff and tight."

4 Empathise with him

"It's tough when ..."
"I can understand that you might feel annoyed when..."
"If my friend did that, I'd feel angry too."

5 Help him to solve his own problem

"What could you do about that?"
"What could you do next time that happens?"



Talking with parents

About parent's behaviour

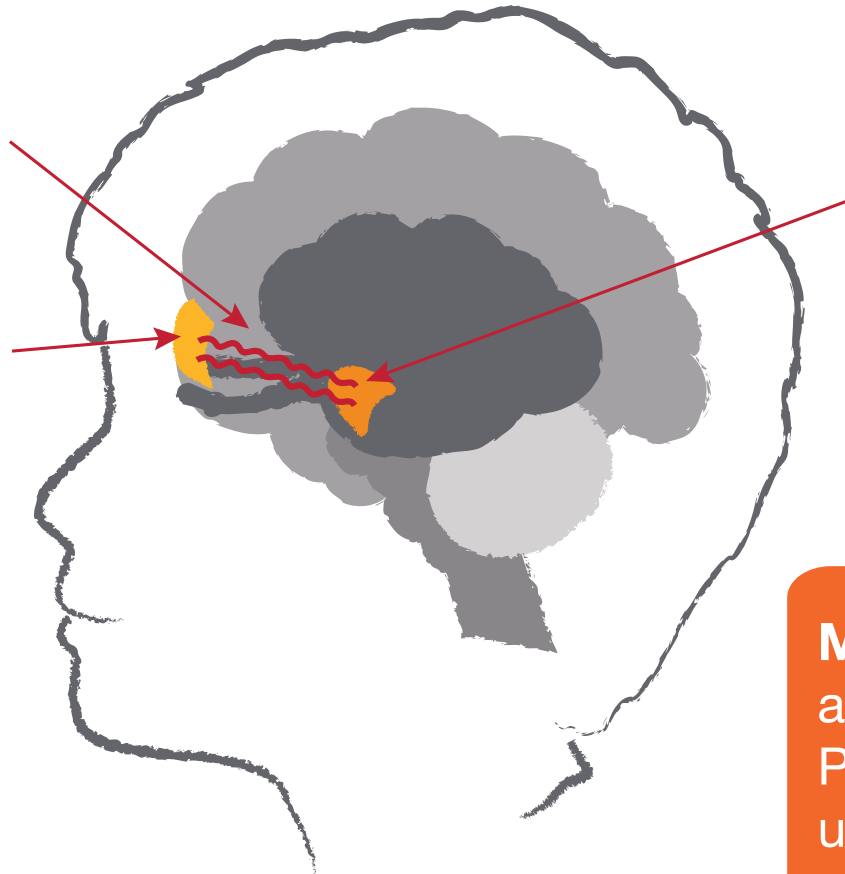


Mindfulness



Deactivation

Medial Pre-Frontal Cortex
The centre of mindfulness/
self-awareness

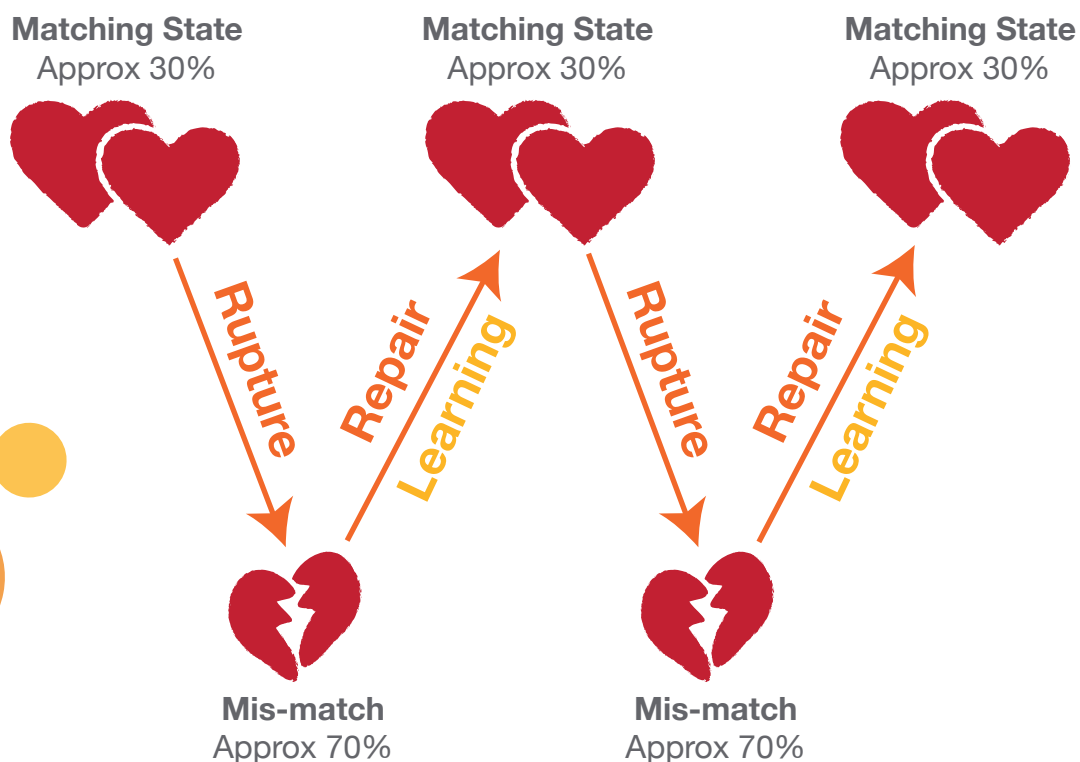


Mindfulness deactivates the Amygdala (the 'smoke-detector' of the brain) helping us to calm.

Mindfulness also develops the Medial Pre-Frontal Cortex, helping us to develop reflection and empathy for others.



Good Enough Parenting (Ed Tronick)



Having a look to this illustration, please discuss the following questions in your group:

- How do you feel about your relationship with your child?
- How can a rupture in relationship be an opportunity for learning and growth?
- Do you feel able to repair after a relationship rupture?



Talking with parents

About self-care



Stop...Pause...Play



When we can relate to our children with mindful awareness we activate a part of the brain (the medial pre-frontal cortex) which allows our defensive systems to switch off, putting us in a more relaxed state and allowing us to think and act more rationally and to step outside our own experience so that we can **BE MORE PRESENT TO OUR CHILDREN'S NEEDS.**

This is an exercise that we will practice every week or use any time you need to take time out to calm down before you respond to whatever is going on.



Stop

- Stop what you are doing.
- Make sure your feet are placed firmly on the ground.



Pause

- Focus on your breath.
- Breathe in slowly, right down into your belly, then exhale completely.
- Take 5 more slow breaths, being aware of each breath in and each breath out.
- Smile and enjoy standing like this for a moment. Feel your body relax.
- Reflect. Ask yourself "What do I need?" and "What does my child need?"



Play

Respond to your child with new understanding.



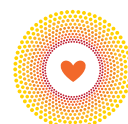
10 Breaths

When something wonderful touches you, savour the experience by offering it 10 full breaths. By paying close attention to special moments, we come to see that opportunities for happiness present themselves many times each day.

Give your 10 breaths to anything that seems wonderful to you

- Something beautiful from Nature
- A special moment with your child/partner/friend
- A piece of music
- Eating something delicious
- A work of art

- 1 Stop whatever you are doing
- 2 Close your eyes, place a hand on your belly and take 3 deep breaths to calm yourself.
- 3 Open your eyes and focus on your special object/person/experience
- 4 Stay focused on whatever has caught your attention as you 'count with your body', 10 slow breaths, by pressing and releasing in turn, each finger resting on your belly.
- 5 If you are still entranced by your special moment, repeat the 10 breaths practice.



Mindfulness Bottle



Make your own Mindfulness Bottle. It can support you to be mindful and calm down when you or your children are overwhelmed with big feelings.

Bring the following items:

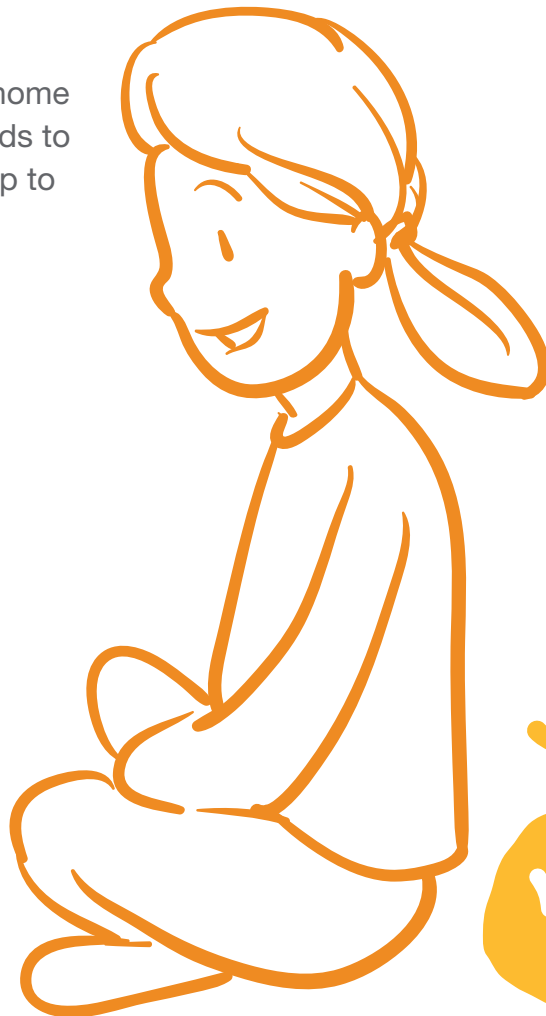
- An empty and clean transparent bottle
- Sparkles or glitter in three or four colors (the tinier the better)
- Glycerin
- Liquid soap

Fill three quarters of the bottle with warm water (not hot, just warm!). Add four drops of liquid soap. Fill the bottle almost to the top with glycerin. Put on the lid and shake the bottle and dissolve soap and glycerin in the water until you have a smooth liquid.

Now the water represents your calm state of mind. Add each color of sparkles or glitter being mindful about one of your feelings. Put the lid back on and your mindfulness bottle is ready.

When you shake the bottle, similar to when we are touched by big feelings, the water gets unclear and the different colors move in all directions and are inseparable and each unrecognisable from the other. As time goes and we are looking at the bottle (and breathing mindfully) the water gets more and more clear and sparkles/glitter settles down to the bottom.

You can use this bottle as a common tool at home with your family members. Anybody who needs to be mindful about their feelings and needs help to manage their big feelings can use the bottle!



Self-care Prescription



Prescription (My self-care activity)	Dose (How long?)	Frequency				
		Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Yearly
Call or visit a friend or family						
Practice breathing / muscle relaxation						
Walk, play sport or exercise						
Have a bath						
Read a book or magazine						
Have one-to-one time with your partner						
Watch a movie						
Listen or dance to music						
Write, paint or play an instrument						
Cook your favourite meal						
Go out for dinner						
Do some gardening						
See a counsellor						
Go away for a weekend						
Go on holiday						



Name: _____

Witnessed: _____

Displayed: 

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Mindful Walking



Mindful Walking allows you to be more present in your body and in the present moment.

So much of the time we are caught up in our intellectual worlds — thinking of the past or future, planning, imagining...

Paying attention as you walk will help you to enjoy simply being alive and connecting with the present mindfully - paying attention with flexibility, openness and curiosity.

A simple mindful walking practice is just to breathe in while taking a step with the left foot and breathe out when taking a step with the right foot.

Breathing is always available as a point of reference - a reminder to be present.

Walking is almost always available.

Mindful Walking can be done very slowly or at a normal walking pace. It's simply a matter of synchronising breath and footstep.

Before you start walking it is a good idea to stand quietly and focus on your breathing for 3 breaths and then commence your mindful walking practice.

Walk for 3-5 minutes if time allows. If you are busy, walk for as long as time permits. Even one minute of mindful walking will help bring you back into the present moment.



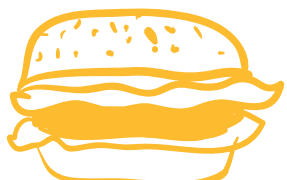
My Favourite Things



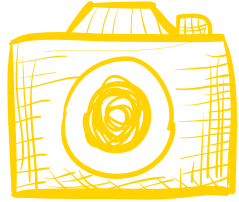
What's your favourite...?

Make sure you experience at least one of your favourite things each day.

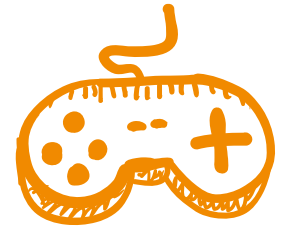
Food



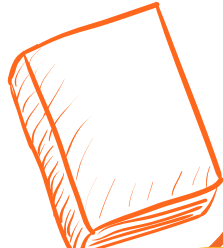
Hobby




Game




Reading




Friends



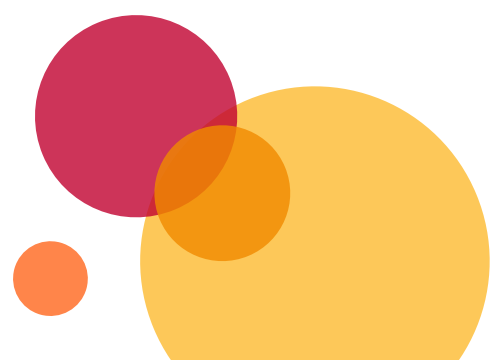

Music



Pet

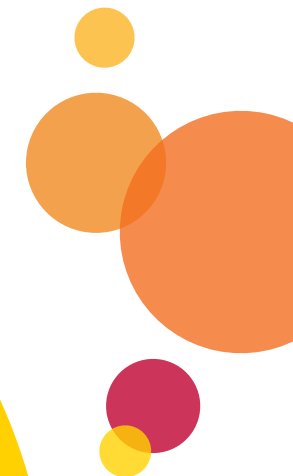
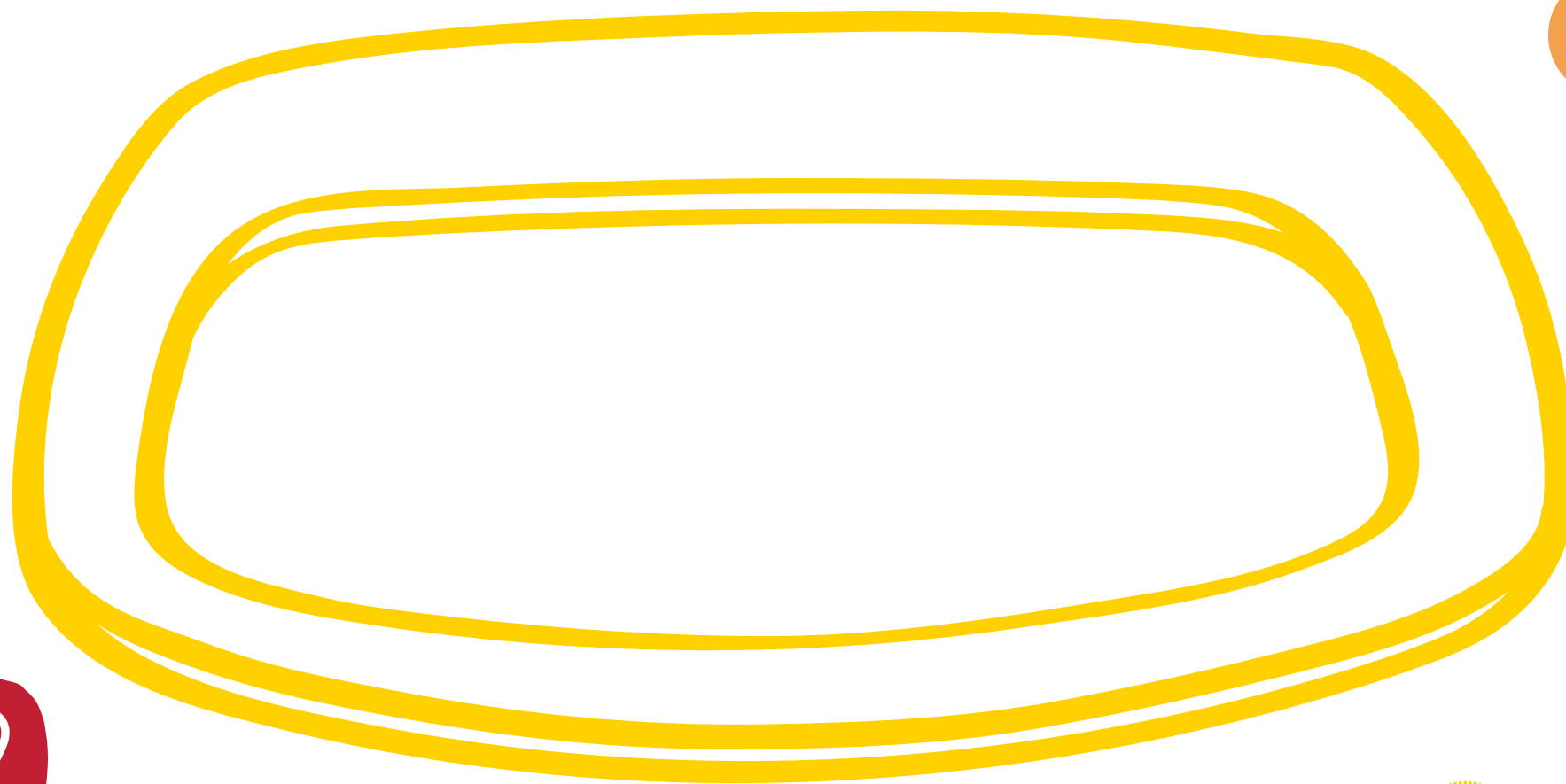


Place



The Wellbeing Plate

★ Design your own wellbeing plate by using the different ingredients provided or by adding your own ideas, shapes and pictures.



The Wellbeing Plate



**Physical
Time**

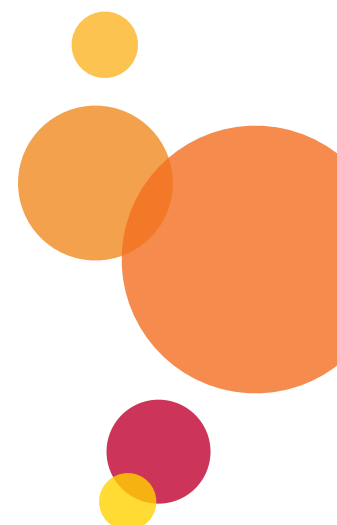
**relationship
time**

**Sleep
time**

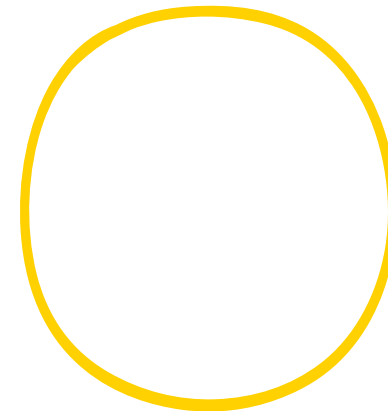
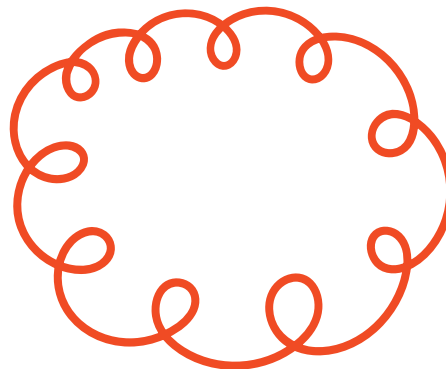
**Nurturing
time**

**Play
time**

**Nature
time**



**Personal
time**



Talking with parents

About messages in life



I still love you



What you did is not okay.....
I was angry with you.....

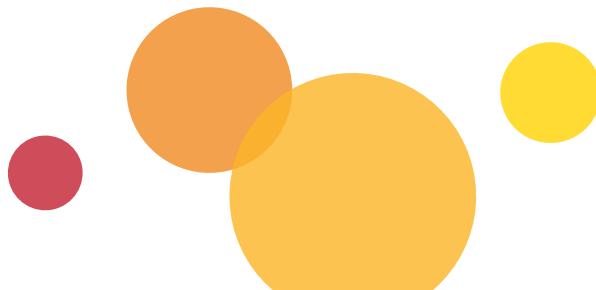
but you are still a good person and
you are not your behavior
but I should not have reacted like
that.....



You are lovable.
and I love you.



I still love you



Repairing Relationships



A mother, her 18 month old and newborn baby are in a supermarket carpark. They have just returned to the car with a trolley full of shopping and the mother is putting the baby into her capsule in the car, when the toddler runs off into the carpark and is narrowly missed by a car backing out.

Mum grabs the child's hand and shouts 'what do you think you are doing you stupid thing, you could have been killed' The child is screaming as mum lifts her quickly into the car.

Time to repair

1

Restore Calm and Safety

Mum stopped what she was doing and took three deep breaths. She could hear her child crying and needed to be calm to deal with the situation. Mum sat in the back seat of the car beside her children and tuned into her breathing. (Stop, Pause, Play)

2

See it from your child's point of view

As mums breathing calmed her down she was able to re think what had just happened from her child's point of view. Her child had first been scared by the car backing towards her and then when mum yell at her. Mum felt regret that she had reacted the way she did.

3

Repairing Relationships

Mum turned to her child and lifted her up, telling her I'm sorry I yelled at you, you must have been scared. It's not ok to run off from mum, I love you and I want you to be safe. Mum strokes her child's hair the way she knew she liked until it calmed them both.

Mum then calmly put her child into her car seat and gave her a kiss. Mum then drove the car home. On the way she sang some of her child's favourite songs and her child clapped her hands and laughed.

4

Future Plans

Later that day when the children were sleeping mum reflected on what had happened. Now she felt calmer mum was able to recognise that she had expected too much for her 18 month old to recognise danger. She recognised that an 18 month old can be very curious and wander away.

Next time she knew she would make some changes and plan a bit better so things were not so rushed. She would always now put her 18 month old safely into their car seat first so that they could not wander off into danger.

We thank Family Inclusion Network of WA Inc. (FinWA) for their feedback that helped in writing this handout.



Time In / Time Out



A toddler runs out on the road when his mother is not looking and is narrowly missed by a car that has to slam on its brakes, frightening the child who starts to scream.....

★ Parent one

....grabs the frightened screaming child, while yelling and crying with her own distress, smacks him and yells, "Naughty boy, never go on the road." She then takes him inside the house, to his room and leaves him there while she goes back to the kitchen.

What sort of messages might the child take away from this experience?

I am _____

Relationships are _____

The world is _____

★ Parent two

....grabs the frightened screaming child and comforts him. Later, when they are both calm, she talks to him about the danger of cars and the importance of staying close to her when they are near the road.

What sort of messages might the child take away from this experience?

I am _____

Relationships are _____

The world is _____

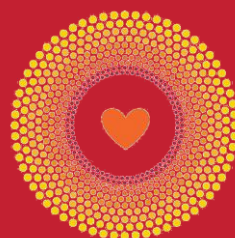




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Email: parenting@childhood.org.au



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