

PATHS TO TEACH CHILDREN WITH AUTISM ABOUT EMOTIONS AND EMOTIONAL REGULATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN IMPLEMENTATION

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Why do what we did?

- engaging children through their special interests (e.g. southeastern trains)
- PATHS curriculum providing a structure to teach and make explicit knowledge and skill that may often be left implicit
- strong visual component
- use of puppets engaging and at what fits with the wider 'developmental pitch' for the children (e.g. Tree Foo Tom)
- exposes 'Hidden Curriculum'



Background and context

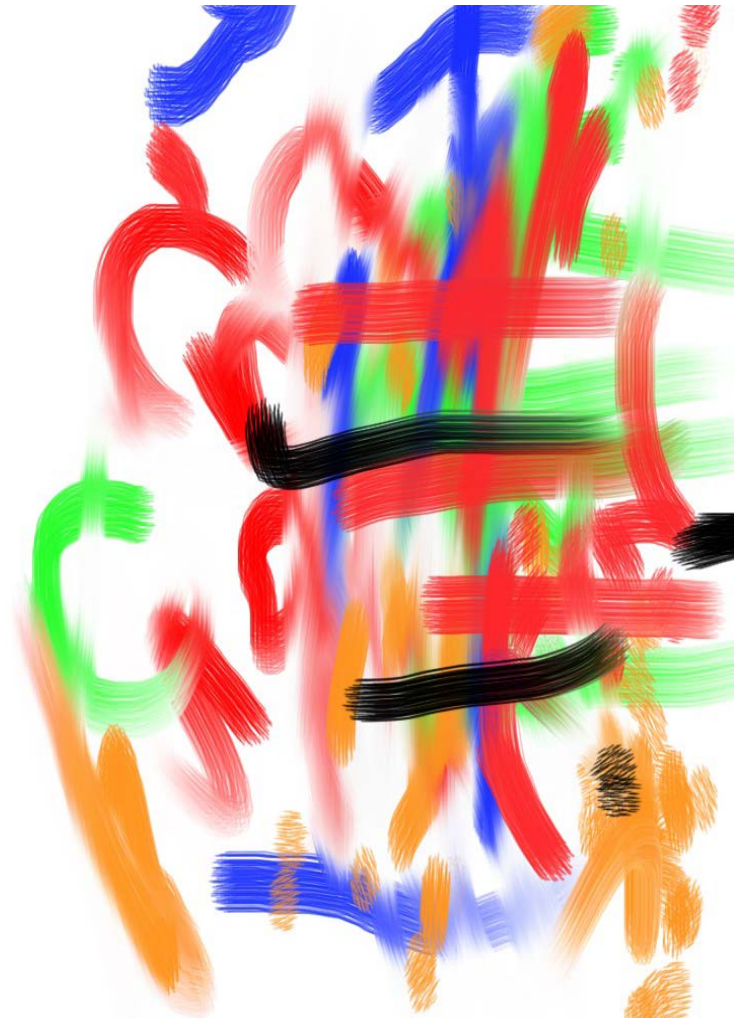
- PATHS and SCERTS and quality standards approach to implementation
- Premium placed on review and evaluation of effectiveness
- Curiosity about the degree of adaptation needed and when does an approach lose it's 'active ingredients'
- Our questions: which factors affect the implementation of PATHS for children with ASC in our community context; and how?
- We knew there were challenges with the mainstream teacher's implementation of PATHS - would that be similar (and with the same factors influencing the work) in the resource base?

SCERTS

SCERTS: social communication, emotional regulation, transactional support

- Development of spontaneous functional emotional regulatory capacities which supports independence are of the highest priority
- Developmentally appropriate and functional
- A child's emotional regulation and its effect on communication, social interaction and learning are always considered and arousal states monitored

Prizant et al., 2006, p. 2-3



What we did

Intervention aims

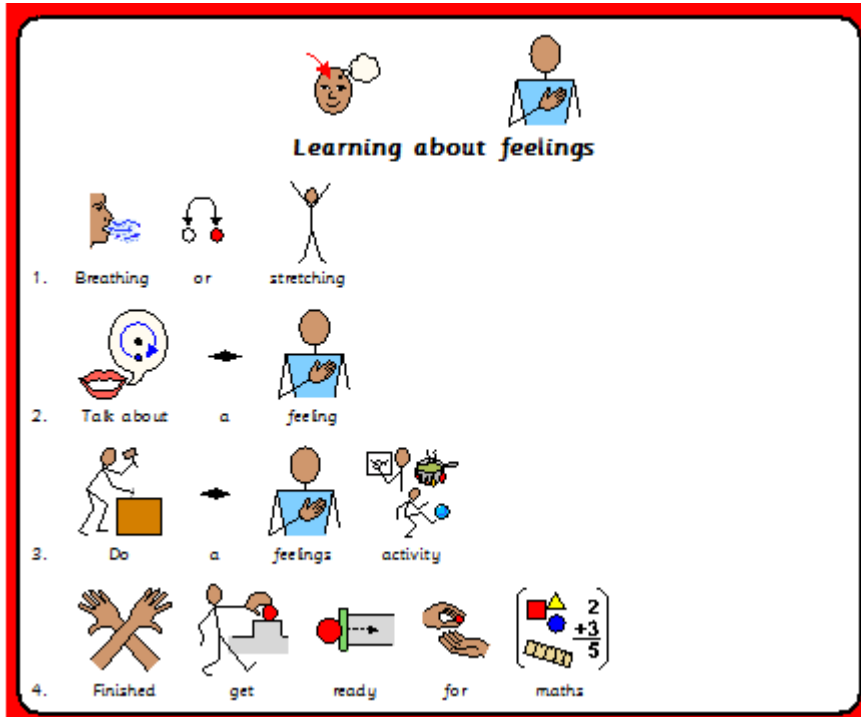
- Children recognise the key features of basic emotions both in themselves and others
- Children can label their own emotions and with support find a regulatory strategy

Key changes

- Children in the base needed a motivation and a structure to the sessions
- Children in the base needed to have explicit strategies shown to them

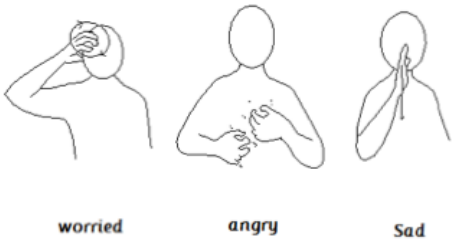
What we did

Visual Structure



What we did

Makaton Signing



Teacher: and all of those feelings are ok



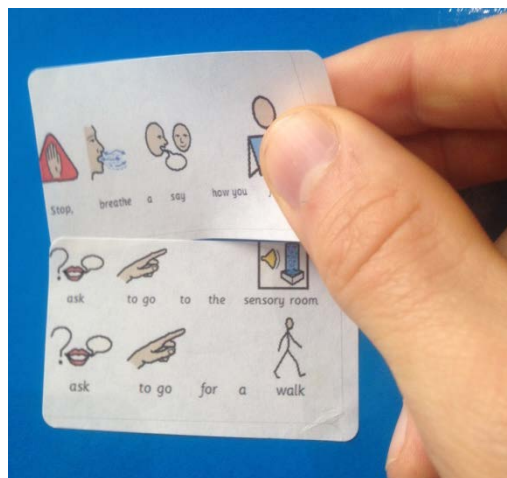
ok

Twigg: But surely not everyone has feeling? What do you think children does everyone have feelings?

Teacher: Yes twigg everyone has feelings shall we look at some pictures? [Use pictures from book]

Teacher: Now who is this? How do they feel?

Practical strategies



Activities

Challenges – focus on the details

What next?

- we know that expecting perfect or near-perfect implementation is unrealistic; and that interventions can still be effective even when they have been adapted
- remain curious about the relative weight of the various factors we have identified affected implementation in our case - more rigorous investigation? similar independent of the intervention or organisational factors?