



USING 'PACE' SKILLS

A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH TO SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Government
of South Australia

P PLAYFULNESS

Ideas for how to incorporate playfulness:

- Use a light tone of voice, like you might use when story-telling, rather than an irritated or lecturing tone.
- Show with your eyes, eyebrows, smile that you are interested in what the child is doing and saying. Try and soften your facial expressions, and lower your body to their level, so not to tower over them.
- Make a game of getting organised; give the child a job during a transition

A ACCEPTANCE

Examples for how to express acceptance:

"I can see how you feel this is unfair. You wanted to play longer"

"You probably think that I don't care about what you want"

"I can hear you saying that you hate me and you're feeling really cross. I'll still be here for you after you calm down".

"I'm disappointed by what you did, but I know you were really upset. It doesn't change the fact I care about you".

C CURIOSITY

Examples of curiosity:

"I'm wondering if you broke the toy because you were feeling angry."

"I'm thinking you're a little nervous about the game, and that's why you don't want to get ready/warm up?"

"I've noticed that you've been using a really loud voice, and if you're trying to tell me that you're angry."

"I'm a little confused. Usually you love playing this game, but today you don't want to. I'm wondering if there's something different about today?"

E EMPATHY

Examples of empathy:

"You are SO upset about this right now. That must be really hard!"

"You wanted to have another turn so badly. You were so excited about it and it's a pity that we ran out of time".

"It seems to you like he hates you. That must be really hard. I know you like him a lot, so this is pretty confusing".

"I know it's hard for you to hear what I'm saying."

"Me saying 'No' has made you angry with me. I get why you don't want to talk to me right now"

Using PACE doesn't mean there are no boundaries around behaviour. It just means we are trying to connect with their current level of emotion. Once kids feel you are there with them, they can often stop showing you their emotions through their behaviour.

