

Before I Offer *Comforting Touch*

A quick reflection checklist for
early childhood educators



This checklist is here to help you pause for a moment and think through what the child in front of you needs right now. There is no single right answer for every situation, but taking a moment to notice can help you make thoughtful, child-centred decisions.



What is happening for this child right now?

Are they distressed, hurt, overwhelmed, seeking reassurance, needing help to move safely, or simply wanting closeness?



Is the child moving towards connection?

Are they reaching for me, leaning in, holding out their hand, asking to be picked up, or showing another clear sign that closeness is welcome?



What is their body telling me once contact begins?

Are they softening and settling, or are they stiffening, pulling away, turning their face or trying to move out of the interaction?



What is the purpose of the touch?

Is it helping with comfort, safety, care or wellbeing, or am I doing it from habit because this is how I usually respond?



Does the contact make sense for this child and this situation?

Consider their age, developmental stage, communication, individual needs and what is happening around them.

Pause. Notice. Then respond.



Is there a less intrusive response that may work just as well?

Sometimes sitting nearby, offering a hand, reducing language, changing the environment or giving more space may be enough.



Is there an immediate safety risk?

If the child or someone else may be hurt, safety becomes the priority and physical intervention may be necessary, using only the support needed to interrupt the danger.



Would this interaction make sense to another educator or family member observing it?

Could I clearly explain why I responded in this way?



Do I need to adjust or stop?

Keep noticing the child throughout the interaction, because what they need can change quickly.



**You know this child.
You know your setting.**

Trust your knowledge,
use this checklist to
support your thinking,
and never stop asking
what this child needs
right now.



Safe practice is not about avoiding connection.
It is about making thoughtful, child-centred
decisions in the moment.



Professional learning resource only. Follow your service policies.
Approved Provider guidance and current regulatory requirements.