

The Communicating with Kids full programme

Session 1 The Basic Building Blocks

In Session One we examine the core principles of effective communication: **respect, clarity and authenticity** and link these principles to the two aspects of the teacher-child relationship, **the teacher's authority and the human relationship**. The whole programme is based on this simple precept, that it is the quality of our communication which ensures that both aspects of the relationship are strengthened and work together to create both **safety and connection**. We look at a definition of **the teacher's legitimate authority**. We learn how to **observe and define 'behaviour'** - what it is and what it isn't - and the principle of 'ownership' when there is an issue to be addressed. We **clarify whose business we are in, ours or the child's**, as a starting point for dealing with issues with clarity. We have a look at the nuts and bolts of communication, **how we send messages and how children receive them** based on their level of development. We learn the importance of simple clear messages, and look at the words that muddle and confuse, and how to avoid them. We look at the **hidden messages beneath our words** which children pick up, and based on this we examine more effective ways of **confronting unacceptable behaviour and encouraging desired behaviour**.

Session 2 The Child's Business

In Session Two we look at **the child's route to independence and how to encourage this**. We look at the importance for a child in **achieving mastery in both practical and emotional challenges**, and how we confuse the two. We see how negative feelings often arise from areas which are the child's business, such as peer relationships, which can affect a child's learning. We bring in some neuroscience to understand how emotions can cloud issues and cause us to react in unhelpful ways, and what we can do about it. We look at why children's day-to-day feelings are so intense, how they can set the **'emotional temperature' of the classroom**, and the concept of **emotional flooding**. We look at the common **'roadblocks' to communication**, why these don't help when we are dealing with children's feelings, and a more effective way of bringing down the emotional temperature. **We separate 'feelings' from 'problems'** and look at how to deal with feelings so they don't lead to problems. We examine what children really need from us when they are upset, and **how to respond without either dismissing or indulging**. We differentiate between **feelings and behaviour**, in order to understand **who the problem belongs to, and whose business it is to manage it**. We look at how **accepting negative feelings dissipates them**, and how to do this without 'fanning the flames'. We examine **the most helpful way of helping someone** and why it is effective, and then note the whole range of helping techniques and when they might be relevant.

Session 3 The Teacher's Business

In Session Three we examine the characteristics and language of different kinds of authority and **define the characteristics of effective authority**. We look at the importance of this authority and a strong 'teacher role', in **creating a clear framework for the child**, without which he cannot feel safe, and free to grow and learn. We examine the typical language of a harsh authority and a weak authority, the hidden messages behind this communication, and why it is ineffective. We look at the intent behind the message, and **the specific intent and language of true authority**. We examine **the body language which conveys our intent**, and the actual words we use. We clarify what makes a **clear unambiguous instruction** in non-negotiable areas, and how to manage the routines of the day as painlessly as possible. We differentiate between non-negotiable rules, and all the 'grey areas' of behaviour which children take longer to learn, such as in relationships with peers. We find **alternatives to threatening or pleading**, we look at an **effective way of making deals**, and **how to express trust and expectations**. We learn **messages of intent, how to express self-respect**, and clarify the different uses of **You, We and I-language**. We look at how submission is demeaning, but obedience helps a child to grow up, and how to use this information in our practice. We learn how the **'hidden message' behind this kind of communication is trust**, and how this impacts on the relationship and behaviour.

Session 4 Creating the Classroom you Want

In Session Four we look at the **overall classroom 'culture'**, how the creation of this is ultimately the teacher's responsibility, at the same time as encouraging the children's understanding that **we are all responsible for the harmony of the group to which we belong**. We look at both **the teacher's and the child's legitimate needs** within the group and how **the clear expression of needs is a preventive skill**. We define **the difference between needs and solutions**, and the relevant information a child needs in order to know how to behave appropriately. We look at how to **get children willingly on board in creating the culture of their classroom**, and changing repeated patterns of behaviour, through **painting the whole picture, and creating shared goals**. We look at **alternative ways of breaking habits of negative behaviour** which have become entrenched, and the importance of **stepping outside the drama**. We look at our own 'wish list' of what kind of class we want, **the language of teamwork, self-disclosure and effective encouragement of respect and politeness**.