

Activity: Understanding the child's view

Objectives:

1. Highlight the impact of negative experiences on attachment relationships and the developing brain.
2. Compare children's perspectives with adults to the same experiences.

Process – Set the scene

Being touched and loved is essential to baby's healthy brain development. The all important attachment relationship develops in the first two years between primary caregiver and baby through care that is gentle, sensitive and responsive to baby's needs. The brains of children with secure and insecure attachments are wired differently. Experiences of love, trust, and stimulation become a permanent part of a child's brain structure and function.

Understanding their significant role in this can be very motivating for parents.

Research has identified 6 principles or characteristics of effective discipline of which parental warmth and involvement is number one. Cooperation and compliance starts in infancy and flourishes in a climate of attentive caring and affectionate relationships.

All children will be non-compliant at some stage, especially during toddlerhood, when they are busy exploring the world and developing a sense of independence. But this will remain only a stage, if a child grows up in an environment of praise and encouragement, consistency and, firmness.

Different perspectives – Is what kids see and feel the same as the big people do?

- **Brainstorm** and **record** situations at home that might be frightening or stressful for kids?
- **Discuss** the influence that their developmental age/stage might have on their experience.
- What about the adults – how might they see that same situation?

Write up following questions:

- How do you like to be spoken to especially when you're feeling frightened or upset?
- How can we best help you when you're feeling confused or angry?
- Do you ever reward yourself? How?

In pairs/small groups answer questions and discuss. Ask for feedback and record and cluster responses.

Watch SKIP *Children's Voices* DVD

How are their responses different/same as participant's feedback?

Options: Group size will determine activity and process.

Resources used: SKIP *Children's Voices* DVD. SKIP Blue Module Two – Child Development and Behaviour – *Whakatipu* series – Pēpi says sections