



Bee
Netball

BEEELONGING

A guide to helping children thrive in sport.

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Why Does Belonging Matter?



Improved attendance



Improved engagement



“Most young children’s misbehaviour is a sort of ‘code’ designed to let you know that they don’t feel a sense of belonging & need your attention, connection, time & teaching.”

Dr. Jane Nelson



Improved behaviour



Improved development

Why Beeloving?

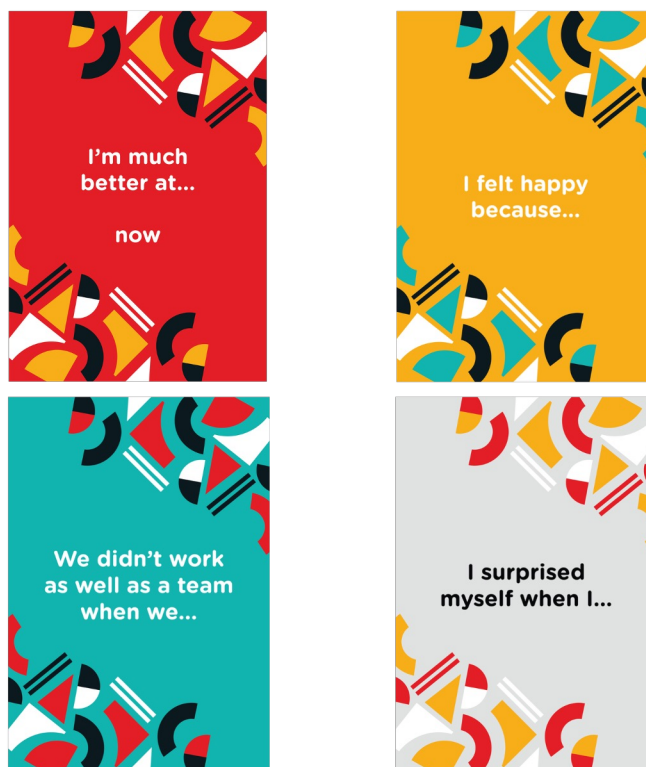
Creating a positive and supportive culture at Bee Netball is essential for fostering a strong sense of belonging within a group. This begins by creating an environment where all children feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, feelings, and experiences and where their differences are celebrated and respected. A psychologically safe space encourages open communication, allowing children to be their authentic selves without fear of judgment or exclusion.

Two great tools you can use to create a sense of belonging at Bee Netball are:

The Beeliefs



Review & Reflect Cards





Your Role

Bee Leaders play a vital role in setting the tone for the group culture and should lead by example, demonstrating positive behaviours such as **fairness, respect, and empathy** towards all members.

Modelling these desired behaviours inspires children to follow suit and helps to create a culture of respect and inclusivity.



Creating a Child Centred Environment



**Helps children feel
like they Beelong**



**Engages parents
and carers**



**Sets clear
expectations**



**Embeds the Bee Netball
philosophy, Beeliefs and
Play Their Way**



OUR Beeliefs



Bee proud.

Bees are proud of their efforts and love their game.



Bee fair.

Bees play fair and treat others as they would like to be treated.

Bee friendly.

Bees welcome anyone who wants to play netball.



Bee strong.

Bees are independent and determined and always try their best.



Bee yourself.

Bees are true to who they are and let other people be who they are.



Bee together.

Bees work for the team and support everyone.



Bee Leaders can implement strategies, such as setting clear expectations or using positive reinforcement, by referring to

Our Beeliefs



Applying Our Beeliefs

TOP TIP
Pick 1 Beelief to focus on each session



Bee proud.

Bees are proud of their efforts and love their game.

If a child is really trying in an activity remind them to be proud of their achievement.

If a child is struggling to stay engaged, the Bee Leader can refer to Bee Strong, reminding them that trying their best, even when things feel challenging, is part of the game.

Bee strong.

Bees are independent and determined and always try their best.



Bee together.

Bees work for the team and support everyone.

Encouraging teamwork and respect, such as listening when others speak and celebrating each other's successes.

If a child is honest about touching the ball before it went out of play. *"That was a fantastic example of Bee Fair—well done for playing by the rules and supporting your teammates!"*



Bee fair.

Bees play fair and treat others as they would like to be treated.

Bee friendly.

Bees welcome anyone who wants to play netball.



If a child helps a teammate who is struggling, say, *"That was a brilliant example of Bee Friendly—well done for supporting your teammate!"*

Encourage the children to talk about what they enjoy and express themselves in sessions.



Bee yourself.

Bees are true to who they are and let other people be who they are.



Play Their Way

The Play Their Way movement embodies the child-first coaching style that we want to see Bee Leaders delivering. It promotes 3 simple, but critical factors to be aware of when engaging with children.



The 3 factors are informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and they state that every child has a right to play, develop, and be heard.

This is more commonly known as **Voice, Choice and Journey**.



Voice

Children and young people have the right to **express their views** which are acted on together in a meaningful way.

Children and young people have the right to play and **shape what play looks like**.



Choice



Journey

Children and young people have the right to **develop holistically**, in their own way.

Top Tips on Engaging Children & Helpers

Here are some other practical tips from Bee Leaders on ways to create a child centred environment and engage both children and parents/carers to support Belonging at your sessions.



Get Ahead of the Game

“Before a child comes to the session you could send photos of the Bee Leaders and the activity space. That could help children who are nervous or struggle with new environments to settle in quicker and be more engaged.

Can you invite a child and their parent/carer to come and have a look round or watch a session before joining?

Could you consider whether parents/carers fill in a ‘passport’ explaining the young person’s needs, so leaders are aware before a session. (template available).”



Buddy System



“We have a buddy system, pairing children up, especially those who may need extra support or are new. This helps build confidence, encourages peer support, and reduces distractions.

We rotate buddy pairings weekly so that all players interact with different teammates and learn to work with different personalities.”

Consider, if a child in your group likes routine. Could they stay in the same buddy pair but “meet” a new pair?



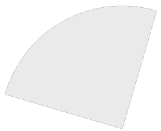
Top Tips on Engaging Children & Helpers



Welcome Activity

“Have a welcome activity running. So many of our kids arrive 10 mins early. We just have something to keep them busy until the session actually starts. A couple of my volunteer helpers take it so I can sort out admin, greet new players speak to parents/carers and set up equipment.

We use any of the cards that are simple activities e.g. Invade the Castle, Quick Thinking, Pop Up, Bees and Bears, Defend the Spot, Stings, Reactions and Quizzer. They all really work for activities that you can add players in as they arrive, but don't need much set up.”



Set Expectations

“We establish simple and consistent behaviour expectations, such as listening when the Bee Leader is speaking, respecting teammates, and staying within designated play areas, also what to do if they need a drink or to go to the toilet.

Using questioning at the start of a session is a great way to do this e.g. “What do we need to do if we need a drink?” let the children answer.”



Top Tips on Engaging Children & Helpers



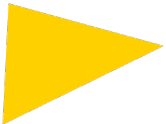
Rewards

“Use stickers or certificates to reward positive behaviours and children who display the Beeliefs, not just children who play netball well.”



Code of Conduct

“We send out a code of conduct when children join for both the parents/carers and the children so they understand from the start what the expectations are.”



Inform Parents/Carers

“We let parents know children should have a drink with them and to ensure children have used the toilet before the session starts.”





Understanding Children's behaviours

Why do children display some behaviours?

Sometimes children in your Bee Netball sessions may not engage the way you would like them to. This might not be disruptive, it could just as easily be a child being quiet, disengaged, or tearful. Gaining an understanding of why children display different behaviours is important to help you as a Bee Leader to approach every situation with **compassion, empathy, curiosity and confidence**. Which in turn ensures any challenges are dealt with quickly and efficiently.

According to experts in child development and education, children display different behaviours for a variety of reasons, often linked to their emotional, social, and cognitive development.

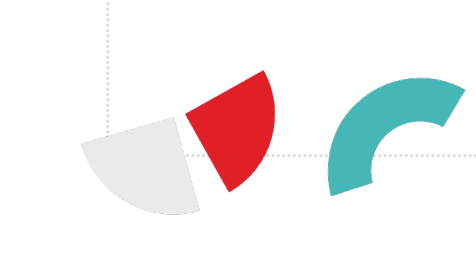
We'll cover some of the most common examples over the next few pages.





Understanding Children's Behaviour

Reason	Behaviour	Solution
Seeking Attention: Children may act out to gain attention from adults or peers, even if it's negative attention. This is common when they feel overlooked, are bored or struggling with a task, especially in group settings.	A child may interrupt repeatedly or be disruptive to get a reaction from the Bee Leader or their peers.	At the start of a session, the Bee Leader can remind participants of the Bee Together value by encouraging teamwork and respect, such as listening when others speak. Keep activities fun and groups small to ensure children are engaged and not stood around getting bored. The Bee Leader can encourage children to be involved in choosing activities and setting up equipment; giving them voice and choice.
Lack of Clear Expectations and Boundaries: If children don't understand what is expected of them, they may test limits to see how far they can push boundaries.	If rules are not clearly explained, some may challenge them to gauge the Bee Leader's response.	At the start of each session, establish simple and consistent behaviour expectations. Use visual aids or hand signals to reinforce key rules for younger children or those who struggle with verbal instructions. Example: Before starting, the Bee Leader can say <i>"At Bee Netball if the Bee Leader puts a hand in the air, we must stop what we are doing and listen."</i> Example: Before starting, the Bee Leader can say, <i>"In Bee Netball, we work as a team. That means we listen, take turns, and help each other. Let's see who can show me great teamwork today!"</i>





Understanding Children's Behaviour

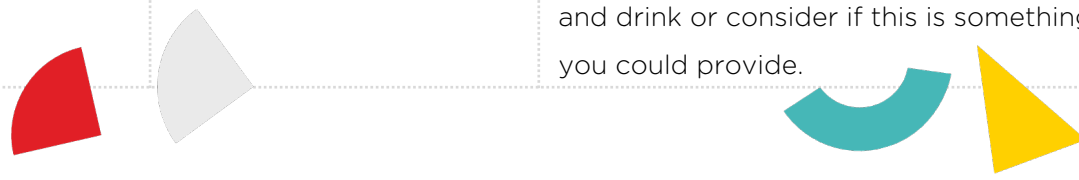
Reason	Behaviour	Solution
Feeling Frustrated or Overwhelmed: When tasks are too difficult or unclear, children may act out due to frustration.	A child struggling with a skill may throw a ball away or refuse to participate.	Ensure you check for understanding when demonstrating the activity. Use the Bee Netball cards to adjust activities to match different skill levels and offer encouragement.
Lack of Engagement or Boredom: If an activity is not stimulating or engaging enough, children may lose interest and find other ways to entertain themselves.	A long explanation without movement may lead to fidgeting or talking.	Keep instructions brief (under 30 seconds) and interactive. Stick to the maximum of 2 coaching points. Be ready to switch to a new game as soon as you realise the current game isn't landing well. Younger children, in particular, may struggle with long or repetitive tasks. Keeping activities dynamic and fast-paced helps maintain focus and reduces disruptive behaviour. Use different types of games to engage children who may get bored quickly. Instead of long drills, switch between small-sided games, and skill challenges to keep engagement levels high.





Understanding Children's Behaviour

Reason	Behaviour	Solution
Need for Autonomy and Control: Children naturally seek independence and may challenge authority if they feel overly controlled.	A child may refuse to follow an activity simply because they want to assert independence.	Give them the opportunity to take a leadership role, they could choose and explain the activity or act as Bee Leader for a small group of peers. Offer choices, when possible, e.g. <i>"Would you like to start in this role or that one?"</i>
Seeking Peer Approval: Some children behave in a certain way to impress their friends or fit in socially.	A child might make jokes during instructions to gain attention from peers.	Reinforce positive group dynamics and reward teamwork. Implement a "Bee Star of the Session" award for players who consistently display positive attitudes and sportsmanship.
Underlying Emotional or Social Struggles: Anxiety, stress, or difficulties at home can manifest as challenging behaviour.	A child struggling with a family issue may become withdrawn or lash out.	Maintain a positive and supportive approach; ask, <i>"Is everything okay?"</i> privately if needed. Be aware of your safeguarding responsibilities by completing relevant training.
Fatigue or Hunger: Physical needs impact behaviour; tired or hungry children are more likely to struggle with self-regulation.	A child becoming disengaged in an after-school session may simply be exhausted.	Recognise when energy levels drop and adapt activities accordingly. Have a quiet activity available if a child needs to sit out for a bit. Schedule breaks in activity, encourage parents to send children with a snack and drink or consider if this is something you could provide.





Challenging Situations

Sometimes you may have situations where a child regularly has difficulty engaging with the sessions or interacting with other children in the group. Managing this can be challenging. Here are some things you could do:



Where possible speak to the child, get on their level if possible (kneel/sit) ask them if everything is OK and what can you do to help?



Address behaviour away from the group if needed.

Example: *"I noticed you were having a tough time following the rules today. Is there something I can do to help you stay focused?"*

This approach encourages reflection rather than embarrassment or shame.



Speak with parents/carers of the child to determine if there are any specific behaviour triggers or strategies for their child.



Schedule a break halfway through the session to allow time for rest and a toilet break. Make sure you have enough helpers to be able to escort children to toilets if needed.

Have a quiet zone with quiet activities like colouring or a puzzle for if a child needs time away from the session.



Maintain consistency and follow through.

Be consistent in applying behaviours you expect so children understand expectations. This should apply to everyone to ensure fairness and structure.

Use movement breaks for restless players.



Some children struggle with sitting still or waiting for their turn. Incorporate short movement breaks to let them burn off energy without disrupting the session.

Example: If a child is becoming fidgety while listening to instructions, say, *"Let's all do five quick star jumps before we start!"*



Further Support

For further resources and support please access [The England Netball Knowledge Centre](#).

If you want to find out more about inclusive coaching the [Activity Alliance](#) provide training.

If you have a safeguarding concern for a child at your session you can report [here](#).

The [NSPCC](#) also have lots of useful guidance.

You can also find out more about [Play Their Way](#).



Bee Passport

The Bee Passport is a document that aims to help Bees who need a little extra support to let their Bee Leaders know the best ways to help them enjoy their Bee Netball session.

This is a template that can be amended for the individual or the condition. It is designed to be completed by the child with/or by their parent/carer.

It is best done in the presence of, and with the help of you the Bee Leader to encourage dialogue, better understanding and create an agreed plan.

It is then designed to follow the player from stage to stage, to any new Bee Leaders, and can be shared with others as required with the parent/carers consent.

You should complete the version for older children/adults when progressing out of Bee Netball.



**Bee
yourself.**

Bees are true to
who they are and
let other people
be who they are.



My Bee Passport

Please keep me secure and confidential. Only share me with people I have agreed to.

Please destroy or return to me if I leave.

My name is	
My address is	
Phone number	
Email	
Please complete the sections below that apply to your child.	
Diagnosis	
Neurological differences	
Physical needs	
Mental health needs	
How do they communicate best?	



My Bee Passport

To complete the next section, think about

- Communication, and barriers
- Activity duration, breaks
- Instructions – receiving, processing, remembering.
- Style, complexity – during Bee Netball and for planning/organising
- Memory, concentration,
- Stimuli in the environment – noise, light, people, kit
- Interactions with other children in my group, opponents, umpires, coaches
- If, when and how much to tell others about this

The **EN Neurodiversity Factsheets** may help with this.



My Bee Passport

My symptoms/traits are

These things can make my symptoms/traits worse

These things help me

I would like other people to...

I don't want other people to...

I give permission for this form to be shared with:

(this can be named individuals or anyone in a particular role - to be agreed by the person completing this form)

Signed by parent/carer

Date

