

Creative Play to Promote Resilience and Positive behaviour in Early Years

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“All children are capable of extraordinary things. There is no happiness gene, no success gene, and no ‘doer of extraordinary things’ gene. The potential for happiness and greatness lies in all of them, and will mean different things to different kids. We can’t change that they will face challenges along the way. What we can do is give them the skills so these challenges are never able to break them. We can build their resilience.”

www.heysigmund.com/building-resilience-children



What is Resilience ?

The ability to bounce back!!

- ▶ Children may face, stresses, trauma, adversity, trauma and challenges during their life's.
- ▶ Resilience helps children become braver, more curious, more adaptable and of course helps them reach their full potential.



What does Resilience look like ?



Executive functioning for Resilience

The Prefrontal Cortex promotes executive functioning, which controls behaviour and feelings, to allow children to develop coping strategies.

To promote executive function:

- Establish Routines
- Model expected social behaviours
- Create and maintain support networks
- Provide opportunities for children to make their own support networks
- Board and memory games (help impulse control, social skills)
- Exercise
- Independence



Why is Resilience important ?

- ▶ Children can: handle difficult situations
- ▶ Be more empathetic
- ▶ Have better problem solving skills
- ▶ Better communication
- ▶ Better learning and academic achievement
- ▶ Less likely to partake in risky behaviours
- ▶ Better physical health leading to lower rate of mortality
- ▶ Have a more positive outlook on life
- ▶ Can identify and deal with their feelings
- ▶ Have better mental health



Building Resilience

“Building small humans into healthy, thriving big ones isn’t about clearing adversity out of their way. Of course, if we could scoop them up and lift them over the things that would cause them to stumble, that would be a wonderful thing, but it wouldn’t necessarily be doing them any favours. A little bit of stress is life-giving and helps them to develop the skills they need to flourish. Strengthening them towards healthy living is about nurturing within them the strategies to deal with that adversity”

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Building Resilience

Children need supportive, loving relationships to get them through adversity.

Any caring and responsive adult can make a difference in a child and give them the tools to develop vital coping skills.

- Family
- Friends
- Teachers
- Coaches



A support network offering social support helps:

- Build positive emotions
- Develop self control and predictability
- Build self esteem
- Motivation
- Build optimism

Alongside a positive environment, these should lead to good resilience.



Children need to know

Their support systems

- ▶ People who I trust
- ▶ People I know love me
- ▶ People who set limits and keep me safe
- ▶ People who teach me
- ▶ People who help me



Their strengths

- ▶ I am likeable
- ▶ I am empathetic
- ▶ I like to be kind
- ▶ I am respectful
- ▶ I am responsible
- ▶ I can take ownership



What they can do

- ▶ I can talk about my feelings
- ▶ I can problem solve
- ▶ I can keep myself safe
- ▶ I can control myself
- ▶ I can talk to someone
- ▶ I can ask for help



How can we promote Resilience in children?

- ▶ Model it - allow children to see your highs and lows and how you deal with them
- ▶ Help children face their fear
- ▶ Allow them to take age appropriate risks
- ▶ Allow failure - *“It's not how many times you get knocked down that count, it's how many times you get back up.”* George A. Custer U.S Military
- ▶ Allow them to problem solve
- ▶ Open and honest communication



Building resilience should be natural



How Does Resilience affect behaviour ?

- ▶ “It’s not so much what children learn through play, but what they won’t learn if we don’t give them the chance to play. Many functional skills like literacy and arithmetic can be learned either through play or through instruction – the issue is the amount of stress on the child. However, many coping skills like compassion, self-regulation, self-confidence, the habit of active engagement, and the motivation to learn and be literate cannot be instructed. They can only be learned through self-directed experience (i.e. play). ~ Susan J. Oliver

<http://childplaymagazine.com/>



How Does Resilience affect behaviour ?

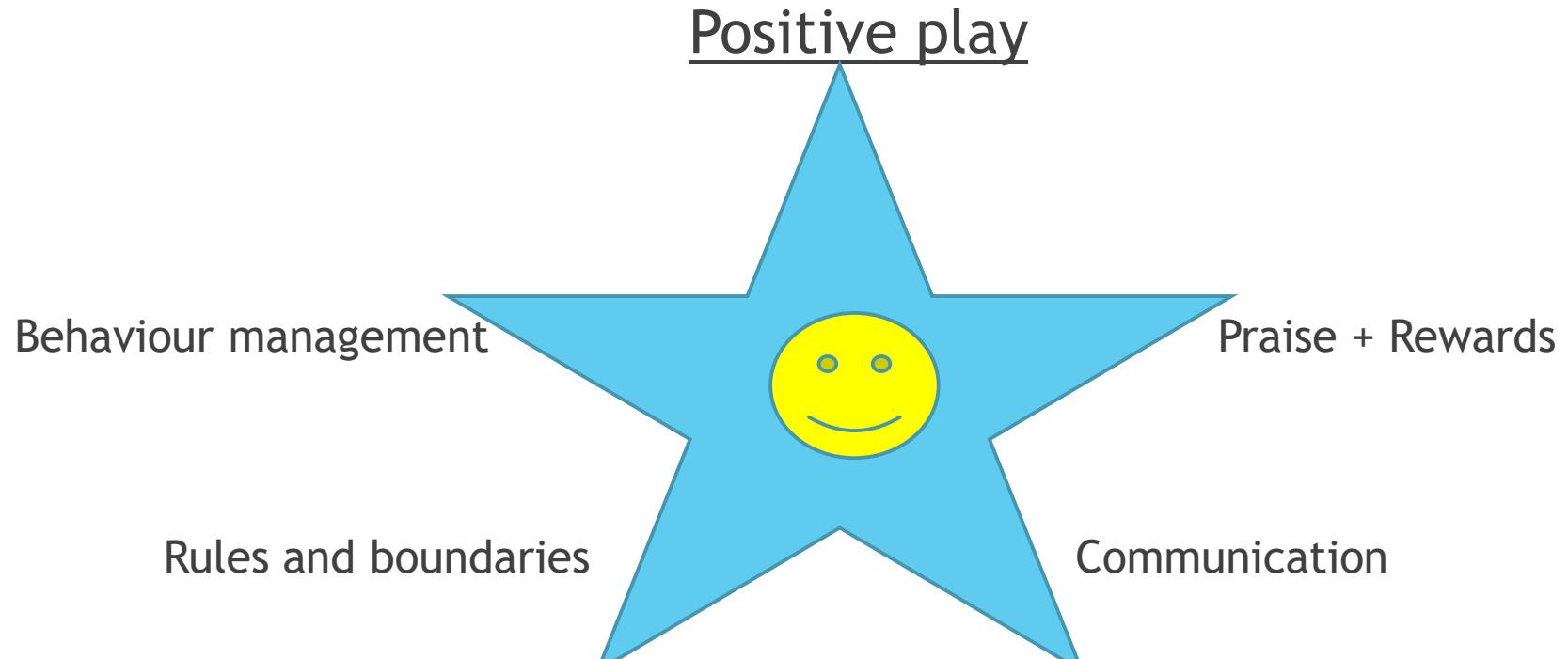
Although all children react differently, if they can't cope with stresses, they may:

- Become Emotional
 - Withdraw
 - Become defiant
 - Become angry
 - Become resentful

The right experience can shape a child and their characteristics to help build resilience and display positive behaviour.



How can we support children's behaviour ?



These five points if initiated in the right way, will lead to a well rounded child who is able to meet their full potential.

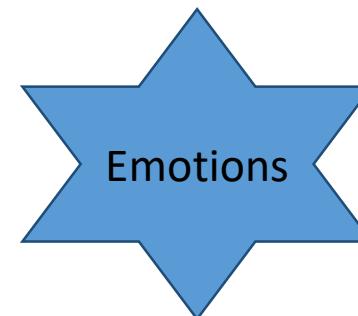
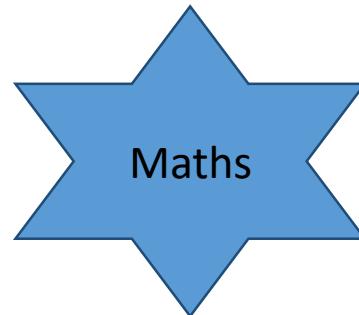
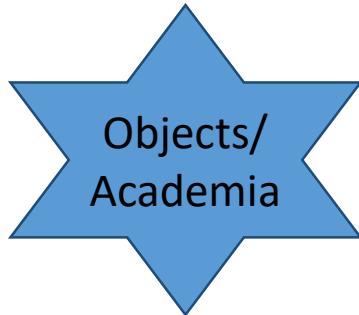
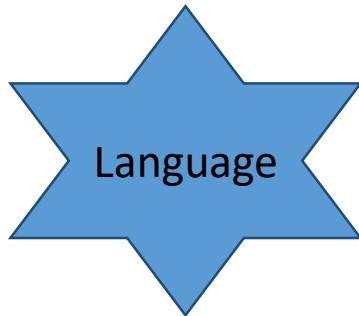


How Does Play affect Resilience and behaviour?

- ▶ “*Play permits the child to resolve in symbolic form unsolved problems of the past and to cope directly or symbolically with present concerns. It is also his most significant tool for preparing himself for the future and its tasks.*” ~ Bruno Bettelheim
- ▶ “*It is in playing, and only in playing, that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self.*” ~ D.W. Winnicott
- ▶ “*It is becoming increasingly clear through research on the brain, as well as in other areas of study, that childhood needs play. Play acts as a forward feed mechanism into courageous, creative, rigorous thinking in adulthood.*” ~ Tina Bruce

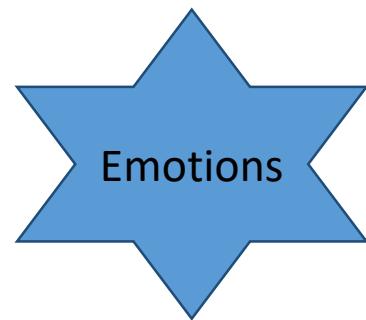
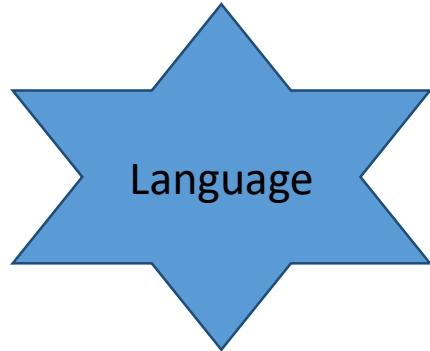


During Play we can teach



Play for Positive Behaviour

During Play we can teach



- ▶ Understand and express our feelings, lessening our need to be angry or lash out or become withdrawn.
- ▶ Be open to others
- ▶ Ask for help
- ▶ Admit when we are struggling
- ▶ Understand and give praise

Language and emotions helps us



Play in practice



Play for positive behaviour

During Play we can teach



- ▶ Form relationships
- ▶ Be a part of a community
- ▶ Have social graces
- ▶ Model correct behaviours for others
- ▶ Learn acceptable boundaries

Social skills helps us

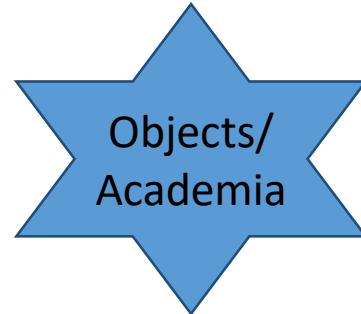
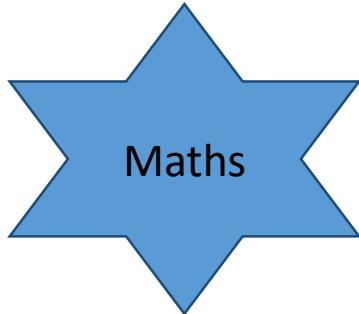


Play in Practice



Play for positive behaviour

During Play we can teach



- ▶ Learn to problem solve
- ▶ Learn patience and concentration
- ▶ Become academically successful
- ▶ Discover perseverance

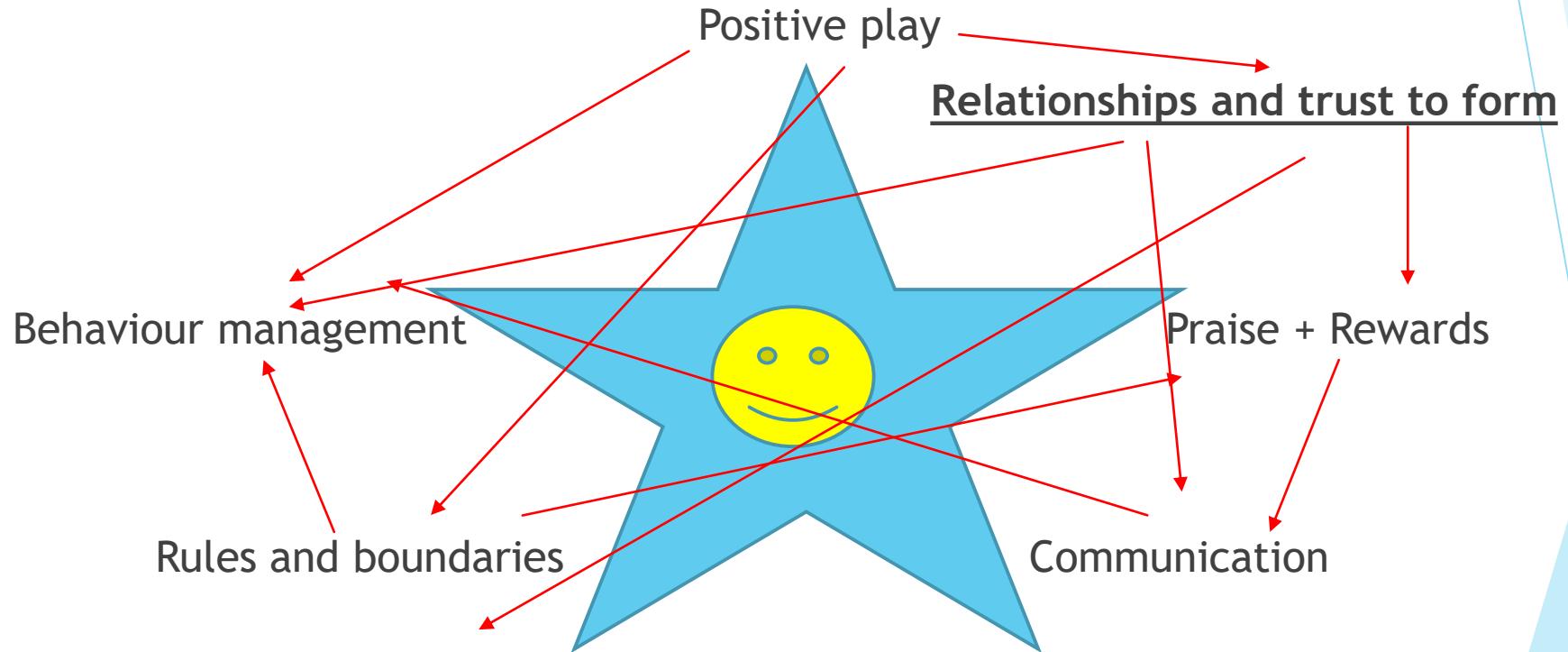
Maths and objects helps us



Play in Practice

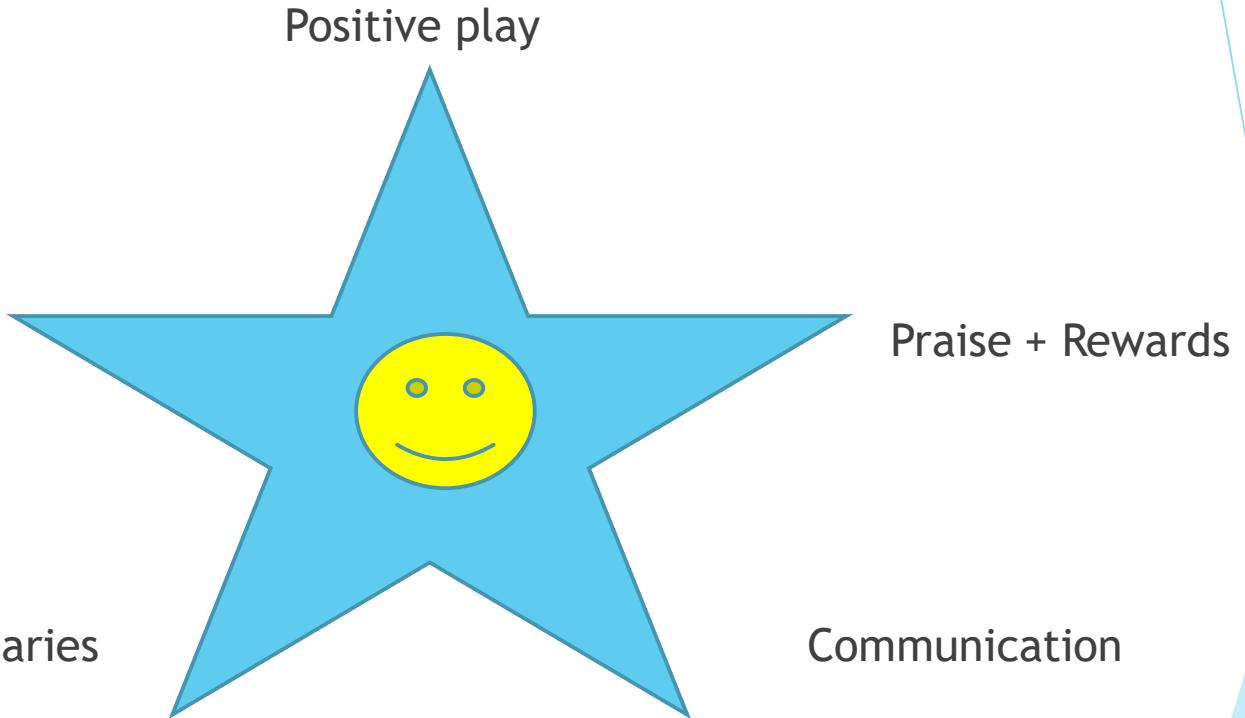


How does play improve Behaviour ?



How can we support children's behaviour ?

Behaviour management



These five points if initiated in the right way, will lead to a well rounded child who is able to meet their full potential.



Behaviour Management techniques

Behaviour management is a lifelong change that won't happen over night, Children need to learn to trust you to allow you to manage them and their behaviour, and parents need to trust their plans and have the will power to put the effort in.

- ▶ Have clear age appropriate rules
 - ▶ Reward charts
- ▶ Reward the good/ignore the bad where appropriate
 - ▶ Precise praise
 - ▶ Stickers



Parents must follow through with what they say.

And remember do not bribe.

Creative play examples

Resilience

- ▶ Circle time - communication
- ▶ Independence activities
- ▶ Puzzles
- ▶ Physical play
- ▶ Messy/sensory play
- ▶ Reading
- ▶ Cooking



Positive behaviour

- ▶ Board games
- ▶ Physical play
- ▶ Role play
- ▶ Art activities
- ▶ Puzzles
- ▶ Social stories
- ▶ Flash cards - language/emotions



Building a positive, loving relationship with children helps them build resilience, have self control and work towards reaching their full potential.



Thank You

► Questions

► Contact Information

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