

# IN SOCIAL CONTEXTS

## What do they need from us?

To **COMPENSATE** for what is missing in them

Be their PREFRONTAL CORTEX

- to accept responsibility for keeping them out of trouble instead of asking them to control their impulses
  - ✓ Creating structures and routines that prevent problem
- keep them out of situations that are beyond their developmental level
- script appropriate behaviour instead of expecting social sensitivity

# Minimize the influence of peers

- Expecting poor behaviour when young immature children spend unsupervised time with peers
- Making room for the child to spend time in the presence of those more mature
- Finding “dignified” ways of keeping children apart when it is too overwhelming and triggering:
  - ✓ by creating pre-determined small group activities
  - ✓ by setting up blocs of time where the child can have respite/downtime
  - ✓ by having the child be a ‘helper’ to the adult

# Guidelines for handling conflict BETWEEN CHILDREN

## 1. Assume the lead in guiding interactions

- Tune in to situations that may turn into a “problem”.
- Don't expect young children to be able to sort out challenging conflicts
- Listen to each child, then make a decision about what is best to do next. It won't be possible to please both children.
- As the adult indicate that you are in charge and that you will decide how to find a way through the difficult situation e.g. whose turn it is to play with the toy.

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## 2. Don't try to figure out "who did what to whom" and who was in the "right".

- ❑ The conflict is often more than what it seems – it may be a build-up of previous frustration that spills over into the next situation.
- ❑ There is no point to focus on "who did what to whom". We may not have the full picture (e.g. non-verbal behaviours that we may have missed).
- ❑ The immature will INSIST on their perspective as they do not have the prefrontal cortex development that allows them to see the situation from the other person's perspective.

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## 3. Come alongside each child's experience

- ❑ Try to reflect back the EMOTIONAL experience (Frustration, Alarm, Pursuit, Sadness):
  - *“That really wasn’t working for you – not what you had in mind.”* (Frustration)
  - *“That was scary – you were worried.”* (Alarm)
  - *“You really wanted him to play with you.”* (Pursuit)
  - *“That was upsetting – you feel hurt and sad.”* (Sadness)

# Guidelines for handling conflict BETWEEN CHILDREN

## 4. Don't try to teach a lesson and don't talk too much

- ❑ Instead: Do what you have to do to diffuse the situation – ACT **don't** TALK
  - Kindly separate the children – preserve their dignity
  - Give one child something else to play with
  - Or ask the children to help you with something

# Guidelines for handling conflict BETWEEN CHILDREN

## 5. Don't request 'sorry' unless genuine

- An insincere apology is not effective. Even young children know when it is not a genuine “sorry”.
- Young children feel badly AFTER the incident even if they cannot temper themselves during the incident. They need to know we understand how hard it is for them to “control” themselves.
- Instead: Go to the affected child and take the time to name and validate their “pain”. Model to the children by saying you're sorry the situation turned out the way it did. Let them know you are taking charge of the situation.

# BRIDGE all that can divide

Put the focus on the next point of contact

- “I am looking forward to seeing you tomorrow.”
- “We’ll find a way to make things better.”



The message we want to give our children is that **NO MATTER WHAT** they **DO** or how they **BEHAVE**

**ADULTS WILL CONTINUE TO CARE FOR THEM.**

**BRIDGING** gives the child **HOPE.**