

All children are different and have different needs.

Being a good adult for children is not always easy. All children are different and have different needs. Children's needs also vary over time. We would very much like to be able to meet the unique child according to his or her unique needs. This is not always possible for us.

Most children are quite adaptable. They understand that they must sacrifice some of their own needs when they are in the company with others. They must wait their turn, participate in activities they don't really want to, sit still even though it's more fun to play. They manage, they can do it, and they are greeted with an affirming look.

This can be hard for other children. Sitting still is not always a real choice. Listening or focusing on something you are not interested in can be almost impossible and is not always a matter of will. These children often need us to adjust ourselves, and for us to make adjustments to their surroundings, rather than *them* having to constantly work to adjust.

Some children adjust themselves a little too well. It may look as though everything is fine, but in reality they make too many compromises regarding their own needs. It is a bit like the turtle that withdraws into its shell to be safe. It does not cause problems for others, but it is too cramped for development in there. These children need to be seen and met according to their needs, even if they do not ask for it.

As human beings, we are equipped with the ability to read such needs in others. From time to time, we can find ourselves in the middle of a chaotic situation where several children both have individual starting points and individual needs at the same time. Then what do we do?

Example:

Thinking: "Ugh, there's a lot going on here at once now. First, I must intervene and stop what could hurt someone":
Says: Sofie – it's not okay to do that, come to me and sit here, and breathe calmly while you count to 20. ... Emma, I noticed that what happened now was very painful for you. It shouldn't be like this. Are you all right? (Says to the others in the room:) Let's continue with the activity. - Sofie, I understand that you were disappointed and angry, it's no wonder. Still, you can't do these things to Emma. Do you want to try to repair? Should we find out how you can make amends?"

Some children have needs that are a little difficult to understand. What has worked well for you with other children does not work well with this child. Detective work is needed. In which situations does the child function well? What characterizes these situations? What happened before, during and after a positive situation that can help us understand why it went well? Is this something we can try to facilitate?

Some children can trigger something in you that makes it difficult for you to be a good adult for *this* child. It can be related to something in our own lives when we grew up, it can be related to our life situation here and now, or it can be related to your personalities. Whatever reason we might have we know that children have a healthier development when they feel appreciated and liked. This is quite logical. Therefore, we should try to like all the children we are responsible for.

We shouldn't try to manage to meet all everyone's needs all the time. Children understand that this is not always possible. However, when we notice that we don't suffice in situations that are hard for a child, we should talk to the child afterwards. Tell the child that we noticed what the child needed and that we understand that the child felt that way. And that we hope we can manage better next time.

Children need adults who are good enough, not adults who are perfect.