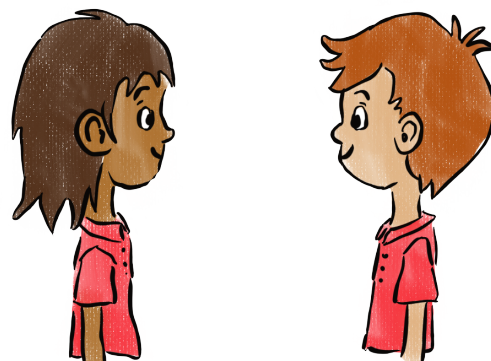


# How can we support tamariki developing social skills?

## Decode Behaviour as Communication:

Think about tamariki behaviour as being a form of communication. Instead of just reacting to challenging behavior, take a moment to ask, "What is this telling me?" Understanding the 'why' behind behavior is half the battle. Whether it's a shout in the playground or a withdrawn moment, there's usually more to it than meets the eye. Addressing the root cause can make a world of difference. Think what emotion this behaviour is telling us.



## Understand Neurodiversity:

Learn as much about neurodiversity as you can! All tamariki want to connect and feel that they belong, however, all brains do this differently. Often social skills rely on tamariki being able to pick up on cues from the interactions around them. If your brain doesn't naturally do this it doesn't mean that they're not a good friend or a kind and thoughtful person. It just means you learn about this stuff differently. Learn as much as you can about neurodiversity to be able to support tamariki. Appreciate the differences; they're what make our classrooms vibrant!

## Become a Social Clues Detective:

Sharpen the skill of 'reading the room' with your students. Discuss the cues out loud with them - "Mrs G's face looked flustered and she was talking fast. I think she is really busy. I was going to ask her if she could help with our topic but I'm now going to wait and ask later" or "Jo is backing away, she is telling you that noise feels too loud for her". The other part of this is being vulnerable ourselves, let's face it we all get this wrong sometimes! Telling our students this empowers them to give it a go and be okay when they miss something as well.

## Encourage Perspective-Taking:

Teamwork and friendship thrive when tamariki can see things from others' points of view. This is where we make our best guess at what someone else might be thinking or feeling. It is also us recognising that others often have different thoughts, feelings and opinions to us. Support tamariki with this by pointing out the different perspectives of the ākonga in your class. For example, "Lisa loves puppies, I think she will choose the puppy sticker from the sheet."

## Master Personal Space Bubbles:

Introduce tamariki to the concept that we each have a space bubble. This is the area around our body that makes us feel safe. Have a kōrero about how we can invite someone into this space like for a hug by holding our hands out for a hug and how it is their choice if they take the invite and the importance of respecting others' bubbles. Tell tamariki when they are doing a great job not getting into someone's space bubble, "wow I love how this group is sitting in a circle and everyone is in their space bubble."