

## Coaching

Coaching is teaching children to learn to regulate their emotions, their social skills and their ability to persist on a task through using 'You are...' statements

### Types of coaching

- **Persistence coaching** - comments on the child's cognitive and behavioural state
- **Social coaching** - model and label appropriate social skills
- **Emotion coaching** - labelling children emotions - both positive and negative
- **Academic coaching** - focus comments on academic skills

### Persistence coaching

Skills that a child needs to be able to persist at a task

- Concentration - you are concentrating well
- Motivation - you really want to keep going
- Patience - you are being really patient
- Determination - you are determined
- Courage - you are really brave
- Focus - you are really focused
- Curiosity - you are really interested
- Effort - you are making a big effort

**Remember:** if you give attention to a behaviour, it makes the behaviour happen more

- Labelling the skills the child is using, draws attention to the behaviour

**Coaching is powerful:** it is all about the timing and it is different from praise

- An adult might tell a child, "Well done for sitting nicely in your chair"
  - This feels good and reassuring for the child
  - Next time the adult walks in the room the child is more likely to sit nicely in the chair because they want more praise
  - The child wants the adult to notice
- If another adult walks in and does not notice
  - The child might act up because they want that adult to notice them
- We do not want the child to have to rely on external reinforcement to make them sit nicely in a chair
  - We want the child to do this from within
- The adult could say to the child, "You are good at sitting nicely in your chair"
  - This makes the child feel good



The difference between saying 'Well done for sitting nicely in your chair' and 'You are good at sitting nicely in your chair'

- You are... focuses on the intrinsic quality and the ability the child has within them to sit on the chair (or do whatever the thing is)
- The child believes that they are really good at sitting nicely on a chair
- Next time they are required to sit on a chair the child knows they are good at this
  - Has the belief in their mind that they can do this

If a child with negative behaviour is constantly fed the lines that tells them what they cannot do, particularly around persistence, they will believe they can't do it

- The adult needs to use the 'You are...' statements whenever the child does a required behaviour.

E.g. -

- Child stays calm for 3 seconds
- Adult says, "You are staying calm"
- Adult does not say "You are really good at staying calm" - because the child is not doing this well yet
- The child will start to believe about themselves that they can stay calm
- The adult can provide some 'thought challenging behaviour' for the child
  - You look like you are thinking about calming down
  - You are taking deep breathes
  - You are breathing more slowly
  - You are calming down
  - You look like you are calm
- These you are statements can increase the behaviour
  - Calming down might happen after 3 minutes
  - Next time it may happen after 2 minutes 30 seconds
  - Next time it may happen after 2 minutes
  - Builds up the internal belief about the things that they can do

We are giving the child their internal positive voice, so when the other people around them are not able to give it to them for them, they are able to do it themselves

- The child will not always have a parent or teacher there to do this for them
- Gives the child an alternative dialogue to all the things that they think they cannot do

**Coaching** is all about in the moment because sometimes the window of opportunity is tiny

- Need to be vigilant to spot the moments
  - this can be very difficult for parents with more than one child
  - easier when the parent is one-to-one with the child



- Often adults wait for the predicted moment of when the child will erupt
- There is a period before the child erupts
- Need to spot the moment just before the child erupts
  - You are sitting / doing...
- Once the child erupts they get a lot of attention about what they are doing - crying loudly / running off / knocking over things etc.
- This reinforces the child's negative internal dialogue and gives them extra external attention which reinforces the negative behaviour

Example: Siblings playing nicely together

- The parents notices how well they are playing, so often creeps away because they do not want to break the spell
- When a child wants attention from their parent, the quickest way to get this is to do something bad such as hit their sibling
- Parent comes straight back into the room
- For children this is not manipulative - it's black and white - this is what works

The way we use words is really powerful in the way we shape how children think about themselves and what they are doing

Acknowledging that something is hard and the child is still sticking at it, has the same positive impact

- You are finding this hard and you are still doing it

Some adults will help children because they do not want the child to fail or feel frustration

- This teaches the child that negative emotions are not to be had

#### **Persistence coaching:**

- requires the adult to use specific words that match the action of the child
- is about the process and not about the end product
- equips children with life skills that can be used in any situation
- challenges the child's internal negative self-talk about the things that they do
- gives the child encouraging words BEFORE they have given up
- uses the window of opportunity to notice the moments when it is still going okay

'You are...' statements are genuine and real, so are easier to handle than praise (especially for older children)

Saying 'You are...' statements in the moment it is happening, helps the child to learn what it is they are doing



- 'you are holding the green one' - the child learns it is green
- 'you are concentrating' - the child learns what concentrating is
- 'you are staying calm' - the child learns what staying calm is

Persistence coaching statements can be used in situations where the child finds it easier to stay on task in order to build up their internal self-talk, so when they are faced with a more difficult situation the child has a firmer grounding about what they believe about themselves.

- Child struggles to share their toys with their sibling, but they can share their toys with the adult
  - 'You are good at sharing your toys'
  - 'You are good at sharing your toys with me'
- When this statement is applied when playing with their sibling - they are more likely to generalise the idea and share their toys
- Skill the child up to use the strategy in more difficult situations

#### **You are... statements:**

- 'You are...' statements keep the focus on the child
- When we say 'I can see you are...' the focus transfers to us
- 'You are...' statements have a greater impact on the child's internal self-talk, and challenges their core beliefs about themselves