

# Solihull Approach Training for Early Childhood Practitioners

Supporting behaviours through relationships: An evidence-based model

## The Solihull Approach:

- ° is a synthesis of three core psychological constructs, aimed at supporting and understanding behaviours within the context of a relationship
- ° provides a thinking framework to help understand and navigate difficult conversations and dysregulated behaviours
- ° is a relational model. it applies to any interactional relationship, and therefore maintains relevance for those working with children, and extends to supporting quality interactions between adults including with parents and colleagues and enables community collaborations (Douglas. H. 2023)
- ° it offers insights into behaviours to promote quality interactions and relationships in any situation.

## Aim: to equip early childhood professionals:

- ° to provide experiences that support respect, connectedness and emotional regulation in children, parents, and those who work with them, which in turn, supports behavioural change
- ° to understand the origins of behaviours, including trauma, and how best to promote emotional regulation and reflection in self and others
- ° to support children in feeling safe, respected, and understood, and therefore be more able to use their energy to freely engage in the world around them
- ° to reflect in the moment to manage challenging conversations and behaviour of children and adults.

*The model incorporates a thinking framework for safeguarding staff.*

## Training Outcomes - NQS links over page

Increases: reflection, work satisfaction, confidence, team cohesion, and workforce retention.  
Promotes: shared language, continuity of approach, and inter/intra-agency collaboration.

## Contact

If you have questions, or want to know more about available trainings:  
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## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS

### **Quality Area 1 Educational Programs**

Standard 1.1 The educational program enhances each child's learning and development. The child is designed to take in and learn from interactions, experiences, environments, and a range of contexts. Predictability, attunement, and sensitivity, are major components in the development of the sense of safety and trusting relationships. The Solihull Approach training course fosters attunement to the indicators of when learning can actually occur, and what to do to mobilise learning capacity.

Standard 1.2 Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development. Learning can occur in a range of contexts when each child, early childhood professional, parent, or colleague, is free to think. Stress, anxiety, and even fear of the unknown activate stress response systems. The resulting emotional dysregulation reduces the window of opportunity to learn. The Solihull Approach promotes sensitivity to regulation before leaning, and promotes trust in the ability of every child. A trusting and curious approach supports a safe place for autonomous thinking.

Standard 1.3 Educators and co-ordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child. Observation and then reflection on the significance of what is seen offers critical insights into the capacity and needs of each individual child. For educators and co-ordinators, attunement to expressions of experiences ensures programs are individualised and appropriate. A component of the training course is skilling the Professionals to be sensitive to the child's development needs for exploration and expression of their inner most worlds, and how to attune to their expression of their individual progress. This includes identifying and promoting emotional regulation, through a supportive, rather than a solution based, fix-it approaches.

### **Quality Area 4 Staffing Arrangements**

Standard 4.2 Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful, and ethical. As a relationship-based model, the Solihull Approach is relevant to anyone working with others. It provides for an understanding, in any situation, to promote quality interactions and relationships. The model provides ways to minimise misunderstandings and promote connections. It highlights elements of transference and countertransference to foster respectful and healthy interactions. Through integration of the understanding of the model that foster common language and collaborative approaches to relationships has increased job satisfaction and staff retention.

### **Quality Area 5 Relationships with Children**

Standard 5.1 Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child. To establish responsive, meaningful, and trusting relationships, understanding of each individual is key. One of the main theoretical tenants underpinning the Solihull Approach is understanding the sophisticated interactive components within relationships. Awareness in being in the moment and interpreting the cues of the other, allows for synchronised, and mutually satisfying interactions that are critical features in quality relationships. The Solihull Approach training course emphasises the relevance of the observable features of the relationship with the child, parent, and others, and promotes ways to adjust to foster emotional regulation in self and others.

Standard 5.2 Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships. Positive, respectful daily interactions with children can support them to learn about interdependence and to become considerate children. These relational experiences guide and support children as they develop self-confidence and skills necessary to manage their own behaviour, and how to relate positively with others at the time, and throughout their life. Bion's theory of Containment underpins the Solihull Approach. It provides access to the crucial elements of attentive listening, to gain insight into the experiences and emotions (both conscious and unconscious) of another, without being overwhelmed, then reflecting them back in a way that validates the emotional responses of the child or parent or other professionals. This process mobilises self-reflection, self-agency, and regulation capacity, of another, no matter what age. In turn, the individual who experiences containment, can development the abilities to consider the needs of others, enabling positive, quality relationships, with a range of others.

### **Quality Area 6 Partnership**

Standard 6.1 Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role. Understanding the elements of quality interactions provides practitioners with a tool kit to foster respectful and meaningful interactions with families that reinforces respect and value of the family and their experience and expertise. As a relational model, participants learn about the sophisticated interactive components of relationships and how to promote positive interactions that promote the feeling of being respected and understood.

Standard 6.2 Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing. The development of collaborative but supportive partnerships with parents and families is a key principle of the NQS. The Solihull Approach is grounded in quality within all relationships, and ways to support all partnerships. Participants learn how to use the same thinking framework when with parents and caregivers, so the respectful messaging is consistent. Every person is entitled to experience quality relationships, without exclusion.

### **Quality Area 7 Leadership and governance**

Standard 7.2 Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community. Self-reflection and self-assessment, as individuals and as a team, is critical in quality improvement processes. Leadership of the Educational programs leadership involves an understanding of others motivations and interpretations. Insight into internal working models and self-reflection are major components of the training to promote both introspection and supporting others to self-reflect. The Solihull Approach provides a framework for supporting those responsible for these programs, in a way which could maximise the outcomes for all involved.