



LOVE SAVERS

SOS Signal - Space of See Me

The Space of See Me means your responding and noticing to what your child is seeing, doing and feeling through connect and reflect interactions.



Connect & Reflect

STEP 1: Connect with your child by:

- Following their gaze
- Noticing what they are pointing at
- Listening to what they are saying

STEP 2: Reflect by communicating through:

- Words, authentic nods etc.
- I wonder if you are feeling...
- I wonder if you are looking at....
- I am seeing that you working on a picture...

Infants

Infants process a lot of their learning through what is known as a sensorimotor stage, which means that children are learning about love and care through connect and reflect interactions with their senses. For Example:

- Touch: Massage, picking your child up, rocking them, holding and snuggling them
- Taste: Full tummies and feeding with connection
- Hear: Soft tones, singing, humming, reflecting with words
- See: Looking at what your infant is seeing, pointing at and showing interest
- Smell: Feel safe with caregiver scent

Toddlers & Preschoolers

As children get older they learn through what is known as a preoperational stage. Children at this stage continue to need connect and reflect interactions in their Space of See Me through symbolic ways of learning, such as:

- Play is the most prominent method children use symbolism to make sense of their world and relationships
- Notice their interests and the things they enjoy doing
- Playful learning can include reading books together, oral storytelling, watching a favourite show, games, singing and dancing together.





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SOS Signal - Space of Safety



The Space of Safety means fostering a space of emotional safety through your presence and compassionate understanding of their emotions.

Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy can give your child a voice to their emotions and can be learned through:

- Songs
- Play
- Books
- Oral Stories
- Everyday Moments
- Role Modeling

Stress Contagion

Emotions are highly contagious and this includes stress. Studies have shown that when we are stressed, the people around us can feel and sometimes absorb this stress as well. It is important as big people to take care of ourselves and become aware of the stress we bring into relationships. Interestingly, there is a happiness contagion as well.

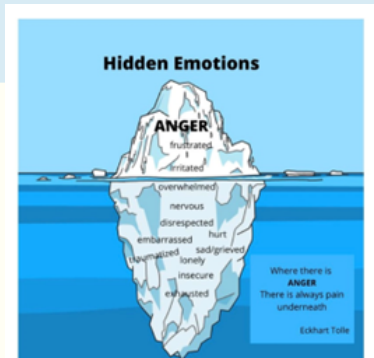
Self-Compassion

Self-Compassion can be defined as treating ourselves in moments of stress with how we would treat our dearest friend. That is, being kind to ourselves and having less judgement or being hard on ourselves. It is important to know that as humans we make mistakes and we are doing the best we can.

Emotional Safety

Emotional Safety reminds us that children need to feel safe to share their vulnerable emotions and not mask them with other emotions (e.g. below).

- Allow your child to express their different emotions
- Help your child understand and learn their different feelings
- Becoming self-aware of your own emotional presence





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SOS Signal - Space of Soothing



The Space Of Soothing means soothing our child's heart and mind by knowing how to soothe their brain. We can connect to the heart and mind by using the **I CARE** Approach to support and sooth the brain.

I Connect Authentically

Soothing the Downstairs Brain: Am I Safe

- Bridging your brain to your child's brain...to Connect Authentically and regulate their breathing and heart rate to foster a strong feeling of safety
- Being present, rocking your child, soft voice tone (little to no words), bending down to child's level and using words such as, "I am here" ... "You are safe" ... "I got you".

and

Respond Empathetically

Soothing the Limbic Brain (Stairway): Am I Loved

- Bridging by Responding - Empathetically and using validation to help your child feel cared for and loved. For example, "This is super hard for you."
- Name it to Tame it – often when a child's emotions are named or labelled, they feel that they have been heard. For example, "I am wondering if you are feeling sad."

To Repair the Relationship

Soothing the Upstairs Brain: What can I learn

- Bridging with validation and then problem solving. For example, "It is so hard waiting for a turn when your sister has the train, and you want to play with it too."
- Providing your child choices on how they can do things differently. For example, "Let's think of a way we can do it differently so that you can have a turn too."
- An apology by the caregiver can set the stage by role modeling mistakes. For example, "Sorry I was yelling. Daddy is working on trying to have a calmer voice."





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SOS Signal - Space of Security

The Space of Security is when you foster a space that supports your child's need for safety, consistency and predictability. When we use 'Yes Brain' responses our children are more likely to access their upstairs brain because they feel safe with your guidance.



'Yes' Brain Response

- Using a 'yes brain' response helps communicate to your child that you can kindly place limits on expectations.
- 'Yes Brain' approach can help support our children to respond to our requests or limits rather than react to them.

'Yes' Brain Approach

A 'Yes Brain' approach essentially has us consider communicating with our children in ways that they are more like to hear us because it meets their need for safety and opens access to their upstairs brain. This might sound like, "Yes, you can have a cookie after dinner" or "Sure, let's go to the park after we clean up the toys."

Setting Limits

This does not always mean that our child will stay in their upstairs brain, but they know they can depend on you to be their "In Charge Safe Person" when you set limits. Consistency and predictability is also critical to foster a Space of Security when limit setting.

Limits using ICARE Approach

We can still set limits with empathy and have our children see us as the "In Charge Safe Person" when we follow through.

STEP 1: Connect AND set the limit or choice AND

- Example, "I see you're enjoying the blocks AND it is time to clean up so that we can..."
- Choices, "Would you like to clean the red and blue blocks or green and yellow blocks?"

STEP 2 (if needed): Respond with Empathy AND set limit or choices.

- Example, "I can see you are sad AND this is hard AND it is time to clean up so that we can..."
- Choices, "Which two colours are you choosing to clean up?"

It is okay if they land in their downstairs brain, remember to connect with safety and once they are ready go to STEP 2 again.





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SOS Signal - Space of Stimulation

Space of Stimulation means that our children's brain requires stimulation for healthy growth and development. It all begins with PLAY!



Executive Functioning

A significant foundation to building children's life and learning are executive function skills, they include: impulse control, memory and flexibility. All these skills can be fostered through PLAY!

Impulse Control

Infants: Waiting with our younger ones and not rushing them through an experience, e.g

- Following their gaze
- Taking turns—smiling at each other, imitating their sounds
- Playful games - peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake

Toddlers and Preschoolers: Helping children with waiting and taking turns in meaningful ways, e.g

- Games - freeze tag, hide & go seek, go-go-stop
- Turn taking - looking at a book together and waiting to turn a page, blowing bubbles
- Talking - waiting to take a turn to talk

Flexibility

Infants: Flexibility can be fostered as children are a little bit older. As infants, they need predictability to feel safe, AND you can support little bits of flexibility as they get older, for example: Simple role play and imaginative play is a great way to start.

Toddlers and Preschoolers: Building on imaginative play skills and changes to familiar patterns in play, for example:

- Imaginative play- playing roles of other people
- Games - Simon Says.
- Changing the ending to a familiar story or song

Memory

Infants: holding information in their memory through repetition of songs and games, for example:

- Singing familiar songs over and over again, such as Itsy, Bitsy Spider
- Games - simple matching games

Toddlers and Preschoolers: Building on more skills to help increase memory skills, for example:

- Games - Guess What's Missing, the Memory Game
- Songs, rhymes, dances that have many steps and movement





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SOS Signal - Space of Stimulation

The Space of Self-Worth means helping children see themselves as capable individuals. Considering all SOS needs help nurture children's self-esteem and self-worth. Building on children's sense of REALLY being seen and feeling important fosters self-worth so that they are resilient for when you are not there.



Growth Mindset

- Research in growth mindset is helping us understand how important it is to allow our children to try new things, make mistakes and learn from them.
- Growth mindset encourages us to try refraining from saying things that also add pressure to be perfect (fixed mindset phrases), such as, "You are a natural" or "You are so smart".
- Growth Mindset approach allows children to see that practice helps mastery. Your words can encourage Growth Mindset, such as "It is hard when we make mistakes, but the practice helps us learn. You are almost there. All that practice is helping."

Reminder

Modelling and making mistakes in your learning helps your child see that this is a natural process.

Process vs Product

Transitioning our thinking from helping our children understand the process is more important than the product...this requires us to think this way as well.

- Art work is a great example when children can be absorbed in the process and sometimes only to have their caregivers change it to be "perfect".
- The ingredients in the process are the skills that support growth mindset thinking. For example, "Wow, you have spend so much TIME on your colouring."

Mastery

Mastery requires us to have a lot of patience with our children. We need to make sure that:

- The expectations are developmentally appropriate – if it is too hard, we are setting them up for failure: if it is too easy, they will get bored
- We can break down tasks to make them more achievable.
- Never rewarding or penalizing children for their efforts.

