

'CONNECTION WITH CORRECTION' - THE TWO HANDS

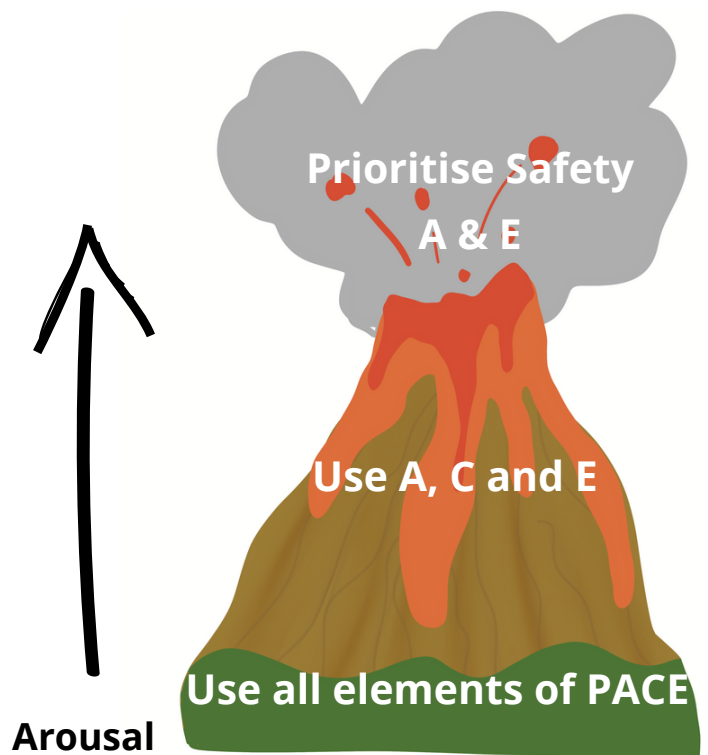
(FOR PARENTS/CARERS)

When children experience difficult things, especially when they are very young, it can lead them to develop feelings of mistrust and a lack of safety in relationships. For these children it can feel safer, or more comfortable, to feel disconnected rather than connected to others. They may also struggle to separate who they are from their behaviour, so it is very easy for them to misinterpret being disciplined for something they have done as being told they are a bad person, resulting in strong feelings of shame. You can find out more about this in our resource on '**Understanding Shame**', but the key to remember is that shame will rarely help to manage challenging behaviour, and usually makes things worse. Parents can limit feelings of shame in their child by working to first build stronger emotional connections that create a base where structure and discipline can be offered. Over time, using the approach offered below, parents can help their child to trust in the relationship and to feel safe in the knowledge that they are accepted and loved unconditionally.

PARENTING PRINCIPLES

PACE

PACE is a way of being, a consistent feature in everyday life. Discipline is brought in as and when it is needed. This helps children to feel unconditionally accepted and emotionally connected. PACE *with* discipline helps to maintain connection when children are at their most vulnerable, experiencing shame and fear. As children's arousal level increases, the number of elements of PACE that can be used decreases. During an emotional eruption, elements such as curiosity and playfulness should be avoided. During these times, prioritise safety and use only A&E (Acceptance and Empathy). Head over to the Resilience Project's PACE resource if you'd like a refresher on the different PACE elements.

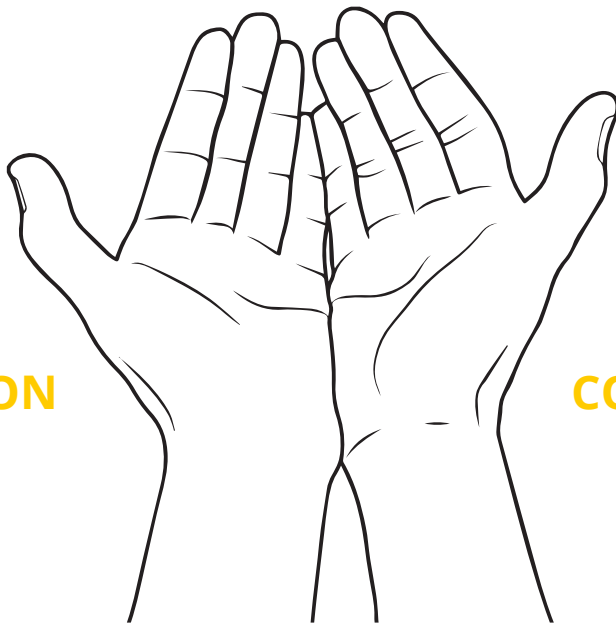


THE TWO HANDS OF PARENTING

Connection with correction is an approach that encourages high levels of warmth and nurture alongside age appropriate behaviour strategies. It can be thought of as the two hands for parenting:

Hand One – Provides warmth and nurture and allows children appropriate autonomy matched to their developmental age (**connection**).

Hand Two – Provides structure, discipline and boundaries (**correction** – behavioural support)



CONNECTION

CORRECTION

A child needs both of these to thrive - **connection and correction.**

Using connection strategies with the aim of understanding your child's experience, **before** implementing behaviour support, will likely help to build trust between you and your child. Avoid discipline or consequences until you have an understanding/explanation for the behaviour. Discipline, consequences or increased structure, will likely be more successful if the child feels understood and connected to first.

Here are some examples of what might be connection and what might be correction:

CONNECTION

- Remaining calm and regulated
- Acceptance and Empathy (for feelings and thoughts)
- 'Name it to tame it' - Labelling feelings
- Curiosity (*I wonder what this behaviour is communicating? What are their hidden needs?*)
- Helping to regulate emotions
- Light and caring voice
- Time in strategies (i.e. time away from a situation to regulate emotions, but alongside/with support from a trusted adult)
- Drawing out feelings/their experience
- Staying with your child
- Showing that you care about them unconditionally

CORRECTION

- Time in strategies (i.e. being alongside them, until they are open and engaged)
- Boundaries for harmful behaviour
- Conversations about the behaviour (reasoning)
- Providing natural and logical consequences* for their behaviours- if needed (linking directly to the behaviour)
- Structure and supervision that matches developmental age
- Problem Solving Together

*There are resources on our website that explain these ideas in more detail!

HELPFUL PHRASES

Connection: *I'm not surprised you're angry"*
"They must have made you angry for you to hit them"
"It must be horrible to think that I don't love you"
"I'd be so sad if you left, I'd miss you so much"

Try to avoid: *"What did you do that for?"*, *"Why are you upset?"*, *"What have you done now?"*, *"Shut up"*, *"I can't deal with you right now"*, *Ignoring*, *"Go on then, run away, there's the door"*, *"Get a grip"*.

THE PARENTING SANDWICH

Discipline, in the form of boundaries and consequences, is important at times, but it works best sandwiched between lots of attunement and relationship repair.

Remain **calm, warm and empathetic**, whilst being clear about the boundary (what isn't allowed) and the possible consequence (if – then).
Avoid anger



Use **empathy** to **build emotional connection**

Help the child to know that **they are cared for and liked**. The **relationship is stronger** than what has happened

*If-then statements help to set boundaries and teach cause and effect.
I.e. **if** you break something, **then** you won't be able to use it.

THINGS TO DO:

- Take breaks when needed/practically possible to look after yourself
- Take responsibility for the relationship (including repair)
- Be mindful of children's emotional maturity and provide appropriate structure and supervision
- Stay open and empathic to your child's struggles with letting you have well-meaning authority over them (in order to keep them safe or when bringing an activity to an end)

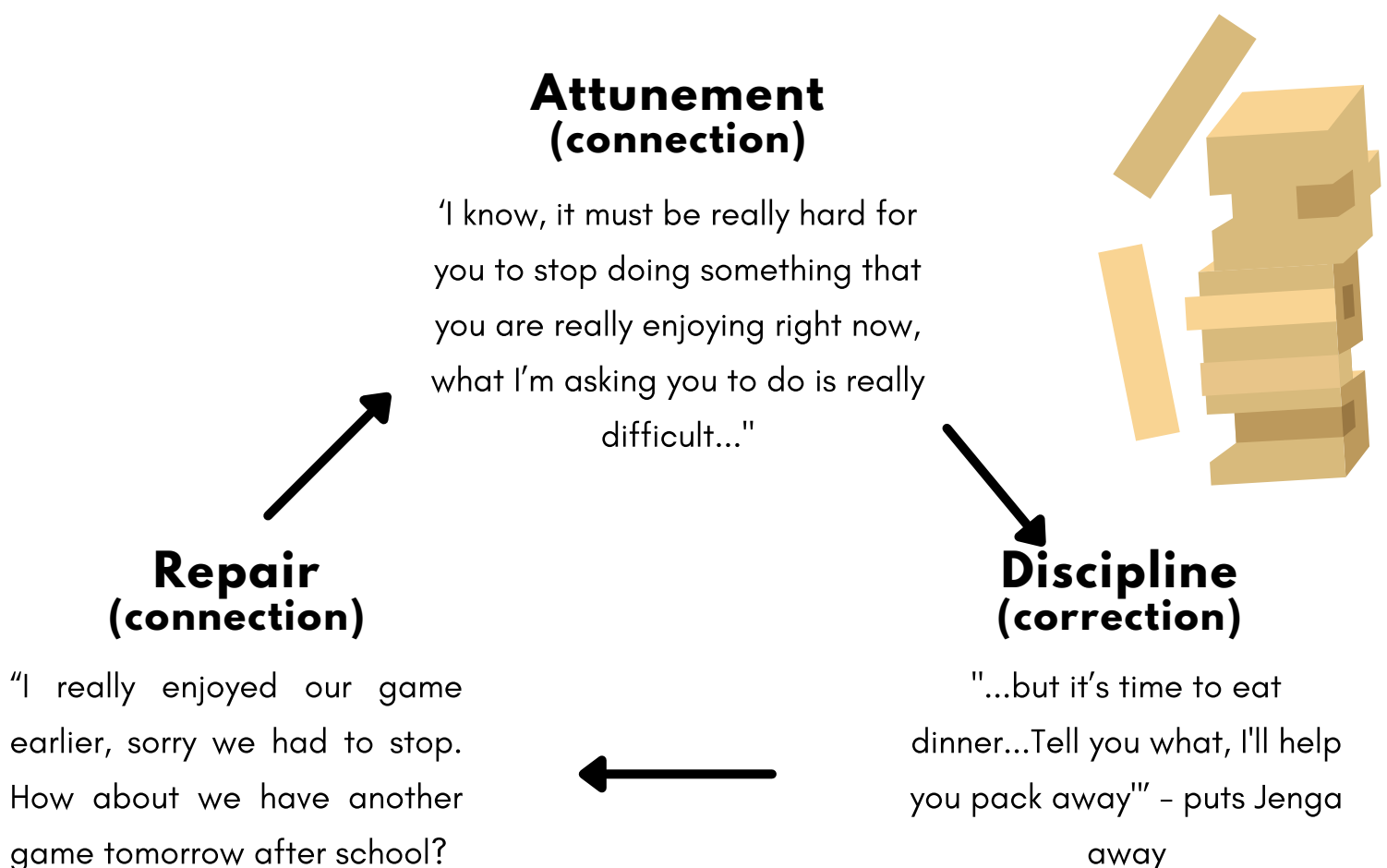
THINGS TO AVOID:

- Punishing by withdrawing from the relationship, i.e. avoiding or ignoring
- Lecturing – children can rarely be talking into out of behaviours
- Responding with anger
- Problem solving or reassuring too soon – aim to understand first

THINK ABOUT THIS SITUATION WHERE THE 'TWO HANDS OF PARENTING' ARE BEING USED:

Child and parent are playing with toys in the living room whilst dinner is cooking. When the timer beeps, parent says that it's time to put the toys away and wash our hands. The child continues to play. Two minutes later, the parent gives the child another reminder; the child says they don't want to and that it's not fair. Parent then uses this opportunity to empathise with the child saying 'I know, it must be really hard for you to stop doing something that you are really enjoying right now, what I'm asking you to do is really difficult, but it's time to eat dinner'. This helps the child to know that the parent understands the child's internal world and their feelings. The adult may then say "Tell you what, I'll help you pack away" and puts the jenga away. Later on, the adult may then think it would be helpful to do some repair to show the child that their relationship is ok: "I really enjoyed our game earlier, sorry we had to stop. How about we have another game tomorrow after school?"

(Adapted from Kim Golding, Foundations for Attachment Training Resource).



This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg