

# What is the Thrive Approach?

**‘Every behaviour is a kind of communication.’**

Paul Watzlawick, family therapist, psychologist, communication theorist and philosopher.

The Thrive approach is a dynamic, development and trauma-sensitive approach to meeting the emotional and social needs of children and young people. It is proven to improve attendance, behaviour and learning outcomes.

# The Thrive Developmental Model

Each strand of the spiral broadly matches the changes that are taking place in the brain and body of a growing child.

When adults in a child's life are unable to support them with the support and experiences they need at the right time, they are left with gaps in their social and emotional development.

The impact of these gaps varies. It is usually greatest amongst those who have suffered abuse, trauma and neglect during the first three years of life.

**We can help children to repair these developmental gaps through giving them appropriate relational experiences, repeated over time.**



Interdependence	11 - 25 years
Skills and Structure	7 - 11 years
Power and Identity	3 - 7 years
Thinking	18 months - 3 years
Doing	6 - 18 months
Being	0 - 18 months

**Connection before  
correction.**

# Maintaining an Attitude of PACE

## Playfulness

Find moments of joy, share humour, lighten your tone and expression and find fun in interactions.

## Acceptance

Accept each other's thoughts and feelings, showing understanding. No emotion is wrong.

## Curiosity

Be curious about the child's experience without judgement. Wonder aloud what might be going on for the child, showing genuine interest.

## Empathy

Connect with how they are feeling by showing empathy and compassion. Show that you want to understand what they are experiencing, and that you care and want to help them.

# The Four Vital Relational Functions (VRFs)

## Attunement

Be alert and responsive to the feelings and experience of the child. Show you understand their emotional state through **facial expressions, body language and gestures** to reflect how you imagine they are feeling.

## Validation

Show you understand the experience and perspective of the child and recognise the validity of their feelings.

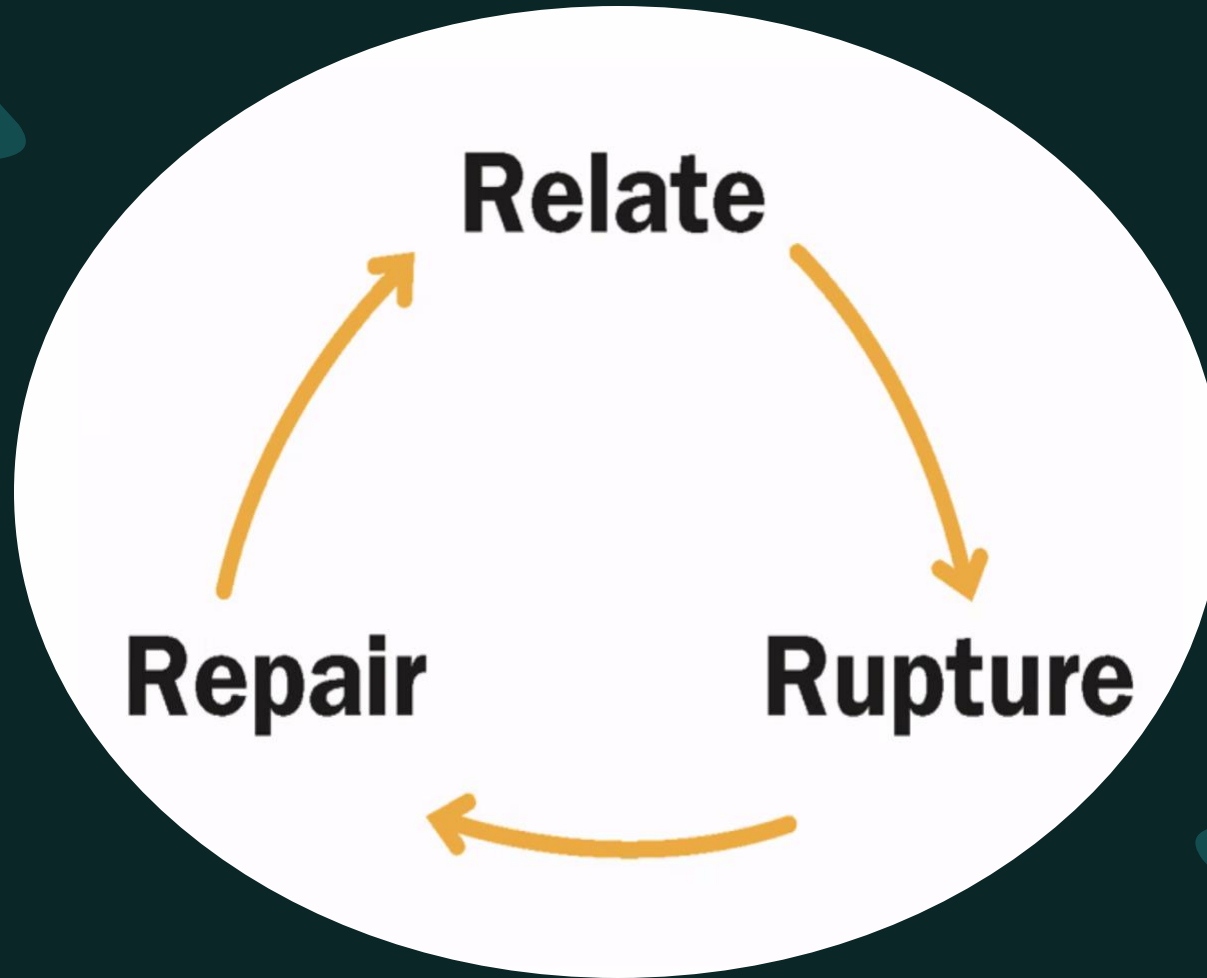
➤ Use sentence starters: *I am wondering...I am imagining...I am noticing...* (WIN)

## Containment

Catch and match the intensity of their feelings, showing you can bear it. Help the child to digest their emotions and realise it is a survivable experience.

## Regulation

Help bring the child into a state of calm and back to their window of tolerance by soothing their distress or engaging their interests if they shut down.



# The Relate- Rupture- Repair cycle

## Relate

The times in a relationship when we feel connected and attuned with one another, things are going well, and we are making efforts to maintain this positive and mutually beneficial relationship. Caregivers and their infants start building this bridge from before the baby is born and continue to build it after birth and throughout the child's life.

## Rupture

Those times in a relationship where there is a misunderstanding or misattunement, in other words, when we don't get it right for the other person and we feel like the relationship experiences a setback. Although we might think of ruptures as being problematic and therefore to be avoided where possible, in fact, they are an inevitable part of any relationship. They become a crucial component in the relationship when the rupture is subsequently repaired because this helps to build the child's resilience.

## Repair

This involves correcting the misunderstanding or misattunement of the rupture by trying to share understanding of intentions, feelings, thoughts and actions in order to come back into the relationship. The repair part of the cycle is an essential component of healthy growth, boosting our resilience and helping us to cope with challenges by giving us greater trust that difficulties can be resolved.