

Toddler: Teacher Sensitivity
Title: Providing Comfort to Upset Child

In this classroom, the children play freely as the teacher attends to their needs and cues. The teacher notices and responds immediately to an upset child who misses her mother.

Awareness

- The teacher demonstrates awareness of the child who is upset and asks her, “What’s wrong, Roslyn? You all right? What’s going on friend?” as she pats the child’s back, providing additional comfort.
- The teacher is also aware of the remaining children in the classroom by verbalizing how she is watching each of them playing in their centers. She says, “And Kendall, are you reading all the music, all the songs we have?”
- Additionally, she demonstrates awareness of the other children through her non-verbal actions, such as visually scanning the room and turning her body towards the children.

Responsiveness

- The teacher provides individualized support and attention by asking Roslyn if she wants to play with pretend food and instruments (for example, “Do you want some food?” and “Would you like some egg shakers?”).
- The teacher acknowledges Roslyn’s non-verbal signals to play with the bells that another child is playing with at the time. She says, “You want the bells? When she is finished with the bells then you can have a turn, okay. All right?” The child continues to cry over the bells so the teacher continues to acknowledge the child’s emotions and remains calm by saying, “I know you want them now. Sometimes it’s hard when we want something right now, isn’t it? Do you want me to hold you for a minute? Sometimes we just need a hug, don’t we?” The teacher picks up the child, and she accepts the physical comfort.

Child Comfort

- The children in the class freely participate, playing on the floor and in the carpet area.
- The upset child indicates her comfort by accepting the physical affection offered by the teacher.
- The teacher effectively resolves the child’s problem; the child begins to show interest in other center activities.

The teacher in this classroom is aware of and responsive to children’s needs, which helps the children feel secure and ready to explore their environment. Children in classrooms with sensitive teachers grow to see their teachers as sources of support and reassurance.