

# Supporting Your Child's Emotional Development

## Alwyn Infant School

### Summer Term 2025

### Session Two

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**achieving  
for children**

## **Session One (8<sup>th</sup> May 14:15)**

- Exploring emotional regulation in relation to brain development

## **Session Two (15<sup>th</sup> May 14:30)**

- An introduction to PACE, an emotion coaching approach
- Q & A Session

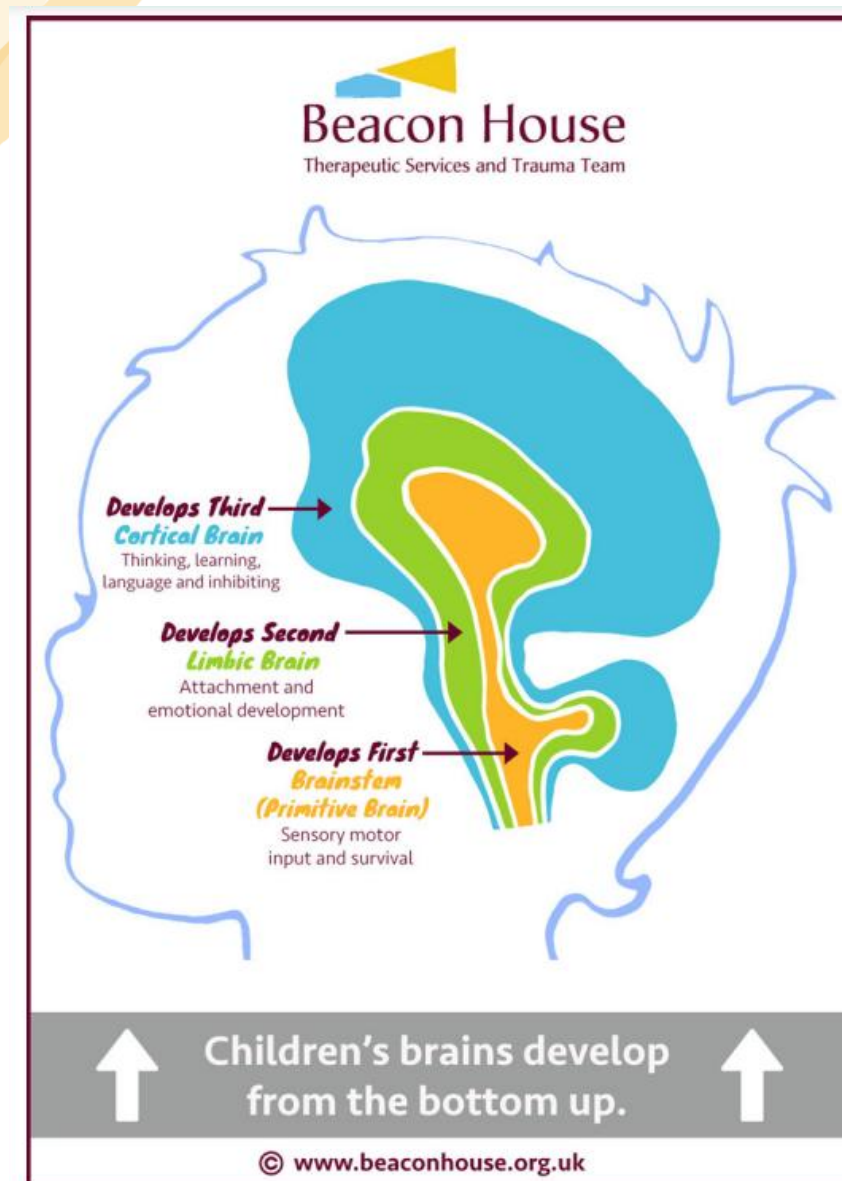
# Aims

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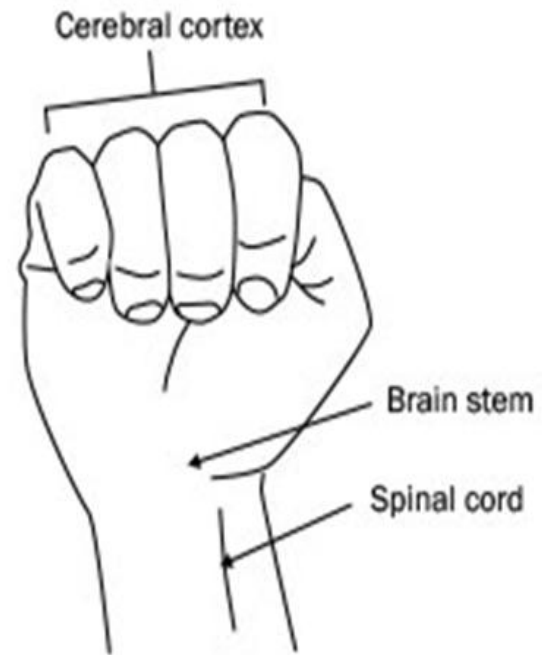
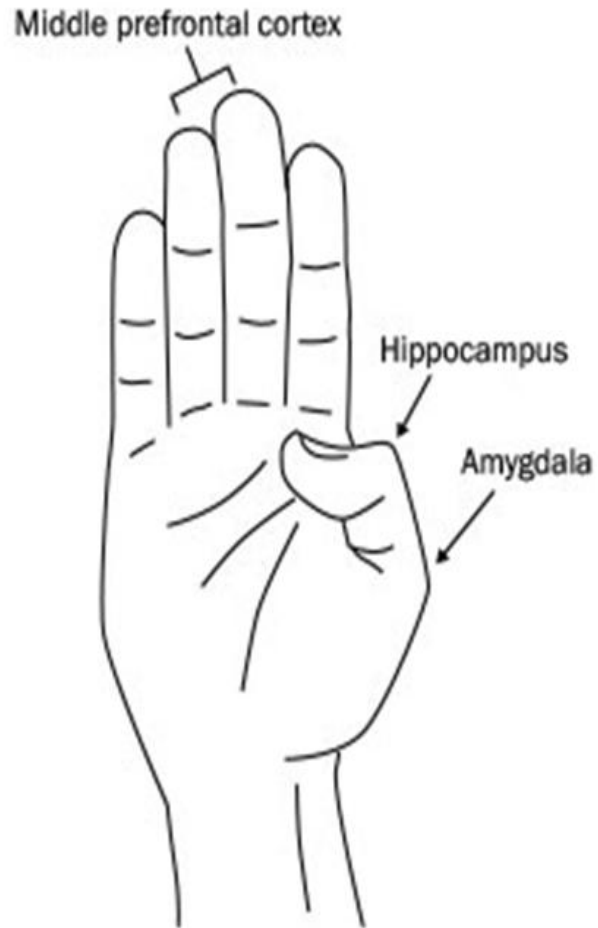
An introduction to PACE – an emotion coaching approach

Time for questions and reflections

# Re-cap: Brain Development



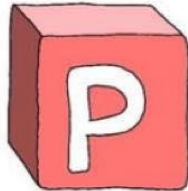
# Re:cap: Dan Siegel Hand Model - dysregulation





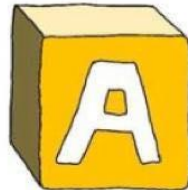
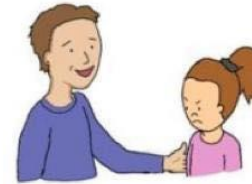
PACE

# PACE (Dan Hughes)



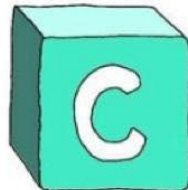
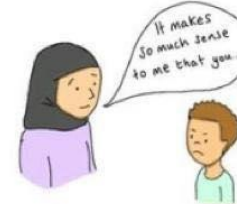
## Playfulness

- Playfulness in interactions can diffuse conflict and promote connection e.g. Maintaining a relaxed 'lightness' and can involve making a joke (though this has to be done carefully)



## Acceptance

- Accepting needs and emotions that drive behaviour (not necessarily the behaviour) without judgement



## Curiosity

- Being curious to where a behaviour has come from (in your head or out loud...)



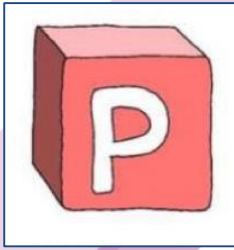
## Empathy

- Really connecting with how they are feeling and showing compassion



P.A.C.E is an approach developed by Dr Dan Hughes aimed at supporting recovery from developmental trauma. However, it can be a useful attitude to adopt with anyone who is emotionally dysregulated

Illustrated by Juliet Young



# Playfulness



This is about creating a **fun, light and playful atmosphere** when communicating with the child.

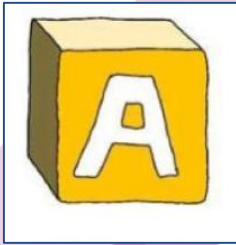
It is not about making making jokes when a child is sad or frustrated or being dismissive of their needs.

Instead, it's about using a light tone of voice, like you might do when **story-telling**, rather than an irritated or lecturing tone.

A playful approach can be powerful for **defusing tension**.

A playful approach also **reassures the child** that you are cross with them and that they are not a bad person.





# Acceptance

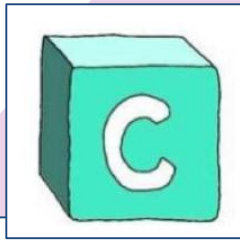


This is about accepting that whatever the child (or you) are feeling right now is **ok** - even if it is a painful or 'negative' feeling.

You are aiming to convey that **you still accept the child** - regardless of the behaviour / feeling they are currently showing.

Let their feeling 'land' with you.

Acceptance does not mean there is no place for limits - you can limit the behaviour, while **accepting the child's underlying need or motive**.



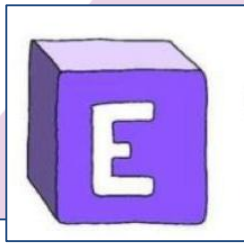
# Curiosity



Curiosity involves a **quiet, accepting tone**: “What do you think that was about?” or “I wonder what...?” You say this without anticipating an answer or response from a child.

Curiosity is **not asking the child, “Why did you do that?”** with the expectation of a reply.

With curiosity we are trying to show **we simply wish to understand** why. We hope to convey that our intentions are to truly understand and to help the child, not to lecture.



# Empathy

Empathy is about putting yourself in **someone else's shoes** and allowing yourself to feel what they must be feeling.

It gives us a sense of **compassion** for the child and their feelings.

This is essential in helping a child feel **understood**.



We are trying to communicate to the child that **they are not alone** with their feeling (which isn't the same as reassurance).

# Using PACE flexibly, in the moment



## In an emergency, go to 'A' & 'E'

- “I can see that this feels too difficult for you to try right now” (Acceptance)
- “I know things can feel really difficult and frustrating sometimes” (Empathy)
- “Work can sometimes be really tricky and I know that it's so rubbish when we feel like we can't do something” (Acceptance and Empathy)
- “Hey, look at that worksheet Alex, it looks like a little mouse has nibbled right through it. I hope he's not going to eat my secret sweetie stash too” (Playfulness)
- “Alex, this is just feeling impossible for you right now.” (Acceptance)
- “I wonder what might be making things tricky for you today” (Curiosity)
- I know that it can feel really overwhelming when we feel rubbish at something. I can feel rubbish at things too, and when I can't do something I get angry with everything and I just want to scream (Empathy)
- I wonder what might be helpful for you in this moment (Curiosity)

## Top tips

- Remember to stay **consistent** with a PACE approach. Persist with PACE even when you feel like it has not worked. To be thought of and related to in this way can be a very powerful experience for children.
- **Sit with the uncomfortable.** Our instinct can be to reassure children by saying 'it'll be okay', 'of course I like you', or 'but you are really good at homework.' These responses are attempts to make everyone feel better. However, they are like putting a sticking plaster on a big open wound. Sitting with the big negative feelings can be really uncomfortable and you may feel like you need to say more to make it better, but you don't.

# Summary

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Emotional Regulation

Brain Development

Hand-Brain Model

PACE

## Q & A

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What's **one thing** you're going to take away from our workshops together?

What will your **next steps** look like?

Queries and reflections are welcomed, please be mindful not to use children's names.



Thank You

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Champions for children and families