

# Understanding Children's Behaviour

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## My Early Years



## My Early Years



## My Early Years



## Miss Doyle





# Attachment



"a lasting psychological connectedness between human beings" (Bowlby, 1997)1.

Attachment theory highlights the importance of a child's emotional bond with their primary caregivers. Disruption to or loss of this bond can affect a child emotionally and psychologically into adulthood, and have an impact on their future relationships.

The first two years of a child's life are the most critical for forming attachments (Prior and Glaser, 2006)



# Adverse Childhood Experiences



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic experiences that children experience before the age of 18 that can have lasting impacts on their mental health, physical health, and general well-being.

Many kinds of traumas in childhood can be ACEs:

- Experiencing physical or emotional abuse
- Abandonment or neglect
- Losing a family member to suicide
- Growing up in a household with substance abuse or alcoholism
- Having a mentally ill parent
- Having an incarcerated parent
- Being a child of divorce or parental separation



1 in 6 adults have experienced childhood ACEs

# Adverse Childhood Experiences



Risk Factors For Adverse Childhood Experiences

Here are some of the factors that may make a child more likely to experience an ACE:

- Coming from a low income family
- Coming from a family with a low level of education
- Growing up with high levels of family stress
- Growing up with high levels of economic stress
- Growing in a family that is not close knit and doesn't speak openly about feelings
- Having parents who used spanking or corporal punishment
- Having parents who themselves had been abused or neglected
- Living in a community with high rates of violence
- Living in an economically disadvantaged community
- Living in a community with high levels of substance abuse
- Living in a community with few resources for youth



# ACEs - Impacts



ACEs are traumas that are more difficult to overcome

ACEs can cause what is called "toxic stress," which is where the stress that floods the body is so intense that it can cause changes to one's metabolism, immune system, cardiovascular system, as well as brain and nervous system.

Cumulative effect

Children who experience ACEs and toxic stress may:

- Have difficulty forming close relationships with others
- Have trouble keeping a job
- Have difficulty with finances
- Experience depression
- Be more likely to be involved in violence
- Experience early, unwanted pregnancies
- Be more likely to be incarcerated
- Experience higher levels of unemployment
- Be more likely to also expose their children to ACEs
- Have a higher risk of alcohol or substance abuse
- Have a higher risk of suicide attempts
- Have a higher risk of health issues such as heart disease cancer, lung disease, and liver disease



# Support in the Early Years



- Good understanding of ACEs
- Strong parent partnerships
- Focus on building relationships with children
- Calm environments that reduce stress
- Routines
- Care, affection and praise
- Opportunities to have fun



# What's in my bag?



What do I need?





# What do children need?



- Nourishment
- Stimulation
- To be comfortable
- To be able to relax



# Positive Relationships in the Early Years



- A strong emotional environment:
- Children should feel:
  - safe
  - cared for
  - relaxed
- Physically, emotionally, mentally healthy.
- A sense of belonging.

# Positive Relationships



warm and loving



# Positive Relationships



a sense of belonging



# Positive Relationships



supportive of the child's own efforts and independence



# Positive Relationships



sensitive and responsive to the child's needs, feelings and interests





## Positive Relationships



consistent in setting clear boundaries; and stimulating.



## Why do children 'misbehave'?



There is always a reason...



## Physical needs:



tired



hungry



thirsty



unwell



We have to meet a child where they are at.



## Boredom:

not engaged, lack of stimulation.

## Frustration:

too challenging  
or not  
challenging  
enough.



Think about ages and stages of development.

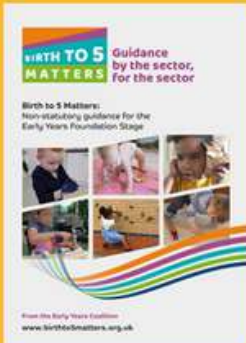
Understand the child and focus on their interests.





# Birth to 5 Matters

Marmalade Planning Packs



## Development Matters

Plan your provision around the needs and interests of the children.



## Adult inconsistency

## Unclear boundaries

## Unrealistic expectations



Follow your policy

Same approach by all adults

Set out your expectations

## Be the calm in their chaos...



## Environmental Factors

Is something happening at home?



## Parent partnership is essential

How do you build trust with parents and carers?

- Open and honest
- Regular conversations
- Listen
- Stay and play



## Developmental-striving for independence

Empower independence to develop confidence





# Not understanding what they've been asked to do.



# Developing Listening and Attention



Use language that children can easily process and understand.



Nursery rhymes and songs  
Clapping a rhythm  
Traffic lights  
Beans game



# Simon Says:



# Lack of physical play opportunities



Simon Says:

Pat your tummy with both hands  
Rub your tummy and pat your head  
Touch your toes with your thumbs  
Point a finger to your opposite ear  
Tickle your knee with your fingers  
Tap your head 3 times  
Turn your head to one side  
Place your hands behind your back



# Vestibular Development and Proprioception

Children need to move!

# Crossing the Midline



# Crossing the Midline



Promotes the coordination and communication of the left and right hemispheres of the brain.

Encourages bilateral coordination, the process of developing a dominant hand and development of fine-motor skills.



Cross Crawls  
Starfish  
Figure of 8  
Ball Figure of 8





# Sensory Needs



Some children have sensory seeking or sensory avoiding behaviours.

*Sensory Diets Daily*



Sensory seeking: kicking, hitting, biting, chewing, loud noises, running in circles.

Sensory avoiding: smells, noise, people, lighting, textures, movement.

# Biting



Children might bite if they:

- Lack language skills necessary for expressing important needs or strong feelings like anger, frustration, joy, etc. ...
- Are overwhelmed by the sounds, light or activity level in the setting
- Are experimenting to see what will happen
- Need more active playtime
- Are over-tired
- Are teething
- Have an need for oral stimulation



# When children bite...



Sensory Seekers:

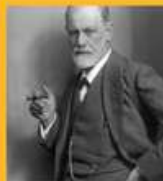
- Pressure activities
- Textures to try in their mouths-food
- Chew toys
- Sensory play opportunities
- Overwhelmed - Tired



- Distraction
- Relaxation methods
- Sleep

- Anger/Frustration
- Close shadowing by an adult
- Small groups
- Play that interests the child
- More of the same resources
- Communication with child's parents
- Communication with other families

# Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)



The unconscious mind and moral development.

Freud suggested that we have an unconscious mind that is split into three parts.

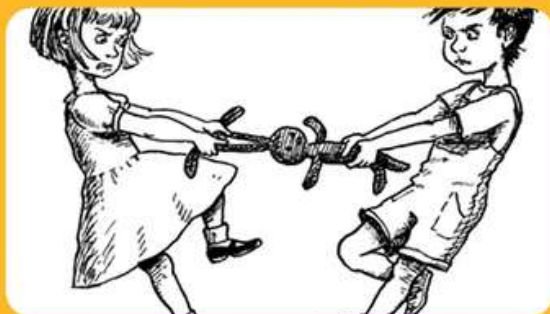


# The id- I want that now!



This is the part of our brain that represents our desires and needs.

Freud thought that babies were all id- as they are unable to consider other people's needs.



# The Ego



MAYBE WE CAN COMPROMISE...

The ego emerges later as children begin to consider the consequences of their actions and also start being able to plan the best way of meeting the powerful id's demands

e.g. A child may want something and determine that the best way of getting it is by behaving well.

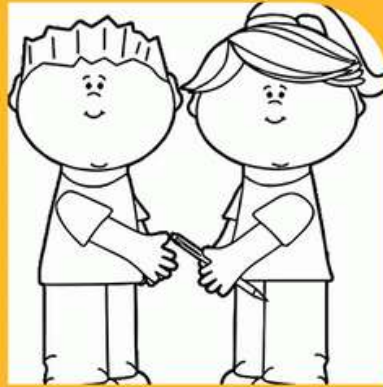




## The superego—it's not right to do that...



This is the third part of the unconscious brain and is the moral part. The superego is the part of us that knows right from wrong.



Children don't fully develop superego until they are 4/5.

## Sharing and taking turns



Are our expectations appropriate for the ages of children we are working with?

In the early years, children are on the journey to making moral decisions. Sharing and taking turns are moral decisions—giving away something that is yours. Telling a 2 year old to share isn't effective. They don't understand. We may model this. Am I telling children to do something that they understand? MODELLING sharing is key for them to develop the understanding and awareness.

## What are the typical behaviours you see in your room?



## How your routine promotes positive behaviour



Consistent routine gives children clear boundaries and reassurance

Managing transitions helps to eliminate frantic times

Going outside regularly has a huge impact on children's behaviour



## How your environment promotes positive behaviour



A stimulating environment is interesting, exciting and offers the chance for children to move around and explore.

## How your environment promotes positive behaviour



Pictures of themselves and families around the room





## How your environment promotes positive behaviour



Displaying:  
models  
creations  
photos

## How your interactions promote positive behaviour



Use their name-part of identity

1:1 attention-providing that for your key children each day. Settles children which impacts behaviour

Helping children to understand the consequences of their actions. We as adults use this moral code.

Being positive and enthusiastic (modelling)

Support tidy up time (modelling, using music)

Split into smaller groups (sit in horseshoe) pitch at the right level for the children



## How your interactions promote positive behaviour



Giving children responsibilities:  
positive self-esteem which reduces unwanted behaviour



### Do your children have responsibilities?

Lunchtime, resources, younger children, coats, garden

## How your interactions promote positive behaviour



Enable them to make decisions and choices



Food, toys, activities, resources

## How your interactions promote positive behaviour



Specific praise-why you are praising them?



Give your child a hug



Because....

"I love how you..."  
"It is so helpful when you..."  
"Great job (exact behaviour) "  
"Thank you for..."  
"I like the way you..."  
"You are so smart to..."  
"When you \_\_\_ it makes me so happy."  
"Wow! I can't believe you...!"



Marbles in a jar

## Self Regulation



A child's brain is not mature enough to function as an adult brain. When dysregulated they will reach to the animal part of their brain- often resulting in a physical response.

As adults, we need to meet the child where they are at and help them to regulate their emotions.

Only then can we talk about it and help them to find other ways of handling a big emotion.

Shaming children does not help them to regulate and learn.

Working with them, understanding them and showing them alternative ways is the most effective way to help them to self-regulate and manage their behaviour.





## Co-Regulation

- 3 ultimate aims in co-regulating emotional responses:
1. reduce stress levels
  2. help the child return to a state of calm
  3. model/provide SR strategies for them to use in the future.

### Connect before correct

What does the child need in that moment?

Reframe the behaviour  
Recognise stressors  
Reduce stressors  
Reflect  
Respond



## Resources



## Regulating Breathing

When dysregulated, children's breathing becomes accelerated and they find it difficult to regulate their breathing, so these are fun ways to help them calm down.



### Hot Chocolate Breathing



## Brain Humming



## Pinwheel Breathing





# Snake Breathing



Prioritise your own mental health – if you are stressed, you will find it harder to support children to overcome stress



## Post Training Action Plan

	Intent	Implementation	Impact
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Intent-What I want to develop/change Implementation-How I will do it Impact-The benefits



**Make  
this  
course  
count**

## Resources:

Sensory Play Training  
Understanding Autism Training  
Schematic Play Training  
Practitioner Training  
Enabling Environments Training  
Outdoor Play Training

Marmalade Planning Packs  
Marmalade Environment Audits



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