

Bias Check in Support

When need is shaped by perception

This quick reflection helps adults notice whether support is being shaped by how a child appears, rather than what they need.

Need should not have to look a certain way to be believed.

Before deciding a child is “fine”

- ☐ What effort might I not be seeing?
- ☐ Are they coping, or just complying?
- ☐ Are they masking distress?
- ☐ Have I checked privately?
- ☐ Am I assuming independence because they are quiet?

Some children look capable because they have learned not to show struggle.

Before deciding a child is “difficult”

- ☐ What might this behaviour be communicating?
- ☐ Have I considered tiredness, overwhelm, or unmet need?
- ☐ Is this a response to stress, not defiance?
- ☐ Am I responding to the label or the need?
- ☐ Has the environment changed?

Behaviour is often the visible part of an invisible load.

Before making support decisions

- ☐ Is this based on evidence of need?
- ☐ Or based on how polite the child appears?
- ☐ Is support easier to give when the child is “manageable”?
- ☐ Are children who mask well being overlooked?
- ☐ Are children who express distress being judged instead of understood?

Support should not depend on being easy to support.

Need can look quiet.
Need can look messy.
Need can look like compliance.
Need can look like resistance.

Support should follow need - not perception.