

A Brain-Based Approach in a Daycare Context

How play, connection, and co-regulation
serve as anchors.

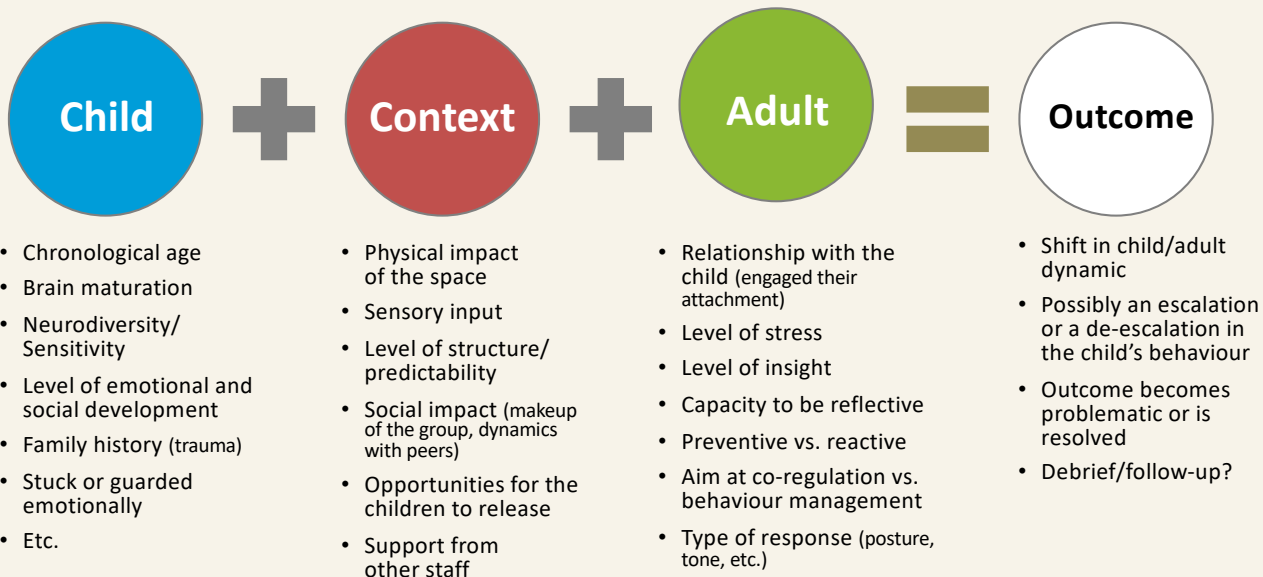
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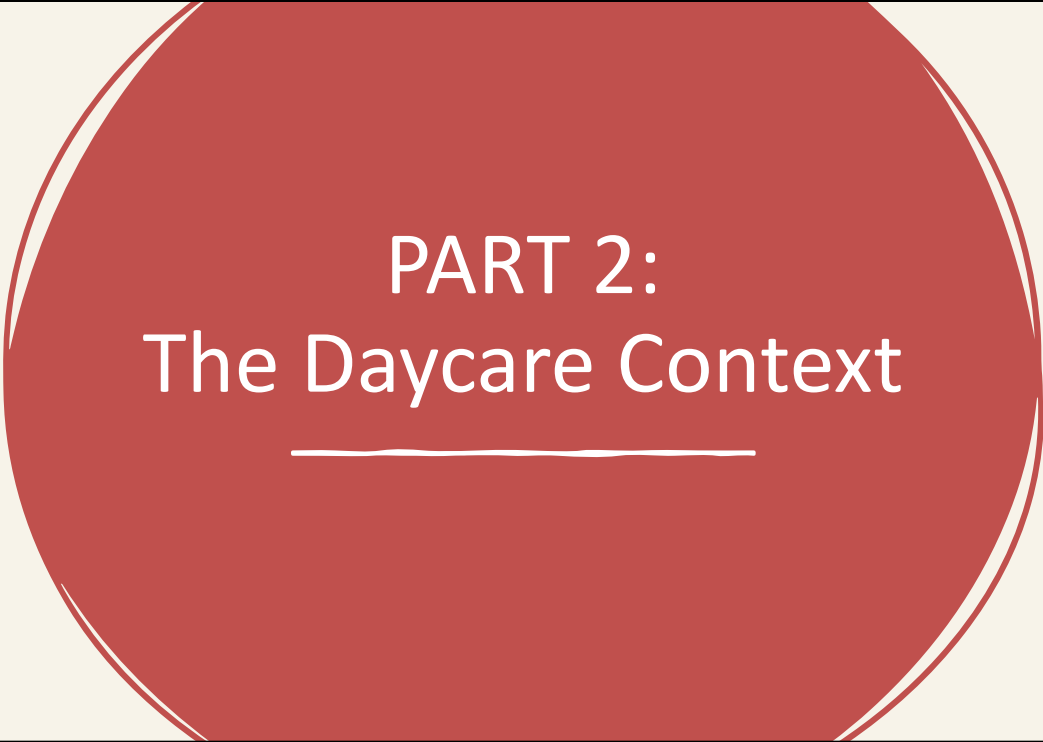
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IN A DAYCARE SETTING

Considering all the elements involved in a child's day



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PART 2: The Daycare Context

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PART 2: THE DAYCARE CONTEXT

- Physical impact of the space
- Sensory input
- Level of structure/
predictability
- Social impact (makeup of
the group, dynamics with
peers)
- Opportunities for the
children to release
- Support from other staff

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THE DAYCARE CONTEXT

Self-reflection question (2min)

What does your group look like in terms of size, grade level, same age vs. mixed-age, individual student need, etc.

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The Crucible of the Daycare Context

Classroom		Daycare
Single cohort, static size.	Group Dynamics	Often larger groups, mixed-age ranges, children arriving from multiple classrooms simultaneously.
Mid-day, stable energy.	Timing & Energy	Early morning variable states; Afternoon decompensation after a full day of cognitive load.
Teacher-directed, rigid pace.	Structure	Flexible, child-directed, highly fluid.

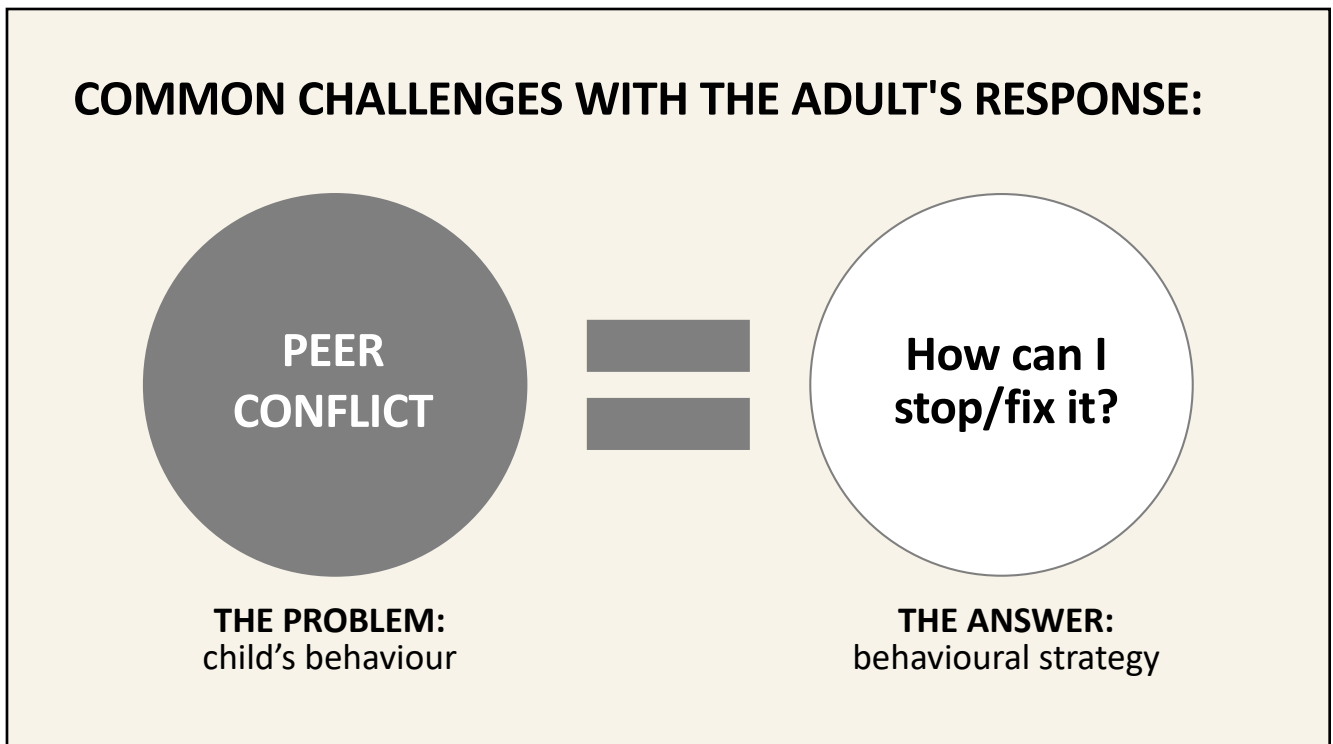
Conclusion: Behaviours seen in daycare will inherently differ from those in the classroom.

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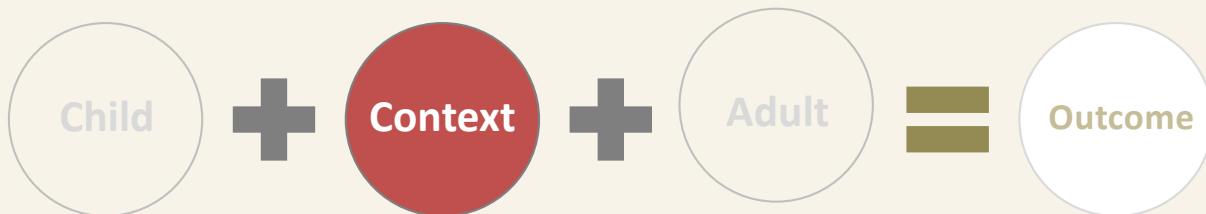


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VULNERABLE CHILDREN EXPERIENCE STRESS ALL DAY LONG



- Level of structure
- Dynamics between these two peers
- Opportunities for the children to release

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The Invisible Load of Unstructured Time

Children have fewer external structures guiding their behavior, leading to complex social demands. With a larger child-adult ratio, students are forced to independently manage:



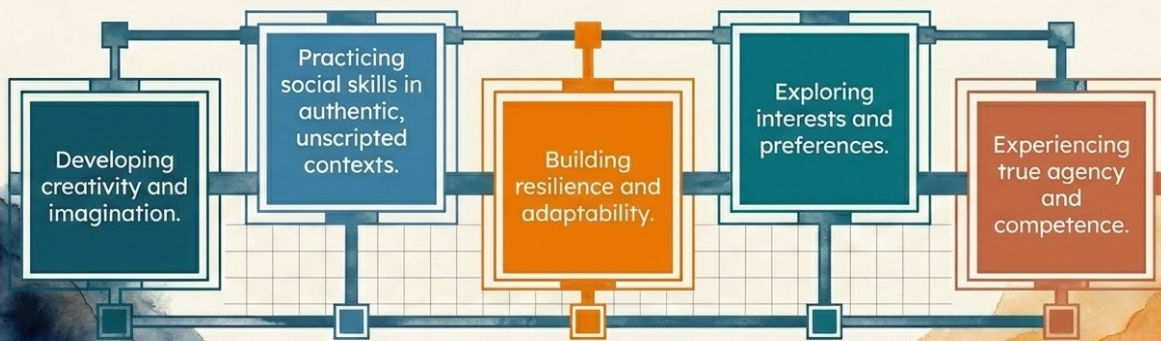
The Vulnerable Profile: For children struggling with executive functioning, sensory processing, or emotional regulation, this lack of structure is uniquely exhausting.

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The Purpose in the Chaos

Unstructured settings are challenging, but they are developmentally critical. They provide the authentic context needed to practice foundational lifelong skills.



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Redefining the Adult Role

The Misconception:
Unstructured environments require less adult involvement.

The Reality: They require a different kind of involvement. The goal is not to eliminate challenges, but to ensure relational support.

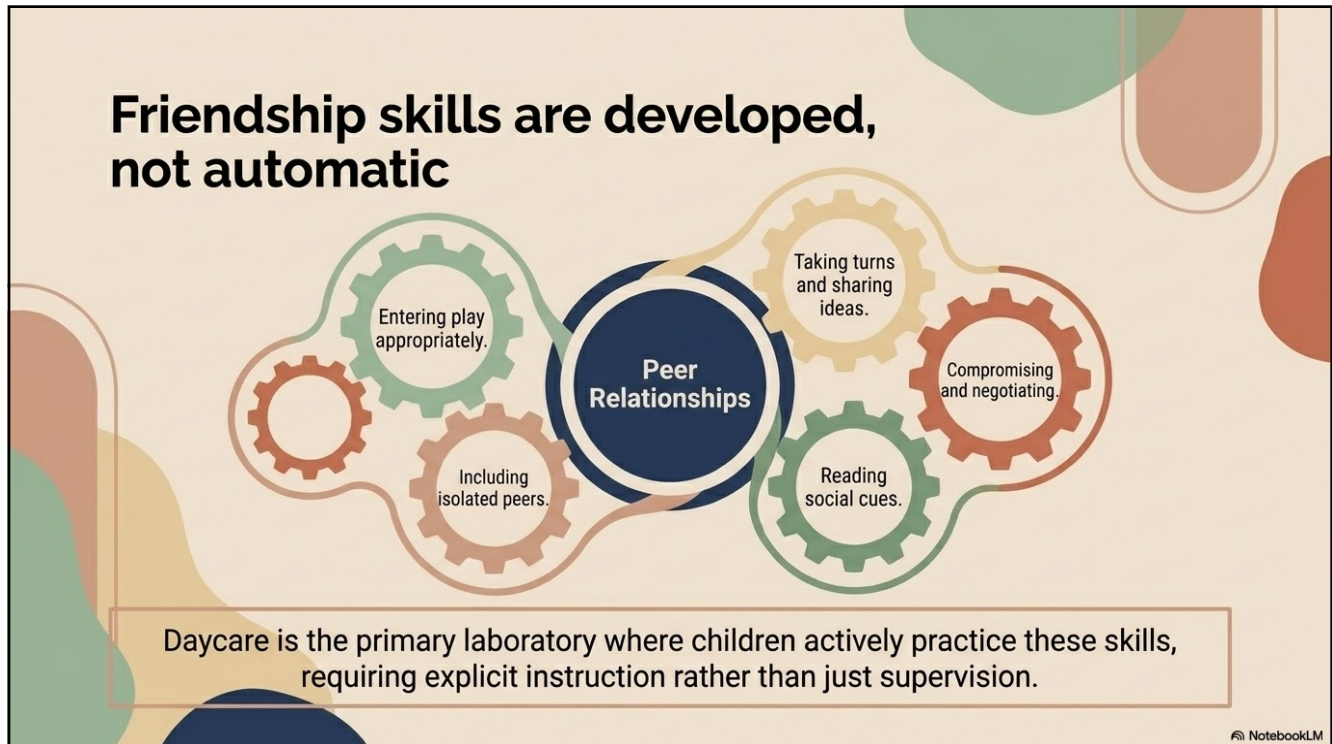
Instructor

The Anchor

- Monitoring emotional states.
- Supporting peer interactions.
- Helping children recover from disappointments.
- Facilitating problem-solving.
- Providing emotional and relational safety.

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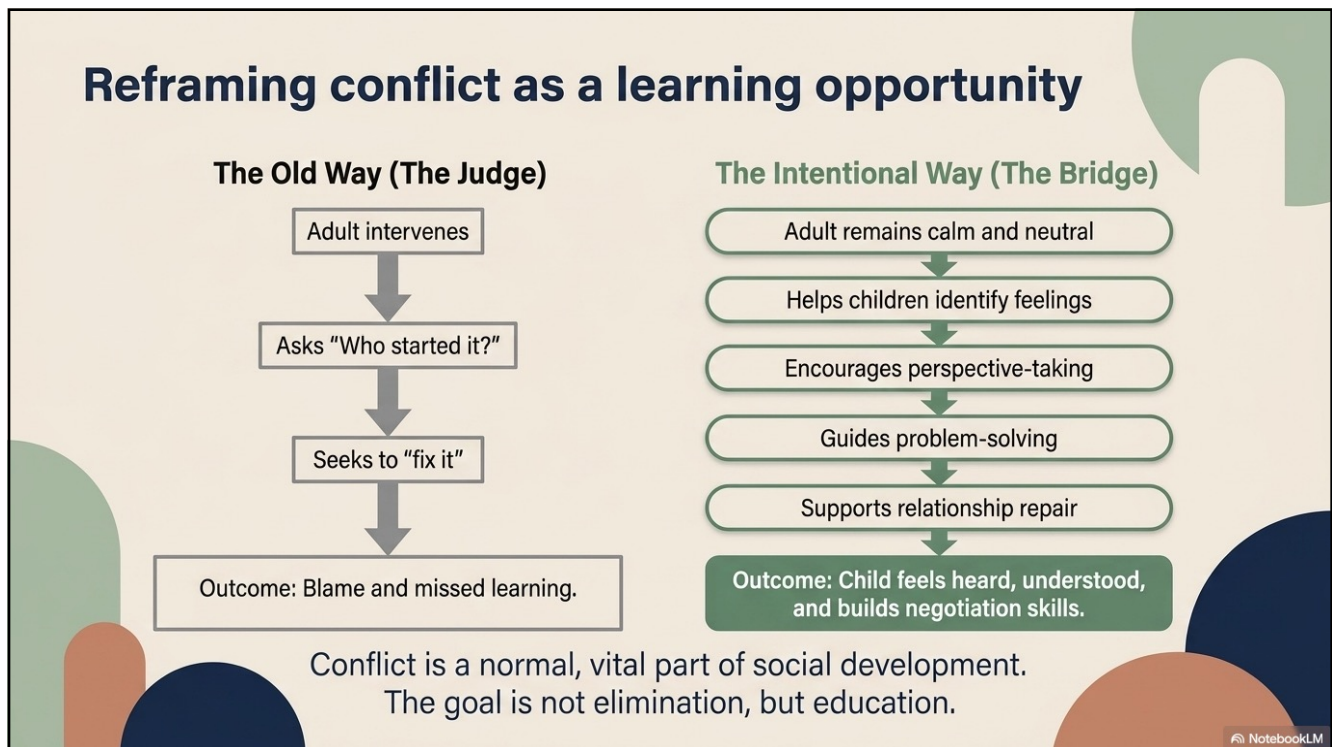
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THE DAYCARE CONTEXT

Exercise in dyads (10 min)

Roleplay: From Instructor to Anchor: Present a common scenario involving an unstructured play conflict, such as two children arguing over how a game should be played. Ask the staff to roleplay the situation twice. The first time, respond as an 'Instructor', trying to eliminate the challenge. The second time, respond as an 'Anchor', focusing on supporting peer interaction instead, helping the children to recover from disappointment and facilitating their own problem-solving.

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