

Promoting Positive Behaviour

Everything we do can be defined as behaviour - smiling, eating, walking, communicating etc are all forms of behaviour.

‘behaviour is often **children’s alternative to language**, their loudest voice’ (Baker et al, 1976) This is why we must respond to children’s needs as expressed by their behaviour in a positive and constructive manner.

In order to promote positive behaviour we need to look at the **factors that influence behaviour**. These factors can be considered in three categories :

YOU The first and most important influence on children’s behaviour is you. Therefore consider:

- is my relationship with this child OK ?
- do I know why the child is behaving as they are ?
- have I looked for unmet needs such as tired, hungry, needing a hug ?
- have I talked with and listened to the child ?
- have I talked to the child’s parents ?
- have I tried a new approach to this child ?

Physical Environment

The physical environment will impact on the child’s feelings and can greatly influence their stress and anxiety levels. Therefore consider:

- what can I change in the physical environment in order to create a more relaxed, comfortable environment – one that is conducive to meeting the child’s needs ?
- what are the noise levels in this area ?
- how is the space used ?
- what are the resources available ?

Programming

Programming provides the structure for meeting the specific needs of children. Therefore consider:

- does my program allow each child to experience success and achievement; engage in meaningful tasks; make choices and have control over their own activities ?
- provide activities that reflect a wide range of interests and abilities ?
- support children in developing skills in particular areas such as moving from one activity to another, interacting with others ?

In promoting positive behaviour remember ‘you are in the unique position of supporting a child to learn many important life skills and develop their sense of self’ (Lawrence, 1999).

Perhaps the single most important intervention in your centre is you