

## Providing Cues of Relational Safety for Children

According to the Polyvagal perspective, humans provide cues of safety or threat through tone of voice, facial expressions, posture, and other nonverbal forms of communication.<sup>30</sup>

**Consider:** Am I working off of an emotionally stable platform? Are the cues I am providing the child supportive of social engagement? Use the following questions to gauge your use of safety cues and check off those that apply to you.

**Presence:** Am I present with the child, attending to him or her singularly, and not distracted or multitasking? \_\_\_\_\_

**Tone of voice:** Is the volume of my voice appropriate to the child's needs? \_\_\_\_\_ Is there inflection or prosody in my voice? \_\_\_\_\_ Is there warmth and a caring tone to my voice? \_\_\_\_\_

**Facial expression:** Is my face expressive of safety and engagement?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Pacing and timing:** Am I approaching and pacing with the child in accordance to his or her immediate needs?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Posture:** Do I have a relaxed posture and inviting gestures? \_\_\_\_\_