



Promoting the inclusion of infants and young children with disabilities in child care

Participant Module

**Relationships with
Infants & Toddlers**



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Notes:

Session: Relationships with Infants & Toddlers

OVERVIEW

What this workshop should accomplish:

Nurturing relationships are a key to infant/toddler mental health, learning, and development. Babies and young children who feel loved and supported are happy, secure, and self-confident. Many young children today are cared for by non-parental caregivers either through child care, relative care, foster care, or other arrangements. The relationships that these caregivers develop with infants and toddlers will be crucial to children's learning, confidence, and well being.

During the infant-toddler years, children learn about themselves, their feelings, and other people. Their experiences in developing socially and emotionally can be quite challenging for caregivers!! Philip's caregiver turns her head for one moment and when she turns back, she sees Philip precariously perched on a stack of blocks trying to reach a toy that is on the top shelf of the bookcase. Miss Lucretia bends over to pick up and comfort a crying Destiny only to find that Harrison is busy exploring the toy chest by throwing everything in the chest out onto the floor. Keeping older infants and toddlers safe as they explore and learn about the world beyond them can be quite a challenge!! Sara screams every time her mother drops her off in child care — and she used to smile and reach out to you!! Justin follows Merci around only to catch her and pull

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her long, blond hair. When David seems to be frustrated or angry, he lies down and bangs his head on the ground.

This session is about supporting the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers by forming positive relationships that help babies develop self-confidence and an image of themselves as competent people!! Caregivers who use relationship-based strategies with infants and toddlers know positive strategies that will provide young children with safe, nurturing environments in which they can learn about themselves, explore their feelings, and develop positive relationships with other children and with adults.

From this session, participants will gain understanding about:

- i describe the importance of developing positive and supporting relationships with infants and toddlers.
- i identify how infants learn about themselves, their feelings, and other people.
- i identify how to provide relationship-based care.
- i describe how to provide caregiving that is responsive to each child’s unique strengths and needs.

Notes:

SESSION OUTLINE

- I Welcome the group**
- II Introductions**
- III Project Explanation**
- IV Guiding Principles**
- V Relationships Are the Key!**
- VI Responsive Caregiving is Relationship-Based**
- VII Summing Up**

True or False?

Mark each answer with “T” (for True) or “F” (for False).

_____ If we watch and listen, infants and toddlers will tell us what they need.

_____ Child care providers usually care for infants and toddlers in the ways in which they were raised, sometimes imposing their own ways of thinking and their own expectations on the child.

_____ Infants and toddlers learn more when adults leave them alone to explore on their own.

_____ There is always something to do in an infant or toddler room and never time to just sit back and watch.

_____ Stable relationships with caregivers protect children from stresses that may be harmful to them.

_____ Respecting, encouraging, and providing positive role models for infants and toddlers helps them develop a positive view of themselves.

_____ It doesn't matter if babies are not talked to until they are about 9 months of age and can understand what adults say to them.

_____ If babies are left to cry, they won't grow up spoiled.

_____ Toddlers communicate by having temper tantrums, represented by terms such as the “Terrible Twos”.

_____ Being a good “teacher” for an infant or toddler means standing back, watching,

and making it possible for the child to do what s/he wants to do.

Guiding Principles

- Behavior is Meaningful
- Everyone Wants Things to Be Better
- You are Yourself and Your Role
- Don't Just Do Something – Stand There and Pay Attention
- Remember Relationships!!
- Do Unto Others As Your Would Have Others Do Unto Others

What Responsive Caregiving is NOT About-

- ; Long waiting periods (sitting in highchairs to be fed; crying before being responded to, for a turn to do something)
- ; Conversation “around babies” – not talking to children
- ; “Parking lot caregiving” – parking babies in swings, walkers, baby seats or keeping everyone on the same schedule
- ; Propped bottles
- ; Adult-driven activities (all children do the same thing)
- ; Restrictiveness (such as time-out chairs)
- ; Lack of accessibility of toys and materials

The Infant-Toddler Top 10!!

Do Not!!

Focus attention on children who are doing things you do NOT want them to do

Interpret children's behaviors as if they are specifically trying to ruin your day

Tell children how you feel about their behavior

Shout, scold, nag, or use a negative tone of voice with children

Label children with negative-sounding nicknames, even just for fun or even if parents use the nicknames

Correct children unless their actions are dangerous or destructive

Be afraid to hug and touch children

Say negative things about children "over their heads"

Threaten children

Allow children's behavior to make you feel angry or frustrated

Instead

Get involved and excited with children who are doing things you like

Recognize that children behave in ways that meet their immediate needs

Encourage children to feel good about themselves

Sing, laugh, smile, play, and have fun with children

Build on children's strengths and talk to them about their positive characteristics

Brainstorm and use creative ways to redirect children toward positive activities

Show affection in a lot of little ways

Treat every child with respect

Give real choices when they exist

Get lots of sleep and enjoy relaxing and recreational activities in the evenings

References & Resources

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What Did You Learn Today?

1. Did you make any changes in your classroom since the last session? Explain
2. List 2- 3 main points you learned from this session.
3. I am leaving this session with a better idea about how to:
4. What is one thing you plan to do differently in your classroom before the next session?