

Hidden Messages

What might your practices convey to others?

Sometimes our well intentioned actions convey different messages to different people. There are times when our actions might be interpreted in such a way that is not what you intended, or may in fact be the exact opposite of what we are trying to achieve. Below is an example:



Children's Services
Since 1895

Practice

Shadowing a child exhibiting challenging behaviours (i.e. staying beside or close to a child for extended periods of time)

and/or

Providing continuous one to one support (i.e. an educator works solely on a one to one basis with a child)

Possible reasons why we work this way

To focus on the safety of the child and of other children.

To ensure someone is close at hand to help in all circumstances.

To make parents feel comfortable.

To meet parental expectations for one to one support.

What message might this send to others?

This child is not capable of doing anything by themselves.

This child can't be trusted to participate.

This child is different.

This child is dangerous/scary.

We can't play with this child without an adult being with them.

What message might this send to the child?

I am not capable of doing anything by myself.

I don't need to try by myself.

I can't be trusted.

I am different to the other children.

If I keep behaving like this, I can have an adult with me all the time.

I am not good at doing anything and this won't change.

Reflective Questions

Think about these questions yourself, or discuss them at your next team meeting.

Does this happen in your service?

- ▶ If a child believes they are not capable or can't be trusted, what behaviours might you see? What impact does this have on the child's participation in the program and with others?
- ▶ What other practices might send unintended messages about children and how they are included at your service?
- ▶ What messages do you want to send to others through your day to day practice?

If you would like support to work through any specific examples of your practice and what messages this may convey to children, families and others, contact your Inclusion Agency.

Inclusion for children means...



- ▶ Playing with my friends
- ▶ Having opportunities to learn new things
- ▶ Feeling safe and valued
- ▶ Being encouraged to do things myself
- ▶ Being supported to contribute
- ▶ Making my own choices
- ▶ Everyone communicating with me in ways I understand

I belong here, I can be who I am

The Inclusion Support Programme is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.