

Connections Over Compliance

**Sprouting Successful Relationships:
Improving Teacher - Child Interactions**

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Introduction

- **Participants will learn ways to establish connections with children to create a safe and supportive learning environment.**
- **Objectives:**
 - **Develop and utilize strategies for providing students with choice and voice in their learning process.**
 - **Educators will identify strategies to establish safe and supportive classroom environment that fosters authentic engagement.**
 - **Educators will develop approaches to build and maintain meaningful relationships with students to enhance their engagement and learning outcomes.**



Understanding Compliance vs. Connection

Compliance:

- Interactions centered on instructions to elicit specific responses or actions.
- Educator focused
- Power/Control imbalance

Connection:

- Interactions centered on engaging with the child's interest, creating enjoyable experiences, and waiting for their responses.
- Child focused
- Promotes shared control and respect

The Impact of Teacher-Child Interactions



Stephanie greets Journey and her grandfather in the morning, and with a smile on her face says, “Good morning, Journey. We’ve been waiting for you. Come help Carlos and me open this playdoh lid so we can all see what color it is and how it feels.” From her teacher, Journey gets the message that she is an important and special person.

Stephanie greets Journey and her grandfather in the morning. “Good morning, Journey. Journey, go find a center you want to play in. Grandpa, please sign her in.” Teacher walks away and reengages in a conversation with her assistant. From her teacher, Journey and Grandpa get the message that connecting in the morning is not a priority and her interest lies elsewhere.

Building Connections

Strategies to foster genuine relationships:

- ✓ Active Listening
- ✓ Authentic Engagement
- ✓ Building Trust & Respect
- ✓ Empathy
- ✓ Positive Communication



Active Listening

- Ask open-ended questions
- Give them your full attention
- Summarize their thoughts
- Make eyecontact
- Avoid interrupting
- Get close
- Non-verbal cues



Authentic Engagement

- Get on their level
- Be silly
- Get to know their interest
- Share in their excitement and successes
- Enter their play
- See the world from their point-of-view



Building Trust & Respect

- See the world from their point-of-view
- Share Power
 - Offer choices
 - Provide ample freetime
 - Offer solutions
- Classroom Jobs
- Remaining Consistent
- Apologize
- Ask for their feedback



Empathy

- Provide physical touch ask permission
- Help coregulate when needed
- Do not shame
- Discuss emotions
- Validation



- 1 Demonstrate- Your eyes are going like this, your mouth is going like this
- 2 Notice- You seem _____
- 3 Acknowledge- You wanted _____

Positive Communication

- Use of “I”/”We” statements
- Praise
- Modeling Language
- Use of “Can do” statements
- Importance of positive language and tone



Creating a Connection-Focused Environment

- Classroom layout and design for connection
- Encouraging social interactions among children
- Incorporating child interests into activities
- Allow for unstructured communication
- Active supervision/Zoning



Activity

- 1 Think of an educator who had the opposite effect, what attributes did they display?
- 2 Think of an educator that had a positive impact on your life, what attribute did they display?
- 3 Think of a child this past year or current year who challenged you most, what attributes did you display?
- 4 What connection building skills did you learn today that you will implement within your day?

Addressing Challenging Behaviors

- **Strategies for responding to challenging behaviors with connection**
- **Understanding behavior as communication**
- **Building emotional regulation skills in children**



Strategies for Responding

- Remain calm
- We as adults need to take responsibility for our own upsets
- We need to perceive compassionately and offer compassion to others and to ourselves
- Use a strengths based approach with children
- We have to learn to connect and guide instead of force and coerce

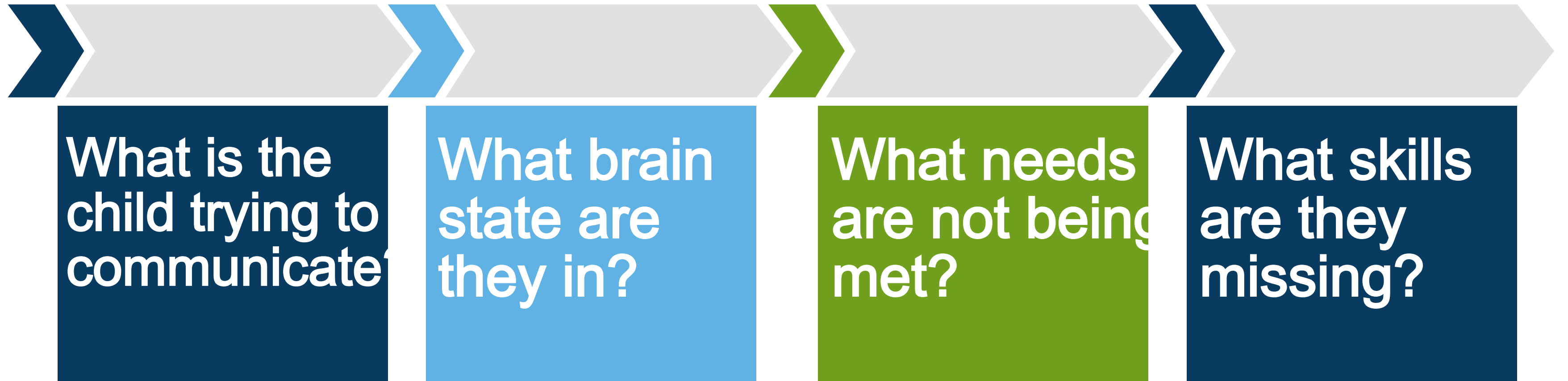


Strategies for Responding Continued

- We need to learn to respond to what life offers instead of attempting to make the world go our way
- Seeing the best in others helps us to consciously respond instead of unconsciously react
- We need to teach a new skill rather than punishing others for lacking skills we think they should possess



Understanding behavior as communication



Building emotional regulation skills

- Model appropriate regulation
- Teach and support breathing techniques
- Teach feeling and emotions
- Develop and teach child specific coping skills
- Create a calm down space in your classroom



Importance of Personal Development

Pause and Reflect

- 1 In what ways does the behavior challenge you and why?
- 2 How do your triggers interfere with connection building?
- 3 What can I do differently to build strong connections?

A dysregulated adult can not help regulate a child







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