

Constantly seeking adult attention

Children need support to self-regulate. When their feelings are in balance, they can make decisions on what they want, and behaviour needed to support them (such as concentration and resisting impulse). They need adults who provide consistency and predictability and who are 'tuned in' to children's emotional cues. Alongside this, children will require lots of stimulating experiences, and adults who model language to help them develop their communication. That's why the time you spend connecting to, listening to and having conversations with children, is so important.

Practitioners can support children by:

- Actively observing their interactions and communication style.
- Being responsive to their attempts to gain attention.
- Checking in with their play regularly to show them they are valued.
- Creating jobs for them to do, so that they have a sense of duty and responsibility within their community.
- Ensuring the routine of the day doesn't interrupt their play.
- Allowing them to play independently and reducing the expectation of adult led play.
- Asking curious questions to parents to find out about how the child is at home and if there are any changes or challenges that may make them dysregulated.
- Providing opportunities for them to talk about things that are important to them.
- Reflecting on the times when individual children interrupt, noticing any patterns e.g. group times / during focused time with another child and considering what the child may be trying to communicate through the behaviour.
- Ensuring opportunities for good quality interactions and 'setting the scene' at adult led activities.

Activities, ideas, resources or strategies:

- Adults to teach social skills. For example, model waiting through people games, turn taking games and role play areas
- Adults to introduce signs and prompts to support waiting when children interrupt. Remember to come back to the child
- Adults to give children time to pursue their play without interruptions
- Adults to rephrase instructions to promote children's thinking and give them a voice and sense of belonging e.g. asking, "I wonder what that sound means?" when the bell rings for snack time
- Adults to observe and listen to children's interests and update My Profiles/All About Me's as needed