

PARTICIPANT TAKEAWAY GUIDE

Inclusion Without Burnout

Practical Tools for Supporting Children with Additional Support Needs

Core Mindset Shift

Challenging behaviour is communication.

Instead of asking:

“How do we stop this?”

Ask:

“What is the child trying to communicate?”

Common messages behind behaviour:

- “This is overwhelming.”
- “I don’t have the skill for this yet.”
- “I need help.”
- “Transitions feel hard.”
- “I don’t know what’s expected.”

When we shift our lens, we move from reaction to strategy.

Prevention First: Reduce Escalation Before It Starts

Most behaviour escalates in predictable hot spots:

- Transitions
- Waiting
- Lining up
- Clean-up
- Loud environments
- Large group time

Adjust the routine before adjusting the child.

Simple prevention strategies:

- Visual schedules
- 2-minute warnings
- Reduced waiting time
- Assigned small jobs
- Clear physical boundaries
- Calm space access

Small environmental adjustments create big behavioural shifts.

In-the-Moment De-Escalation

When behaviour escalates, your goal is:

- Safety
- Regulation
- Containment
- Dignity

Not teaching. Not consequences. Not lectures.

4-Step De-Escalation Model

1. Regulate yourself
2. Name the feeling
3. State the boundary
4. Offer a safe choice

Example:

“You’re frustrated. We’re keeping everyone safe. You can sit with me or use the calm space.”

Shorter language supports calmer brains.

After the Incident: Reset & Repair

De-escalation ends the moment.

What you do after determines whether it repeats.

1. Regulate
Stay calm and nearby.
2. Repair
Restore safety and connection.
3. Reflect (later)
“What can we try next time?”
4. Debrief (team – 2 minutes)
Trigger → What helped → What to adjust
5. Adjust one thing
Routine, transition, environment, or staffing support.
6. Document with purpose
Context + staff response + follow-up plan.

Incidents give information. Use it.

Documentation That Protects Your Centre

Strong documentation:

- Is objective
- Describes observable behaviour
- Includes context
- Records staff response
- Shows a follow-up plan

Use the ABC format:

- A – What happened before
- B – What the child did
- C – What staff did + result

Clear documentation reduces emotional family conversations and protects staff.

Calm, Clear Family Communication

Use this structure:

1. What we're noticing
2. What we're doing
3. What we'll monitor

Example:

"We're noticing transitions after outdoor play are challenging. We're introducing a visual timer and smaller clean-up roles. We'll monitor this over the next week."

Families respond best when they see a plan.

7-Day Action Plan

This week:

- Identify one hot spot
- Standardize one de-escalation script
- Adjust one transition
- Review documentation language
- Debrief one repeated incident differently

Inclusion improves through small, consistent adjustments.