Words for Grown-Ups

BRIAN'S

Thoughts, ideas and questions

Use these as starting points, not lines to recite. Keep the child's usual communication available, adapt the words to their age and preferences, and allow time or no answer.

When I am unsure

"I wonder what might be on your mind. You can tell me, show me, point, type, use your device, or pass."

When you have an idea

"Would you like me to listen, help make a plan, or just hear your idea?"

When something feels worrying

"Would information, more time, a plan, company, or a pause be useful?"

When the answer is not clear

"It is okay not to know yet. We can find out together, or leave it for now."

When I may have guessed wrong

"I made a guess. You can correct me in any way that works for you."

When words are hard

"You do not have to explain it out loud. I can wait while you show me another way."

A child can respond through speech, AAC, writing, gesture, movement, an object, or not at all.

Words for Grown-Ups

WAVES

Body signals, feelings and support

Use these as starting points, not lines to recite. Keep the child's usual communication available, adapt the words to their age and preferences, and allow time or no answer.

When something seems different

"I might be wrong, but something seems different. Would support help?"

Offering support

"Would quiet, space, movement, a break, more time, help, or something else work?"

When the room feels too much

"I can lower the noise, light or number of things happening. Which change would help?"

Checking body needs

"Would food, drink, the toilet, rest, pain help, or another body need be important?"

When you do not want to answer

"You do not have to name a feeling. I can still help make things easier."

When pain or illness may be involved

"Your body matters. I will help check what is wrong and get the right support."

A child can respond through speech, AAC, writing, gesture, movement, an object, or not at all.

Words for Grown-Ups

CIRCLES

Routines, what happens next and change

Use these as starting points, not lines to recite. Keep the child's usual communication available, adapt the words to their age and preferences, and allow time or no answer.

When the plan changes

"The plan has changed. We were going to ____. Now we will ____. I can show you."

Explaining what stays the same

"This part is different. These parts are staying the same: ____."

Showing the sequence

"Now ____. Next ____. After that ____. Would you like to see it written or shown?"

When you need more time

"You can have more time. Tell or show me when you are ready, or if you need another plan."

When a routine cannot happen

"I know you expected ____. It is not happening today. Here are the choices we can offer."

When I cannot promise the exact time

"I do not know the exact time yet. I will tell you when I know, and show what we know now."

A child can respond through speech, AAC, writing, gesture, movement, an object, or not at all.

Words for Grown-Ups

BRIDGES

Interests, relationships and connection

Use these as starting points, not lines to recite. Keep the child's usual communication available, adapt the words to their age and preferences, and allow time or no answer.

Inviting connection

"Would you like me to join in, watch, listen, play alongside you, or give you space?"

Following an interest

"Would you like to show me what you enjoy? You can choose how much to share."

When we like different things

"We can enjoy different things and still spend time together."

When speaking is not the way

"We can connect through a message, a picture, a game, music, quiet company, or another way."

When touch or eye contact is not wanted

"You do not need to hug or look at me to show that you are here."

After a difficult moment

"I care about you. We can talk later, use another way, or leave the conversation for now."

A child can respond through speech, AAC, writing, gesture, movement, an object, or not at all.