

Children's Mental Health Week 6th - 12th February 2023

Let's Connect



BCCS

a children's charity for
Essex and East London

Primary Resources

Starter ideas for conversations and activities

This year's theme for Children's Mental Health Week is 'Let's Connect'. At BCCS we know all about connecting with children and young people, their families and school staff – we do it every day. We know that you do too and that the first time you connect with your class each day is during registration time. A time not only to see who is present but to check-in emotionally, to chat and to set the tone for the rest of the school day.



What we are really talking about here is social connection – feeling close to others. Feeling loved, cared for and valued in our relationships. Most people want to be accepted just the way they are, without judgement, without being expected to change. Social connection can add purpose and meaning to life – this can be family, friends and you at school. These connections can also help all of us to cope when life feels difficult. Connection makes us stronger.

So, we have prepared a few prompts for you to start a conversation about connection or to offer a connection activity. All are simple, quick ideas that use minimal resources. A great way for you and your class to be part of the 2023 Children's Mental Health Week and get connecting!



01277 712022



www.bccs.org.uk



headoffice@bccs.org.uk



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BCCS, 133 High Street, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9AB

Brentwood Catholic Children's Society - Registered Charity Number: 1000661

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Activity 1

Draw a picture/write a poem/write a short story about someone who you like to connect with – it could be a parent, extended family member, teacher or even a pet. Show me why they are important to you.

Activity 2

Lego links – provide a selection of Lego bricks for each pair of children. The children take it in turns to do the following:
Choose a Lego brick to represent each member of your family.
Tell your partner who everyone is and then experiment with connecting the bricks e.g., connect you and your cat.
What does that connection mean to you?
What happens if you connect all the bricks together? i.e., are the people stronger if they are all connected?
If a brick is on its own, what do you think that lack of connection feels like?

Activity 3

Human Knot Game – 10 children at a time. Purpose of the game is to work collaboratively, for everyone to play an equal part, to experience fun connecting with others and also tolerance of others. After the activity, discuss how the children felt – name any emotions that came up. How was it to work so closely with others?

Instructions: Have the entire group of children stand in a circle facing each other. Each of the children should reach out their left hand and grab a hold of another child's hand. Once all hands have been connected, the children should reach out their right hand to grab a different child's hand. If it becomes too difficult for them to hold hands, you need to break into multiple circles. When all the children have been connected, they must slowly begin to unwind the massive human knot that they've become. This will require twisting, crawling, walking through hoops of arms, and more! But remember, they cannot let go of one another's hands at any time.



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Activity 4

Origami finger game – each child makes a finger game which reveals some facts about themselves. One child holds the finger game and the other gives a number which will then reveal a fact e.g., 5 equals “I like to play football”, 2 reveals “I hate ice-cream” etc. Visit Hellokids.com and look for the simple video on how to craft the origami finger game.

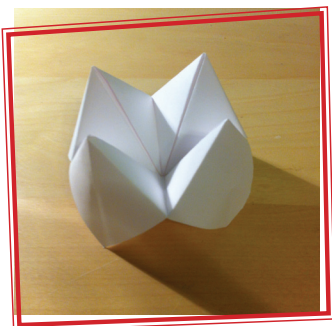
Activity 5

Bring your favourite cuddly toy into school tomorrow!
Get each child to introduce their cuddly and what they mean to them.
Why can these toys be important? e.g., they provide security at night, they may be a transitional object that aids movement from place to place, they may have been gifted by a special person.

Activity 6

Mandala colouring – mandalas have many meanings but they can symbolise connections within their intricate patterns. Some may believe that all things are connected and silently colouring a mandala pattern can allow children to experience and be part of this connectivity.
Visit supercoloring.com for free Mandala colouring pages – one of many free websites where each child can receive a printed black and white mandala ready for whatever colours they choose.
You may like to explore with the class how it felt to sit in silence and colour.
What did they notice about themselves and others?
How did it feel to be quiet but with other people – could they still experience a connection during the collective activity?

We hope that your class has enjoyed connecting with each other while doing some of our activities.
Keep up to date with our work by visiting our website or following us on social media.
Thank you for your focus on children's mental health this week.



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