

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Developing attachment-led practice

A cuddle from someone a child trusts produces a burst of the happy oxytocin hormone which can calm any worries or anxiety, helping them to feel secure, loved and so ready to learn.

Three key requirements for developing attachment-led practice are practitioners who:

- Understand the importance of warm, responsive relationships
- Respond appropriately when a child is upset
- Respond appropriately when a child is happy.



These top tips will explore the three key areas for you to review in your setting.

Warm, responsive relationships

- Build positive relationships with children and families from the start
- Support children to feel relaxed and safe with their key person as early as possible so they form a positive attachment
- Make sure the child knows who will respond appropriately to their needs, such as when their key person is out of the room or absent
- Be confident to cuddle children
- Review policies regarding physical touch and ensure practitioners are enabled to develop warm, responsive, positive attachments with the young children in their care.

Respond appropriately when a child is upset

- Be curious about a child's behaviour, rather than simply responding to it
- Recognise the child's needs in that moment and respond accordingly
- Respond warmly and attentively, even when a child is demonstrating behaviour which challenges
- Help the child to manage their 'big' feelings and develop their skills to cope in the future
- Help children to learn that someone is nearby when they are feeling sad, hurt or angry so they do not have to manage alone
- Be aware of children who may have experienced regular anxiety, fear, upset or uncertainty without help in coping with such feelings. They will need extra support.

Respond appropriately when a child is happy

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- Remember to respond to children when everything is going well
- Celebrate with children when they are interested, focused, happy, delighted or joyful
- Take the time to notice when a child is interested or engaged and be part of this moment
- Be happy and laugh with children, recognise an achievement or marvel at a discovery.

NDNA products to support you with this

- [Live virtual classroom training: Positive attachment](#)
- [Live virtual classroom training: Positive behaviour in early years](#)

Find more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna