

Language is a vital means of communication

What is this nurture principle about?

Understanding that language is more than a skill to be learnt and is valued as a way of putting feelings into words. Understanding that the language we use when communicating with our children and young people, family and colleagues can shape thinking, feeling and subsequent behaviours.

Why is this important for COVID-19 recovery planning?

Reflecting on the language we use is more pertinent than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery process, as the language we use can help create a sense of belonging and reconnection and help staff, children and young people and families to understand, process and manage their emotions.

What I can do:

- **Listen and validate emotions**
 - Listening to others and validating their emotions helps to make people feel heard, valued, safe and secure. *'I understand it's very hard for you when you are worrying about your mum working in the hospital.'*
- **Running commentaries**
 - Adults providing a running commentary (say what you see) can help children and young people (and other adults) make sense of situations and understand their feelings. Using phrases such as 'I wonder' and 'I notice' can be a nice way to do this. E.g. *'I notice that you seem a little upset, I wonder if that is because you're missing being at home with your family'*.
- **'Name it to tame it'** (Siegel & Bryson, 2012)
 - Naming feelings (as above) can help people process what they are feeling and make the connection between emotions and behaviours. It can also help people feel heard and understood.
- **Use the language of belonging**
 - Using language such as 'Let's', 'We', 'Us' can promote a sense of connection and belonging during lockdown and into the recovery process. E.g. *'We may all be at home but we're still Mr H's P4/S4 Art and Design class.'* *'I can't wait until we are all together again.'*
- **Making time and space for talking**
 - Demonstrate that you are available to talk. Both speaking and listening are important to develop language, idea formation and social skills (see also: Environment and Wellbeing principles).

- **Tuning In**

- Effective communication not only involves an awareness of the language that we and others are using, but also our tone of voice and non-verbal communication. Tuning in to children, families and colleagues by noticing, listening and responding to their communication can help develop positive relationships and reach new shared understandings.

Find out more:

- Get PsychEd Blog: <https://getpsyched.co.uk/2020/03/17/telling-children-about-covid-19-advice-for-parents-those-working-with-children/>
- Beacon house 'What we say': <https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/What-We-Say-Comic-1.pdf>
- Dr Megan Gunnar: <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=harvard+serve+and+return+&view=detail&mid=F371EFD6D14E444F7F371EFD6D14E444F7&FORM=VIRE&adlt=strict>
- Dan Siegel explains 'name it to tame it': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcDLzppD4Jc>

Contact your Educational Psychologist for further information about:

- Self-regulation scripts
- The Attunement Principles
- Renfrewshire's Inclusive Communication Environments (RICE)