



## *Held in Mind*

Supporting Children With Relational And Attachment Difficulties:  
'Held in Mind' Approach

### What Does 'Held in Mind' Mean?

- The idea comes from attachment theory - children feel secure when they know adults think about them even when they are not physically present.
- For children with relational difficulties, this reassurance helps them feel valued, remembered and safe.
- It communicates, *"You matter to me, I notice you and I will be here for you"*.

### Why it Matters in School

- Builds trust between child and adult.
- Reduces anxiety and separation fears.
- Strengthens the child's sense of belonging in the classroom.
- Encourages emotional regulation and resilience.

### Examples of 'Held in Mind' Language

Teachers can use short, everyday phrases which show the child they are remembered and valued:

#### *Before Separation*

- "I'll be thinking about you while you're at lunch."
- "I'll keep your picture safe on my desk until you come back."
- "I'll be here when you return from playtime."



### *During the Day*

- "I wondered how you were getting on with your drawing."
- "I thought of you when I saw the book about dinosaurs."
- "I saved a sticker for you because I knew you'd like it."

### *After Absence or Transition*

- "I missed you yesterday and I'm glad you're back."
- "I kept your seat ready for you."
- "I was looking forward to seeing you today."

### *Building Anticipation*

- "I'm excited to see what you'll make in art tomorrow."
- "I'll be waiting to hear your story after break."
- "I'll remember to check in with you after maths."

### Practical Classroom Strategies

- Transitional objects: Let the child leave something small with the teacher (for example, a drawing) and collect it later.
- Visual reminders: Display the child's work prominently to show they are valued.
- Predictable routines: Reinforce that the teacher will be there at key times (start of day, after lunch, home time).
- Personal notes: Write a short message for the child to read later ("I'll see you after story time").