 I Spy

Ways of meeting children’s social, emotional and mental health needs.

With thanks to Cherbourg Primary School for sharing this resource, which is used to help visitors and trainees notice the sometimes subtle practices and adult behaviours, which make all the difference to children with social emotional and mental health needs.

Building relationships

I have seen:

An adult giving specific praise, e.g. I really like the way you have written your ‘a’s.

Example.

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An adult modelling good eye to eye contact when talking to a child.

Example.

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An adult smiling and showing genuine interest in what the child is saying.

Example.

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An adult facilitating a conversation or activity between two children.

Example.

Example.

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Communication

I have seen:

An adult demonstrating relaxed body language, (low shoulders, arms down, face unfurrowed).

Example.

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An adult encouraging a child to use words to communicate, rather than aggression.

Example.

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An adult showing active listening skills (giving eye contact, repeating back the main point etc)

Example.

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An adult encouraging polite language and manners.

Example.

Example.

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Language

I have heard:

An adult using a clear, calm voice at all times.

Example.

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An adult giving the information carrying words at the start of sentences (particularly when a child is starting to show signs of anxiety or frustration).

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Example.

An adult being playful with language, to amuse, laugh together and/or to distract a child as part of de-escalation. NB Sarcasm is not playful.

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Example.

An adult gently checking a child has understood the language used in explanation or instruction.

………………………………………………………………………………

Example.

Example.

An adult using language to reflect a child’s feelings, e.g. I can see that you are finding this frustrating.

………………………………………………………………………………

Example.

Example.

Routines

I have seen:

A child or adult referring to a visual timetable.

Example.

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An adult referring to what will happen next, or what has happened before the current activity/task

Example.

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A child showing that s/he knows where personal items are in the room, e.g. drinks bottle, PE kit

Example.

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A child showing that s/he knows how to move around the school building, e.g. silent, in single file.

Example.

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Strategies for de-escalation

I have seen a child show signs of poor behaviour and then:

An adult counting a child down from 5 to 1.

Example.

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An adult using appropriate humour to re-engage a child in the task.

Example.

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An adult tactically ignoring a child.

Example.

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An adult distracting a child through language or action.

Example.

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Another de-escalation strategy I have seen:

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Giving choices

I have seen:

An adult offering a child a choice of one of two things.

Example.

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An adult engaging a child in problem solving, e.g what do you think you could do to turn this round?

Example.

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An adult asking a child to choose in which order a task or tasks may be completed.

Example.

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An adult offering a child ‘time out’ to turn behaviour round (also a de-escalation strategy).

Example.

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Teaching new skills

I have seen:

An adult working with a child on an intervention programme.

Example.

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An adult showing a child the rules of a game.

Example.

………………………………………………………………………………

An adult working with more than one child offering reminders of sharing skills.

Example.

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An adult supporting a child by rephrasing a child’s demand or question and asking the child to repeat.

Example.

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Encouragement and Rewards

I have seen:

An adult discussing points for a points card.

Example.

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A child be moved within a class reward system.

Example.

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A child explaining how his/her points card works.

Example.

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An adult giving specific praise about a piece of work or learning.

Example.

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Any other notes: