

Mirror Game

Step by step guide

1. Help the children to move into a circle. Encourage, help and enable children to sit together with sensitive adults placing a kind hand around a child that needs reassurance or a sense of containment. Be aware of those children who find touch difficult and help them to feel acknowledged, safe and understood.
2. Share the 'mirror game' with the children by choosing a child to show how it works and have the child with the adult in the centre of the circle. The child is 'the mover' in the game and the adult 'the mirror.' Invite the child to put their hands up palms outward by their chest and the adult mirrors their hands as if they are the mirror image. The child can then move their hands in circle movements or to the side or up and down and the adult 'mirror' follows the movement. Allow the child to move their hands for a few minutes and then swap over so the child becomes the mirror in the game.
3. Ensure that the adult is calm and friendly in the way they engage and encourage the child to participate in the activity. Then show the children some variations of the game how it can include a leg moving or funny facial expressions. (This activity enables the adult and child to begin to make safe and reassuring eye contact and for the child to experience an adult who is completely emotionally available to them, caring about their response, responding sensitively and openly. It is important that the adults face is open, kind and compassionate to enable the child to feel safe and nurtured through this activity.)
4. Then encourage the group of children to join in pairs to have a go at the game. Be vigilant to ensure all children have a partner with whom to play the game and that children are helped sensitively to be with a partner and not feeling left out or vulnerable. Some children may need to be with a specific adult that they trust to be able to have a go at the game.
5. It is important that the children feel contained and safe and able to be with their partner in the game. The adults can notice the sensations and expressions the children make and again validate and notice, model and mirror their responses with an open face, reassuring and a response that shows the children you are completely with them in the moment.
6. While the children are involved in the activity, the adult will need to notice and name the sensations and the experience for them, understanding that children may be unable to name and think about the experience and need the adult to name and give them the language to shape their experience.

Resources

Small mirrors

