

Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS) and RELATE

CPS is an evidence-based, relationship-centred problem-solving approach that shares important principles with RELATE and can support educators with a practical process for putting those principles into action. The NCSE describes RELATE as prioritising **connection over compliance**, with **student voice, relationships, and regulation** at its core. These principles are highly compatible with the mentality and problem-solving process of the CPS model.

Is CPS neurodiversity affirming?

Very much so. CPS emphasizes **developmental variability** – the recognition that every child has a unique developmental trajectory – and recognizes that it's critical for caregivers to be attuned and responsive to that variability. As such, CPS also emphasizes **meeting every kid where they're at**.

The CPS model posits that concerning behavior is best understood as a frustration or distress response, typically caused by an expectation a child is having difficulty meeting. Rather than focusing on the concerning behavior (and modifying it), CPS focuses on the expectations a child is having difficulty meeting (called "unsolved problems") and on solving them collaboratively (with the full involvement of the child) and proactively. CPS also emphasizes a concept called **expectation management** whereby adults are giving conscious, deliberate thought to whether the expectations being placed on a child are truly in range.

The child is not "the problem"...the child's concerning behavior is not "the problem." An "unsolved problem" combines two factors: the expectations adults are placing on kids and the capacities of kids to meet those expectations. Ultimately the goal is to solve those problems, starting from a place of connection and genuine curiosity, seeking to gather information from the child about what's making it hard for them to meet a particular expectation and involving them in generating solutions. Some expectations are typically placed on hold, either for purposes of prioritizing or because it has been determined that the expectation may not be in range developmentally.

Is CPS the same as PBIS?

The two models are completely different, with different mentalities, focal points, and practices. PBIS springs from the applied behavior analytic (ABA) tradition, with an emphasis on behavior and modifying it, typically through the use of consequences. CPS is grounded in the philosophy "**Kids do well if they can,**" and springs from transactional models of development, neuropsychology, cognitive psychology, and research on emotion regulation and neurodiversity. CPS is disseminated by the non-profit Lives in the Balance, which heightens awareness of the harms of punitive, exclusionary disciplinary practices and advocates for legislative change across the world to eliminate the use of these practices.

Is CPS an American model?

The originator of the CPS model, clinical psychologist Dr. Ross Greene, lives in Freeport, Maine, but the CPS model is global, having been implemented extensively not only in the U.S. but also in Ireland, the Scandinavian countries, New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, and Canada. The goal is to explore how CPS can complement RELATE, and how its practical problem-solving process can support Irish educators in moving away from power and control methodologies towards understanding, connection, collaboration, and inclusion.

<https://livesinthebalance.org/ireland/>