

# Help Sheet

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

## How to respond to connection seeking behaviours that challenge.



### Why?

Some children need to feel an adult's presence more than others, and when this need is not fulfilled, they may turn to connection seeking behaviours that challenge in an attempt to feel seen and heard. When these behaviours are not approached in the right way, they can continue and intensify as the child continues to seek connection from those around them.

### You will need:

- A good understanding of your own personal triggers when working with behaviour that challenges and an awareness of how this can impact you.
- To un-pick particular points in the day where behaviour that challenges is likely to occur so that you can plan and staff accordingly.

### How to approach behaviour that challenges - different scenarios.

Behaviour that Challenges	Suggested Response
Tipping out boxes / baskets.	<b>Ignore</b> and call on the good nature of the class – “Who can come and be a super helper?” If the child comes to help, offer lots of praise for making the right choice. You could also use a playful response “Who’s going to get here the quickest to tidy? Ready, steady, go!”
Doing something to activities that have been set up.	Consider if this is happening at particular points in the day i.e. Drop off. Can you give the child a job to do at these times to give them positive attention or offer them time-in with an adult?

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Standing on tables.	<b>Use a say what you see approach</b> “You must really want to be seen if you’re standing up there – look how tall you are! I wonder if you want somebody to notice you.” Keep it playful and see if you can redirect to an activity/task that they can do with an adult.
Hiding under tables.	<b>Use a say what you see approach</b> “I have no idea where you are – I wonder if you’re wanting to hide from me right now.” Keep it playful, notice the child and try and coax them out with suggestion of activity/task or with accessing the dark den where they can hide in there.
Throwing toys.	<b>Use a say what you see approach</b> and re-direct. “I can see you really want to throw, but we don’t throw toys, we might hurt someone. Let’s find a ball we can throw together.”
Doing something to another child.	<b>Ignore</b> initially and give attention to the other child/ren first. Make sure they’re OK and give them lots of nurture and support.  <b>Then use a say what you see approach</b> “You must have been feeling very cross with your friend to do that, but it’s not kind to hit.” If developmentally appropriate, talk about what the child <i>could</i> do instead.
Shouting or making loud noises which disrupt.	<b>Use a say what you see approach</b> “Wow! That’s very noisy. Did you think we’d forgotten about you?” Offer time-in with a familiar adult; if it’s a group activity, ask that they sit close to you so that they can be a ‘special helper’.

### Reference / Evidence base – informed by:

Sarah Naish – National Association of Therapeutic Parents