



Kids Included Together

Reflect, Connect, and Redirect

This is a quick resource for understanding the Reflect, Connect, and Redirect behavior support strategy. Program Leaders can use this Tip Sheet as an outline for staff training. Program Staff can use this resource to support children and youth.



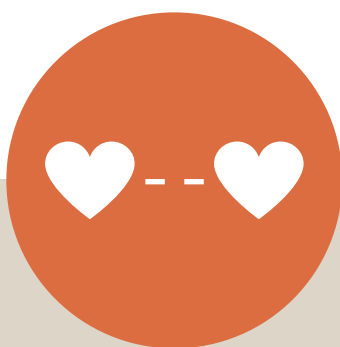
Reflect, Connect, and Redirect is a simple strategy you can use to respond to typical child/youth behavior that may be disruptive. Emotions control behavior! Until children feel safe and loved, they are not capable of problem-solving and learning from their experiences.

The only way to soothe an upset emotional state is through connection.



Reflect

- **Recognize** the child behaviors that trigger an emotional response in you
- Take a step back to **regroup** before responding
- Choose a **tone** that tells the child you're there to help



Connect

- **Acknowledge** the child's feelings or needs
- **Describe** the child's body language or behavior
- **Help** label the emotion



Redirect

- Offer **support** (breathing, distraction, breaks, etc.)
- Offer a **soothing** activity



Helpful Tip

Reflect, Connect, and Redirect is not effective when children are in crisis. Instead, use Reflect, Connect & Redirect in typical daily challenges, like when a preschooler isn't picked to be line leader, a schoolager doesn't want to participate in an activity, or a teenager tells an inappropriate joke.

Using Reflect, Connect, and Redirect / Examples

Preschool Example:

A child gets upset when it's time to clean up for lunch and begins throwing blocks and yelling.



- Take a breath and think about your tone of voice
- Recognize the child is frustrated



- "Your face is scrunched up and you're yelling."
- "You seem frustrated because you want to keep playing with blocks. Is that right?"



- "We can't throw blocks because they might hurt someone. Let's put them down."
- "Take a big breath with me."
- "Would you like to draw at the art table or do wall push-ups?"

School Age Example:

A child keeps touching and bothering another child, even after asked to stop.



- Step back to observe for a moment
- Count to five and take deep breaths



- "You are grabbing and pulling on Susie even though she's asked you to stop."
- "You want Susie's attention and are getting mad she's not giving it to you."



- "We have to listen when someone asks us not to touch them."
- "Let's take a break in the other room for a few minutes."
- "Do you want to listen to music or play with Legos?"

Teen Example:

A teen is distracted, playing on their phone instead of participating in the activity.



- Recognize that this behavior triggers your anger
- Breathe and consider what tone of voice will be most helpful



- "You are really focused on your phone instead of participating with everyone else."
- "Boredom can be really frustrating!"



- "Please put the phone away until our next break."
- "Would you come lead the next warm-up for everyone?"
- "Would you come pass out the materials to the group?"



Connecting is all about acknowledgement.

"You wanted a turn with the sit and spin." The child feels seen and heard, and this validates their feelings.

Connecting is not about enabling or encouraging negative behavior.

It is a way to let children/youth know you recognize something is difficult for them. "You seem disappointed it is time to clean up. Is that how you're feeling?"

We are teaching, not punishing.

We want children/youth to learn to recognize their feelings because it's the first step in learning to cope with anger, frustration, and disappointment.