

# Interact with every student

## Practice brief

### The practice

Teachers cultivate meaningful relationships by interacting positively and respectfully with every student.

### How does it help?

Meaningful teacher-student relationships have a positive influence on academic achievement and engagement, and promote social and emotional development for all students including those on the autism spectrum. Research suggests positive social contact and talk supporting play and peer relations has a positive effect on the social-emotional competence of students on the spectrum. Teachers can cultivate meaningful relationships with students on the spectrum by consistently interacting positively and respectfully, and promoting social-emotional competence via talk supporting play and relationships as often as possible.

### What is it?

Meaningful teacher-student relationships are mutually respectful and supportive. These relationships positively influence student achievement, engagement, and promote social and emotional development. Interactions can be verbal, non-verbal, or both.

### How does it work?

Ways of fostering meaningful relationships include:

- welcoming the student at the start of the day
- creating/identifying multiple opportunities for genuine interaction
- focusing on a topic/s the student is interested in
- paying attention to the student's interaction and responding accordingly.

Every teacher-student interaction is an opportunity to develop and enhance teacher-student relationships.

### How do I do it?

- Identify opportunities for teacher-student interaction.
- Engage in frequent one-to-one interactions with the student.
- Follow the student's lead during interactions, including play.



**inclusion ED**  
supporting diverse learners

## It works better if:

- there are frequent one-to-one interactions which include supporting play and peer interactions
- the teacher takes student's unique abilities, interests, and needs into account when identifying and engaging in interactions
- the student signals (possibly non-verbally) that he/she is ready to engage in an interaction.

## It doesn't work if:

- the teacher insists on engaging with a student who shows (verbally or non-verbally) that he/she is not interested in interacting or that the interaction is finished
- the teacher engages in an interaction while angry or frustrated.

## How will I know if it's working?

The student willingly engages in interactions and from time to time reciprocates.

## Where can I go to find out more?

- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning: "Building Positive Teacher-Child Relationships" <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/wwb12.pdf>
- The Australian Society for Evidence Based Teaching: "What Everyone Needs to Know About High-Performance, Teacher Student Relationships" <http://www.evidencebasedteaching.org.au/crash-course-evidence-based-teaching/teacher-student-relationships/>
- American Psychological Society: "Improving Students' Relationships with Teachers to Provide Essential Supports for Learning" <http://www.apa.org/education/k12/relationships.aspx>

## Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST)

Implementing this practice will meet the following Australian Professional Standards for Teachers:

- 1.6 – Strategies to support full participation of students with disability
- 4.1 – Support student participation

