



THE ARCHETYPE APPROACH / CASE STUDY LIBRARY

AA-CS-004

Connection Before Correction

How Relational Bridging Reduced Physical Behaviour

CASE TYPE	Communication & Social Integration
AGE / CONTEXT	2 years - integrating
DATE RANGE	01/26-05/26
PRACTICE SITE	Children of Towan Kindergarten
PRACTITIONER	Oliver Riddett

EMERGING AA PRINCIPLE

When social connection becomes more accessible, physical behaviour can become less necessary.

OBSERVE

What is happening?

RECOGNISE

What pattern is this?

BALANCE

What is missing?

INTEGRATE

What has emerged?

Observe -> Recognise -> Balance -> Integrate

What was happening?

The pattern as it first appeared



INITIAL PRESENTATION

A child presented with limited expressive language and frequent biting during peer interaction. Biting most commonly followed moments of social rejection, blocked access or difficulty entering play with other children.

RECURRING PATTERNS

- Watching peers before approaching
- Biting following failed connection attempts
- Difficulty entering shared play
- Frustration when misunderstood
- Strong social motivation
- Limited verbal communication
- Physical responses during emotional escalation

OBSERVABLE BEHAVIOURS

The child frequently sought proximity to other children but struggled to establish successful interaction. Attempts to connect could end in frustration, with biting occurring when social access was blocked or unsuccessful.

CONTEXTS AND TRIGGERS

- Social rejection
- Difficulty entering play
- Rapid peer interactions
- Limited communication opportunities
- High social demand without support

WHAT WAS THE CHILD SHOWING US?

The child appeared highly motivated to connect with others but lacked the communication and relational tools needed to bridge observation into participation successfully.

What pattern emerged?

Seeing beneath the behaviour

**PRIMARY PATTERN**

Watcher / Friend imbalance

SUPPORTING PATTERN

Mover impulsivity under stress

BRIDGING FUNCTION

Friend through supported relational entry

SHADOW / IMBALANCE PRESENTATION

The child observed social opportunities carefully but struggled to enter them successfully. When connection attempts failed, frustration could overtake communication, resulting in impulsive physical responses.

POSSIBLE UNDERLYING NEEDS

- Supported peer connection
- Communication scaffolding
- Relational bridging
- Emotional containment
- Language support
- Co-regulated interaction
- Safe entry into play
- Confidence expressing needs

DEVELOPMENTAL UNDERSTANDING

The biting appeared less connected to aggression without purpose and more connected to unsuccessful attempts to achieve social connection. Social motivation remained visible throughout observations.

PERCEPTION SHIFT

The key perception shift was from 'This child is biting other children' to 'This child is repeatedly reaching for connection without a reliable route into it.'

What was introduced?

Keeping the strength - widening access



ADULT APPROACH

- Respond calmly and neutrally to biting while protecting all children.
- Interpret the social context before moving to correction.
- Actively bridge the child into peer interaction.
- Narrate feelings, intentions and simple language during social moments.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLAY ADJUSTMENTS

- Smaller interaction groups
- Slower-paced peer engagement
- Increased adult presence during social play
- Supported parallel play moving toward interaction
- Shared sensory and cause-and-effect games

BALANCING RELATIONSHIP

Watcher -> Friend

Adult support provided a safe route from observing peers to entering play and expressing needs.

BALANCING SEQUENCE

Watch -> Connect -> Express -> Participate

The aim was not simply to stop biting. It was to make connection and communication more available before frustration reached the body.

What became newly available?

Growth without losing the original strength



OBSERVABLE CHANGE

Over time the child demonstrated reduced biting frequency, greater tolerance during peer interaction, increased use of single-word communication and stronger engagement in shared play.

WHAT BECAME VISIBLE

- Improved ability to manage frustration during social situations
- Greater confidence approaching peers
- Increased involvement in shared play
- More verbal ways of gaining attention
- Reduced reliance on physical behaviour to communicate needs
- Greater tolerance of waiting, turn-taking and social uncertainty

WHAT EMERGED OVER TIME?

As relational access increased, communication developed alongside it. The child became increasingly able to gain connection through language and participation rather than physical behaviour.

INTEGRATION

Connection and communication began to replace physical escalation as routes into relationship.



Connection Before Correction

Behaviour that looks purely aggressive may sometimes emerge from unsuccessful attempts at connection. When belonging and communication become more accessible, physical behaviour can reduce as safer routes into relationship develop.

AA SNAPSHOT

PRIMARY PATTERN

Watcher / Friend

BALANCING RELATIONSHIP

Watcher -> Friend

BALANCING STRATEGY

Relational bridging and communication scaffolding

CASE CATEGORY

Communication & Social Integration

SUPPORTING PATTERN

Mover under stress

MAIN PRESENTATION

Biting following failed social connection attempts

OUTCOME THEME

Connection supporting communication

AGE / CONTEXT

2 years - integrating

CLOSING REFLECTION

“Children do not unfold through correction alone. They unfold through relationship, balance, safety, rhythm and being deeply seen.”

AA TAGS

Watcher

Friend

Mover

Belonging

Communication

Peer Relationships

Social Participation

Relational Safety

Biting

Supported Play Entry

AA EVIDENCE THEMES

- Behaviour reveals perception
- Connection before correction
- Belonging supports development
- Communication emerges through relationship
- Co-regulation before independence
- Balance rather than correction

AA DEVELOPMENTAL REFLECTION | EVIDENCE STRENGTH: 5 / 5

This is a strong early case because the recurring timing of the biting gave the behaviour a clear relational context. The reduction in biting occurred alongside increased peer access and emerging single-word communication, which makes the developmental sequence particularly useful. Repeated cases with similar social-entry patterns would strengthen the claim beyond this individual child.