



# LOVE SAVERS



## SIX SOS SIGNALS FROM OUR CHILDREN



### Space of See Me

The Space of See Me means you are anchoring my need of being noticed by responding to what I am seeing, doing, and feeling through connect and reflect interactions.

### Space of Safety

The Space of Safety means you are anchoring my needs for emotional safety through your presence and compassionate understanding of my emotions.



### Space of Soothing

The Space of Soothing means anchoring my need for soothing my heart and mind by learning how to soothe my brain. You can connect to my heart and mind by using the I CARE Approach to support and soothe my brain.

### Space of Security

The Space of Security means you are anchoring my need for safety, consistency, and predictability. When you use 'Yes Brain' responses I am more likely to access my upstairs brain because I feel safe with your guidance.



### Space of Stimulation

Space of Stimulation means you are anchoring my brain's need for stimulation for healthy growth and development. It all begins with PLAY!



### Space of Self-Worth

The Space of Self-Worth means anchoring my need to see myself as a capable individual. All SOS needs help nurture my self-esteem and self-worth. Building on my need of REALLY being seen and feeling important fosters my self-worth so I am resilient for when you are not there.





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## SOS Signal - Space of See Me

The Space of See Me means you are anchoring my need of being noticed by responding to what I am seeing, doing, and feeling through connect and reflect interactions.

### Connect & Reflect

STEP 1: Connect with me by:

- Following my gaze →
- Noticing when I am pointing →
- Listening to what I am saying →
- Labelling what I might be feeling →
- Noticing what I am doing →

STEP 2: Reflect by communicating:

- I am wondering if you are looking at...
- I am seeing that you are pointing at the birds.
- You are saying... (or nodding to show interest)
- I am wondering if you are feeling...
- I am seeing that you are working on a picture...

### Infants

I am processing my learning through what is known as a sensorimotor stage, which means that I am learning about love and care through connect and reflect interactions through my senses, such as:

- Touch: Picking me up, rocking me, holding and snuggling me or giving me a massage
- Taste: Feeding me with connection
- Hear: Singing, humming, and reflecting words and soft tones to me
- See: Looking at what I am seeing or what I am pointing at and showing interest
- Smell: Feeling safe with my caregivers scent

### Toddlers & Preschoolers

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

- Playing with me to help make sense of my world and my relationships
- Playful learning with me can include reading books together, oral storytelling, watching a favourite show, playing games, singing and dancing together
- Noticing my interests and the things I enjoy doing

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## SOS Signal - Space of Safety



The Space of Safety means you are anchoring my needs for emotional safety through your presence and compassionate understanding of my emotions.



### Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy includes giving me a name to label my 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 my big people are stressed, the people around them can feel and sometimes absorb this stress as well. It is important as my big person to take care of yourself and become aware of the stress that can be brought into our interactions.

### Self-Compassion

Self-Compassion means that my big people need to treat themselves in moments of stress with how they would treat their dearest friend. That means being kind to yourself and having less judgement or being hard on yourself. It is important to know that my big people make mistakes and you are doing the best you can.

### Emotional Safety

Emotional Safety reminds my big people that I need to feel safe to share my vulnerable emotions and not learn to mask them with other emotions (e.g., below image).

- Allow me to express my different emotions, especially those under the iceberg
- Help me understand and learn about different feelings and emotions
- Become more aware of how you are showing up emotionally, so I feel safe.

### Hidden Emotions





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## SOS Signal - Space of Soothing



The Space Of Soothing means anchoring my need of soothing my heart and mind by learning how to soothe my brain. You can connect to my heart and mind by using the **I CARE** Approach to support and soothe my brain.

### I Connect Authentically

Soothing my Downstairs Brain:  
“Am I Safe?”

- Connect safely with me and wait while I regulate my breathing and heart rate with your safe presence.
- Be present, rocking me, speaking in a soft tone (little to no words), bending down to my level and using words such as, “I am here” or “You are safe” or “I got you”.
- Being authentic - Accepting of my emotions, no matter what they look like.

and

### Respond Empathetically

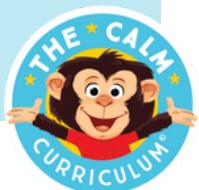
Soothing my Limbic Brain (Stairway):  
“Am I Loved?”

- Using empathy skills of validation to help me feel cared for, loved, and heard. For example, “This is super hard for you.”
- Name it to Tame it – often when my emotions are named or labelled, it can take away the big feelings that come with it because I feel heard. For example, “I am wondering if you are feeling sad when mommy goes to work?”

### Repair & Problem Solve

Soothing my Upstairs Brain: “What can I learn?”

- Validating and then problem solving. For example, “It is so hard waiting for a turn when your sister has the train, because you really want to play with it too.”
- Providing me choices on how I 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. Maybe you could trade a toy with your sister or use a timer to take turns”.
- An apology by my big person 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 means you are anchoring my need for safety, consistency and predictability. When you use 'Yes Brain' responses I am more likely to access my upstairs brain because I feel safe with your guidance.



### 'Yes' Brain Response

- Using a 'Yes Brain' response helps communicate to me that you are in charge with your kind limits and expectations.
- A 'Yes Brain' approach can help support me to respond to your requests or limits rather than react to them.

### 'Yes' Brain Approach

A 'Yes Brain' approach essentially has my big people communicating with me in ways that places limits by using a validating approach. This meets my need for safety and opens the door to my 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

I know that I can depend on you to be my "In Charge Safe Person" when you set limits. Consistency and predictability are also critical to anchor a Space of Security when limit setting.

### Setting Limits using the ICARE Approach

You can still set limits with empathy and have me see you as the "In Charge Safe Person" when you follow through with a caring approach.

#### STEP 1:

**Connect AND set the limit or choice**

- 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 blocks or green blocks?"

#### STEP 2 (if needed):

**Respond with Empathy AND set limit or choices.**

- Example, "I can see you are sad AND cleaning up can be hard work
- Choices, "Which colour are you choosing to clean up?"

It is okay if I land in my downstairs brain. Remember to connect with safety and once I am ready, try STEP 2 again.





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## SOS Signal - Space of Stimulation

Space of Stimulation means you are anchoring my brains need for stimulation for healthy growth and development. It all begins with PLAY!



### Executive Functioning

A significant foundation to building my skills for life long learning are executive functioning skills, these include: Impulse control, memory and flexibility. I can learn all of these skills through PLAY!

#### Impulse Control

**Infants:** Waiting for me and not rushing me through an experience, for example:

- Following my gaze
- Taking turns—smiling at each other, imitating my sounds
- Playful games - peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake, passing a ball back and forth

#### Toddlers and Preschoolers:

Helping me with waiting and taking turns in meaningful and fun ways, for example:

- Playing freeze tag, hide & go seek, go-go-stop
- Looking at a book together and waiting to turn a page, or blowing bubbles together
- Waiting to take a turn to talk with our back & forth conversation

#### Flexibility

**Infants:** Flexibility can be fostered as I get a little bit older. As an infant, I need predictability to feel safe, so that you can support my flexibility as I get older. Simple imaginative play is a great way to start building my flexible brain.

#### Toddlers and Preschoolers:

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

- Imaginative play- playing roles of other people
- Games - Simon Says, where rules keep changing
- Changing the ending to a familiar story or song

#### Memory

**Infants:** Holding information in my memory through repetition of songs and games, for example:

- Singing familiar songs over and over again, such as Itsy, Bitsy Spider
- Looking at familiar books, labelling pictures together

#### Toddlers and Preschoolers:

Building on more play skills to help increase my memory skills, for example:

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



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## SOS Signal - Space of Self Worth

The Space of Self-Worth means anchoring my need to see myself as a capable individual. All SOS needs help nurture my self-esteem and self-worth. Building on my need of REALLY being seen and feeling important fosters my self-worth so I am resilient for when you are not there.



### Growth Mindset

- Research in growth mindset is helping my big people understand how important it is to allow little people like me to try new things, make mistakes, and learn from them.
- Growth mindset encourages my big people to try to resist saying things that might add pressure to be perfect (fixed mindset phrases), such as, "You are a natural" or "You are so smart".
- Growth mindset approach allows me to see that practice helps me get better at new tasks. Your words can encourage Growth Mindset, such as, "It is hard when we make mistakes, but practice helps us learn. You are almost there. All that practice is helping."

### Reminder

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

### Process vs. Product

Helping me understand that the process is more important than the product requires that my big person thinks this way as well.

- Art work is a great example when I can be acknowledged for the time spent rather than the end product.
- Acknowledging growth mindset ingredients during the process supports learning and resiliency. For example, "Wow, you are spending so much TIME on your colouring."

### Mastery

There is no such thing as complete mastery. Me and my big people will always make mistakes as a part of our learning. You can help me learn by:

- Keeping expectations developmentally appropriate. If it's too hard, I may get frustrated, if it's too easy, I may get bored.
- Breaking down tasks like this makes it more achievable for me.
- Praising me for my efforts and not the end product.

