

 **Practitioner guidance:
Skill 3: Reflective functioning (Attachment)**

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**1. Head**

During playtimes, think about your child. Put yourself in their shoes and see the world from their point of view. Give them your whole attention – actively think about them. Notice when other thoughts come into your mind and let them go. Keep bringing your attention to the child. HOLD THEM IN MIND. No need to say anything at this point – just really think and focus on your child.



**2. HEART**

During playtimes, feel your child’s feelings as much as you can. Watch their body language and facial expressions using your own face to mirror them. Practice noticing their feelings affecting your feelings. Differentiate between which feelings are theirs and which are yours. Notice the qualities of their play and what this means about their feelings, for example, bashing dinosaurs together aggressively may represent frustration or anger or it might mean something completely different. No need to say anything at this point – see if you can feel your child’s active and changing emotions.

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**3. HANDS**

Do and say things that let your child know that you “get” them. Let them feel understood by nodding, mirroring facial expression and using reflective words. For example, your child is frustrated trying to do something and you say “soooo frustrating hey”. Short statements are best and guessing is good. They may ask for help but do not help your child unless they indicate that this is wanted. They may seem happy about something and you catch their eye and smile too. Guessing is fine – children really appreciate it when we are trying to understand them. It makes them feel safe and secure. They will put us straight if we get it wrong. HINT: non-verbal reflection is as important as verbal!