Children's Therapy

Playful Steps

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANCY AND COACHING

2027



COACHING AND MENTORING



Coaching and training packages can be tailored to suit individual services.

Professional workshops on a topic of choice, including slides and resources. Examples include:

- Connection Before Correction – The Power of Relationships in
- Education
- Beyond the Behaviour – Understanding Children's Emotional and
- Behavioural Needs
- The Power of Play – Supporting Social and Emotional Development
- From Dysregulation to Connection – Practical Strategies for Emotional Regulation
- Empathy with Limits – Building Safe, Respectful and Predictable Classrooms
- Supporting Neurodivergent Learners – Inclusive, Strengths-Based Classroom Practice

Classroom Connection Coaching (4–6 sessions)
Individualised coaching that supports educators to strengthen relationships, engagement and emotional regulation within their classroom. Includes classroom observation, collaborative goal setting, modelling of relational strategies, reflective discussions and follow-up mentoring.

Play-Based Social and Emotional Learning (6 weeks)
Support teachers to incorporate therapeutic play experiences into everyday classroom routines to strengthen children's emotional literacy, communication, confidence and peer relationships. Includes activity planning, in-class modelling, teacher coaching and resource recommendations.

Supporting Complex Needs in the Classroom (Individualised)
Work collaboratively with teachers and wellbeing teams to better understand children's individual needs and develop practical, inclusive classroom approaches. Includes observation, collaborative planning, modelling, strategy development and review.

Reflective Practice and Educator Wellbeing (Ongoing)
Facilitate reflective discussions that help educators explore challenging classroom situations, recognise their own emotional responses and strengthen their confidence in responding to children's needs. Suitable for individual teachers, teaching teams and school wellbeing staff.

TORA/ CORA

A RELATIONSHIP-BASED FRAMEWORK FOR THERAPEUTIC, TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE, AND EMOTIONALLY SAFE PRACTICE WITH CHILDREN



Drawing on her background as a teacher, Cathi offers a unique and practical perspective, integrating the power of non-directive play therapy into everyday practice. She is passionate about sharing this approach with educators, providing fresh, engaging, and developmentally informed strategies that can be meaningfully applied in the classroom.

The Teacher's Optimal Relationship Approach (TORA), developed by Dr Kate Renshaw, is a school-based early intervention mental health and wellbeing strategy that supports teachers to build therapeutic, playful, and emotionally safe relationships with children within everyday school interactions.

The Contextualised Optimal Relationship Approach (CORA) evolved from TORA into a broader relationship-based framework for professionals working with children across many settings, including education, allied health, healthcare, social work, and recreation. CORA helps adults create safer, calmer, and more connected interactions with children who may feel anxious, dysregulated, resistant, or vulnerable. Its central principle is that the relationship itself becomes the intervention.

As a certified TORA and CORA trainer, Cathi supports professionals to build strong, relationship-based connections with children through a holistic approach to wellbeing and learning. She provides practical, easy-to-implement strategies that fit seamlessly into everyday interactions - enhancing existing practice rather than adding extra tasks - so teachers and professionals can confidently support children to feel safe, understood, and engaged. She provides certification to participants who successfully complete the training program.

See below for further information about TORA and CORA

Group Therapy Programs

Playful Steps Children's Therapy can visit schools to offer small group programs to support skills development, engagement, regulation & positive peer relationships with the aim of building teacher capacity to incorporate learning and skills into everyday classroom routines and learning.

Program: A structured 6-week small group intervention individually tailored to meet the needs of students and classes at each service, including structured skill teaching, group activities, reflection, and practical classroom transfer strategies.

Who This Program Supports:

Group therapy sessions provide children with focused opportunities to develop vital social, emotional, language, cognitive and physical skills in a supportive environment. With smaller group sizes, students benefit from increased individual attention, time to practice skills while building positive peer relationships. Importantly, involving a teacher in these groups not only develops their capacity but also facilitates the transfer of these skills back into the classroom setting.

School Benefits: A 6-week group program provides a focused, high-impact early intervention that builds social, motor, and emotional skills in a short timeframe while remaining cost-effective and easy to integrate into school schedules."

Contact Cathi
0412455959

cathi.playfulsteps@gmail.com

Social Connection...Motor skills...Lego Therapy... Yoga and Mindfulness... Fun With Food



Parenting Workshops



Workshops combine everyday examples, opportunities for reflection and realistic strategies that families can try at home. Sessions emphasise connection, understanding and respectful communication. Parenting workshops can be developed around current school or kindergarten community needs.



Ideas may include:

- Understanding Your Child's Emotional World - Looking Beyond Behaviour
- The Power of Empathy - Helping Children Feel Heard and Understood
- Loving Limits, Safe Boundaries - Setting Limits with Empathy and Confidence
- The Power of Play - Connecting with Your Child Through Play
- Connection Before Correction - Building Stronger Relationships Through Everyday Moments

Accessible, strength-based sessions that help families understand children's emotional and developmental needs and build connection at home.

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Designed for all educators and students, TORA aligns with the Victorian Curriculum, Early Years Learning Framework and Victorian Department of Education wellbeing and inclusion priorities.

Unlike traditional programs, TORA does not require additional lessons or curriculum planning. Instead, educators learn to embed therapeutic relational skills into everyday interactions, creating a sustainable shift in practice – a new way of being, rather than doing.

What Does TORA Include?

- Professional Learning: Interactive training exploring brain and behaviour science, attachment, relationships and eight practical relational skills.
- Coaching and Mentoring: Classroom observations, individualised feedback and reflective practice to build educator confidence and embed learning.
- Measuring Outcomes: Pre- and post-assessment measures to monitor student wellbeing, social connectedness and teacher–student relationships, supporting evaluation and school improvement planning.
- Professional Certification: Educators demonstrating competency may achieve Certified TORA Teacher© or Certified Education Support© recognition, including a digital credential.
- Ongoing Support: Access to professional resources, networking, reflective practice and continued facilitator guidance.

Flexible and Sustainable

TORA offers a flexible, low-to-moderate time commitment and can be tailored to individual school needs. Training and coaching are delivered by Master's-qualified Registered Play Therapists with additional TORA certification.

TORA supports educators to build stronger connections, create emotionally safe learning environments and foster positive outcomes for the whole school community.

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Eight Practical Relational Skills

At the heart of TORA are eight relational skills:

- *Presence and Attunement*
- *Congruence*
- *Tracking*
- *Empathic Responding*
- *Acceptance*
- *Structuring*
- *Therapeutic Limit Setting*
- *Joining*
- *Playfulness.*

Through interactive professional learning, practical demonstrations and classroom-based coaching, educators develop the confidence to embed these therapeutic skills into everyday teaching interactions. This approach strengthens teacher–student relationships, promotes emotional safety and regulation, and creates inclusive, supportive learning environments where children feel connected, understood and ready to learn.

Contact Cathi to see how TORA/ CORA and support professionals, children and families at your service.



Contact Details

www.playfulsteps.com.au

cathi.playfulsteps@gmail.com

67 Wallace St
Beaconsfied 3806
0412455959