



6 WAYS

A selection of practical ideas and strategies to support wellbeing and resilience



Early Years

Haringey
LONDON

INTRODUCTION

The 6 WAYS is a resource that brings together six ideas and strategies that can support resilience and wellbeing in children and families. These may be ideas with which you are already familiar and use on a regular basis, both as a professional and as a parent/carer. Research shows that using strategies consciously has more impact than when we use them unconsciously and for that reason, we have brought these together into a single resource so that these individual strategies are considered and used explicitly on a regular basis, becoming part of everyday practice.



6 WAYS

1

HOLDING IN MIND

Thinking about what they need and remembering them

2

CO-REGULATION

Doing things together and responding to each other

3

SELF-REGULATION

Learning to manage strong emotions for ourselves

4

EMOTION COACHING

A helpful framework to teach children to manage strong emotions

5

HELPING NOT FIXING

Helping children to find solutions when things don't go to plan

6

MAKING AND BREAKING

Learning that things and relationships can break and we can find ways to repair them

WAYS

HOLDING IN MIND

A way of helping others know that they are important – by remembering them

Why we need it

Knowing that we are remembered and not forgotten helps us to develop our identity as an individual in our own right – to develop a sense of self. This helps us to concentrate, have a positive view of ourselves & feel more confident.

How to do it

Find out

- Ask parents/carers about their **child's interests, skills, things they like**.
- Talk to parents/carers about things child will be doing after nursery or at the weekend.

Proximity

- **Standing near** to a child, **making eye contact** or reassuring gesture i.e. a **smile** helps them know you are thinking of them.

Remember to ask

- Talk to the child about things that interest them, e.g. 'I remember you like 'Paddington' – this bear looks a bit like Paddington doesn't it'.
- Say 'Did you have a nice time at your Auntie B's house yesterday? Your dad told me you went to see her'.

Building strong relationships

Let children know that you think about them, and they are important



Staff support children by:

HOLDING IN MIND

Holding in Mind
helps with separation
anxiety

When you are not with them

- Sometimes children can be upset when you have to leave them to do something else....make sure **they know you are thinking about them, even when you are not with them.**
- For example, say 'I am going to change Jai. I will be thinking about you while I am away'
- Or, 'I thought of you at the weekend because I went to Paddington Station and I know you like Paddington Bear'.

Helping parents/carers to hold their child in mind

- **BEFORE** parents/carers drop their children off they can tell them they will be thinking of them when they are not with them.
- **WHILE** child is at setting, parent/carer, can let their child know they are thinking of them by giving them a tissue/cloth with home scent on it and providing a small comfort toy/object.
- **AT PICKUP** when parent/carer reunites with their child let them know they were thinking of them e.g. saying 'I thought about you today when I bought your favourite fruit' and asking about their day.



CO-REGULATION

When one person takes an action in response to another person

Why we need it

Co-regulation is a building block of strong communication skills and the foundation of our ability to self-regulate. It builds feelings of safety & trust when we encounter new people. We need to be able to co-regulate with someone to work, play, cooperate, negotiate, or learn with them. It supports feelings of belonging.

How to do it

Songs

- Songs with actions like: 'Humpty Dumpty' (letting them drop between legs) 'Row, row, row the boat'

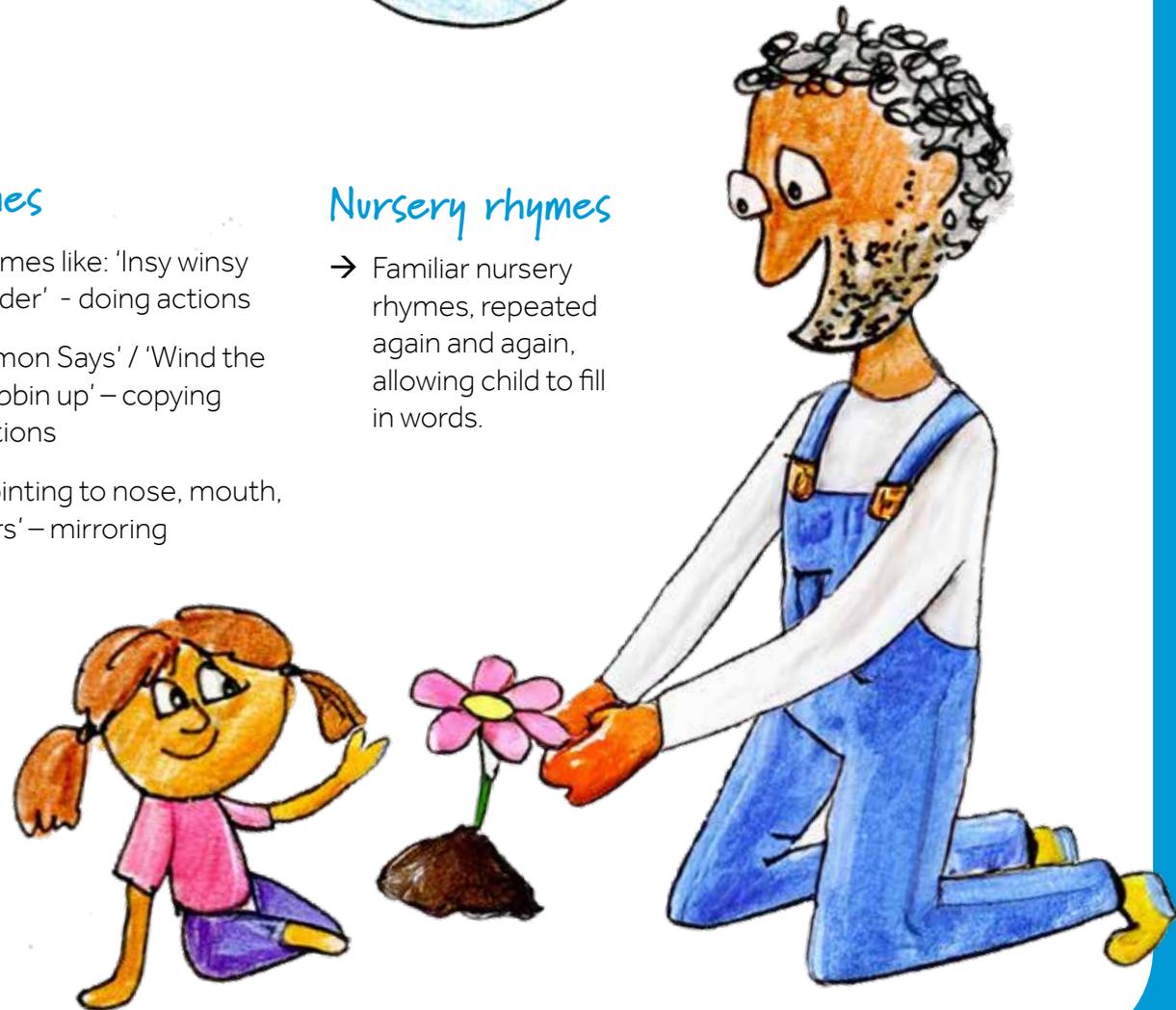
Games

- Games like: 'Insy winsy spider' - doing actions
- 'Simon Says' / 'Wind the bobbin up' - copying actions
- 'pointing to nose, mouth, ears' - mirroring

Find time to laugh and have fun together

Nursery rhymes

- Familiar nursery rhymes, repeated again and again, allowing child to fill in words.



Staff support children by:

CO-REGULATION

Tasks together

Shared tasks like:

- **Cooking** – i.e. making sandwich – one person butters, the other holds bread, one put on the cheese, the other the tomato
- **Folding sheets of material together.** Pairing socks. Matching activities.
- **Reading a familiar book**, pausing to allow child to fill in missing word – encourage child to point at words, adult models first.
- **Carrying things together** i.e. a basket or bowl, one each side so you need to move as one.
- **Planting seeds together**, one put the seeds in, the other covers with soil, one pats soil down.

Helping parents and carers to provide lots of co-regulation activities for their children

- Let parent/carer know what games you have been playing at nursery, let them know child's favourite story/nursery rhyme.
- Remind parent/carer of games like walking in time child on top of adults feet, peek-a boo, pretending to be asleep – child wakes you up. Round & round the garden.

Do things together

Connect with child



SELF-REGULATION

When someone can keep their emotional state 'in balance', even in times of challenge

Why we need it

Small children learn to self-regulate with the help of the caregivers around them. Learning to manage our emotions means we can get through the day without becoming too over-excited, distressed or anxious. We can engage more with others and find it easier to learn.

Our emotions can go up and down when things happen to us

How to do it

Do children need soothing or stimulating?

Soothe when

- They are getting upset or over-excited
- They look away/cry/kick or hit out

Stimulate when

- They are not engaging with activities, co-regulation or conversation

Watch children
— are they ready to learn and engage?



Staff support children by teaching:

SELF-REGULATION

Things that help to soothe:

- Breathing
- Stroking
- Counting rhymes
- Rocking
- Patting
- Music (calming)
- Swinging and hanging
- Climbing
- Pushing or carrying
- Sucking (water from sports bottle)
- Crunching, chewing

Things that help to stimulate:

- Talking
- Spinning
- Playing
- Hopping
- Teaching
- Jumping

Encourage parent/carer to notice whether their child needs soothing or stimulating by:

- using humour when talking to their child if/when they make a mistake
- not getting cross, instead make light of the situations i.e. we forgot this time... maybe next time we'll remember!
- using phrases such as 'I think', 'I wonder', 'maybe', encourages children to think with you about how they are feeling.



EMOTION COACHING

A conversation to support children when they need soothing

Why we need it

It is a way to have a structured conversation to help someone else regulate their emotions.

It teaches others to internalise strategies to maintain and regain emotion regulation.



How to do it

1. **Name the emotion**
Not the behaviour
2. **Acknowledge and validate how they are feeling**
so child relaxes and knows it is normal
3. **Set limits - if needed**
Quietly explain what is not acceptable and why
4. **Offer guidance**
Once settled and calm

Based on American Psychologist John Gottman's Emotion Coaching

Staff support children by:

EMOTION COACHING

1. Name the emotion

e.g. 'I wonder if you are feeling **frustrated** because it is not your turn.'

Try to use a range of words more than happy and sad, e.g. joyful, disappointed, nervous, excited, disgusted

2. Acknowledge and validate how they are feeling

e.g. 'I think [most people/some people/I] would find that [frustrating/exciting/disappointing]....'

HOW to support parents/carers to help their child to self-regulate

Share the emotion coaching strategy with them



3. Set limits

Give the child time to recover from the upset. Kindly and calmly be clear on any limits child needs to follow to avoid hurt to others and themselves

e.g. 'I know it's difficult when... but it is not okay for', 'I know you feel.... but ...(hurting/hitting/shouting) is not kind to others'.

4. Offer guidance

e.g. 'What do you think we could do about...?', 'I am wondering how we make things better...what if we...?', 'Help me to think of a good way to move this forward..' (See Helping NOT Fixing card)

HELPING NOT FIXING

Adults helping children to have confidence in their ability to find solutions for themselves

Why we need it

Sometimes, as adults, we can be tempted to step in and fix children's problems, rather than give them support to find their own solutions. When we use a 'helping not fixing' approach, children begin to create a bank of possible solutions they can use in the future. This gives them confidence in their own ability to problem-solve and helps develop healthy independence and resilience.

How to do it

You can help them by

- **Asking:** 'What do you think we could do...'
- **Finding solutions together** 'What if we tried...'
- **Letting them play** or do an activity their way
- **Remembering** that a 'little bit of struggle' builds resilience
- **Teaching** children something, then let them try it on their own
- **Allowing** them to try safe challenges
- **Being curious**, ask children questions 'Can you tell me about..'



Staff support children by:

HELPING NOT FIXING

Helping Parents/Carers to understand 'Helping NOT Fixing'

At pick-up time, model this to parents/carers for example, when child is struggling to put on coat. 'what if we tried..'



Helping is supporting children to find a solution for themselves

This can build children's confidence that they can work things out for themselves

Fixing is doing it for children

This can lead to children losing confidence in their ability to work things out for themselves

For some activities try to help children rather than fix or do things for them. It helps them to build a sense of control and ownership.



MAKING AND BREAKING

Learning that things can change and we survive

Why we need it

Giving children the opportunity to use objects and toys that can be broken apart and remade, can help them to build resilience for when unexpected things happen, outside of their control. This supports children to maintain healthy relationships and become solution-focused, things can change, they can become fractured and broken and we can survive and do something about it.

How to do it

Puzzles and models

- Let children use puzzles, construction toys or empty boxes, break them up and make them again.

Find time to laugh and have fun together

How could I not do it again?

Sometimes it helps when we say 'sorry'

What can I do to sort it out?



Staff support children by:

MAKING AND BREAKING

'Making and Breaking' is an important way to help children know that when things break or change, they can survive, and things can often be repaired or built again differently.

Helping children to manage challenges and situations, creating a feeling of security and safety

Give step by step instructions for activities that may be challenging



Talk about home and nursery

- It is good for children to see connections between home and nursery. Help them to do this by talking about things they have done at home. Model how to tell someone about their day – 'today we saw... we had fun didn't we'

Helping Parents/Carers to understand 'Making and Breaking'

- At pick-up time, tell parents/carers about any temporary structure the child made.
- If giving them something the child made whilst at the nursery i.e. a model, remind them that if it breaks, not to worry, they can easily make something new.
- Encourage parents/carers to talk with child about their day at nursery – model in front of parent/carer, 'today at nursery we did'



*Supporting children and their families
to live resilient and stable lives*