



# Connections for Life



*Attachment Resource Kit*

**GUIDE**



Production of the

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*Attachment Resource Kit*

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To obtain pricing information on additional copies  
of this Attachment Resource Kit, please contact:

**Saskatchewan Prevention Institute**

1319 Colony Street, Saskatoon, SK S7N 2Z1

Phone: (306) 655-2512 • Fax: (306) 655-2511

E-mail: [info@preventioninstitute.sk.ca](mailto:info@preventioninstitute.sk.ca)

[www.preventioninstitute.sk.ca](http://www.preventioninstitute.sk.ca)

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**Megan Clark**

Project Coordinator  
Researcher and Writer  
Saskatchewan Prevention Institute

**Laura Sharp / Lee Hinton**

Project Sponsor  
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**Laura Stevens / Sylvie Pâlin**

Program Consultant  
Public Health Agency of Canada

**Kim Adamson**

Kootenay Boundary Regional  
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Nelson, BC

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**Laurie Anderson**

Plain Language

**Julie Poissant, PhD**

Scientific Adviser  
Institut national de santé publique du Québec

**Sonya Vellet, PhD**

Content Adviser, Child Clinical  
Psychologist

**Jacinte Gauvin**

Translation Review / Adaptation

**Sebastian Rock**

Translation

**Valérie Vézina**

Translation Review / Adaptation

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Evaluation

**Raymond Saint Laurent  
and Associates**

Simultaneous Interpretation

**Tracey Waskowic**

Researcher and Writer

**Brian Kachur**

Artist and graphic design

**Adrienne Thomas**

Director of the DVD

**Dirk Morrison**

Curriculum Design

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# Introduction

## Purpose

The *Connections for Life* Resource Kit is intended as a resource for Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) and Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) staff and others who work with families to support healthy child development. Attachment is an important part of child development. This Kit provides evidence-based information on what attachment is, why it is important, what influences it, and what we can do to help promote healthy, secure attachment relationships.

All children, including babies, need their parents and other caregivers to love and take care of them and help them to feel safe, cared for and protected. When children are in pain, sick, tired, scared or upset, they naturally seek their parents' care and protection. This is attachment. How parents respond to their child's attachment needs can influence how the child learns to feel, think and behave. This affects the child's social and emotional health throughout life.

When a child has a healthy, secure attachment to a parent, this promotes healthy child development, including:

- ✦ Trust
- ✦ Confidence
- ✦ Empathy
- ✦ The ability to deal well with stress and difficulty
- ✦ The ability to relate well to others

You can help families build healthy attachment relationships and give children the best possible chance in life. This Kit will help you to give families the education and encouragement they need to work on their attachment relationships.

*Note – The information in this Kit should not be used to diagnose children or provide therapy. Only trained professionals should provide diagnosis or therapy.*

## How to use this Guide

This is your Guide to the *Connections For Life* Attachment Resource Kit. It has been organized so you can easily find just the right amount of information for you.

In this Guide there is information on how to use the Kit and the resources within it. The Guide also provides different levels of information on attachment, following the same general outline as the *Connections for Life* DVD. You may want to use the Guide along with the DVD or on its own.

We suggest you watch the *Connections for Life* DVD to get a good overview of attachment. The *Connections for Life* DVD enhances your learning experience by showing parents and children demonstrating the main ideas as they are described, and having an expert explain some important ideas. You may wish to follow along in the Guide, checking that you are getting the key points, and pausing the DVD to read the Guide for additional details or to consider the ideas more thoroughly.

You may also wish to read the Guide at other times to review the key points and main ideas of attachment. Or you can simply refer to the relevant sections when you want to refresh your memory or answer a specific question.

**To get a quick summary of attachment, at the beginning of the Guide you can...**

### *Scan the Key Points*

The *Key Points* section provides a quick summary of what you need to know about attachment. The *Key Points* for Section I through IV are a guide to what you can learn from the *Connections for Life* DVD and the Main Ideas in the Guide.

**To gain a better understanding of attachment, in Sections I through IV you can...**

***Review the Main Ideas***

The *Main Ideas* provide a more detailed summary of the ideas of attachment that we feel are important for you to know. To help you answer specific questions you may have about attachment, we've organized the *Main Ideas* using the same question-and-answer format as the DVD.

***Read the Learn More***

The *Learn More* segments are provided for those of you who want a more detailed understanding of attachment. Reading the *Learn More* is not required to gain a good understanding of attachment, but it can help you understand attachment in a deeper way.

***Spend Time with Something to Think About***

The *Something to Think About* at the end of each section provides questions for you to consider, either individually or in a group. These questions are designed to help you think more about what you have just learned and consider how this might affect you and the work that you do with families.

**When you are ready to support families in developing secure attachment relationships, you can...**

***Review Section V: Introduction to the Attachment Activities***

The *Attachment Activities* section introduces the parent support resource that is part of this resource kit. It also provides tips and suggestions for facilitating a parent group on an activity. Reviewing this introduction, the suggestions and the actual activities will provide you with tools for promoting healthy, secure attachment relationships.

**If you want to learn even more about attachment, you can...**

*Explore the Additional Resources*

The *Additional Resources* section provides you with useful references to allow you to explore attachment further.

The *Additional Resources* includes a list and brief description of useful resources related to attachment theory and practice. The *Additional Resources* section also includes a list and brief description of attachment-focused intervention programs.

The reference list includes all sources used in the development of the *Best Evidence Report* on which the Resource Kit was based. The *Best Evidence Report* is available on the CD included in the Resource Kit.





# Connections for Life



*Attachment Resource Kit*

**KEY POINTS**



# Key Points

## Summary of Section I: Introduction to Attachment

Attachment is the deep and lasting connection that children form with the people they depend on for care.

*Note – For simplicity, we will use “parent” when referring to the person a child has an attachment relationship with. This is with the understanding that anyone providing regular consistent care for a child is acting as a parent.*

- ✿ Attachment is not the same as the “caregiving bond” parents feel for their children.
- ✿ Attachment begins when a baby is born. By the end of the first year, children usually have a clear attachment to one or more of the people who take care of them regularly.
- ✿ Children use attachment behaviours (e.g. crying, clinging, following, cooing) to show they need care.
- ✿ Children’s attachment needs include needing their parent to be available to help them feel safe, cared for and protected.
- ✿ Children form different kinds of attachment (e.g. secure or insecure) depending on how well their parent meets their attachment needs.
- ✿ Children who have a secure attachment trust that their parent will be there for them, feel confident to explore and play, and are easily comforted.
- ✿ Children who have an insecure attachment worry about whether their parent will be there for them. They learn ways of behaving to keep their parent close and available in case of real danger.
- ✿ Children with insecure-disorganized attachment are confused or frightened by their parent and cannot use their parent to comfort them.

# Key Points

## Summary of Section II: The Importance of Attachment

- ✿ Children’s early attachment experiences affect how they develop in many areas.
- ✿ How parents respond to and behave towards their baby affects how the baby’s brain develops.
- ✿ At first, infants need their parent to help regulate, or manage and organize, their responses to experiences.
- ✿ Sensitive parents help regulate their infant by reading their infant’s signals and responding appropriately.
- ✿ How well parents help with regulation early on affects how well children are able to self regulate as they grow older.
- ✿ Children who are better able to self-regulate are better at adapting to new experiences, learning new skills, coping with stress, and less likely to develop mental health problems.
- ✿ The relationships children have early on provide a model for future relationships.
- ✿ Children with an insecure attachment, and particularly insecure-disorganized attachment, are more likely to have behaviour problems and even mental health problems.
- ✿ Children with a secure attachment generally do better. They are usually happier, more trusting, more cooperative, have higher self-esteem, form better relationships, and are better able to “bounce back” from difficult experiences than children with insecure attachment.



# Key Points

## Summary of Section III: Factors that Influence Attachment

- ✿ The most important factor in attachment is how the parent behaves and responds to the child's attachment needs.
- ✿ Parent behaviours that help children develop secure attachments include: Sensitive Responding (to child's cues); Comforting (a distressed child); Repair (of the relationship); Reciprocity (adapting to child's needs); Supportive Play (parent delight in child-led play); Protect/Take Charge (keep child safe/teach appropriate behaviour); Loving Care; and Closeness. *\*For details see Section III.*
- ✿ The care that parents experienced as a child has a strong influence on how they respond to their own children.
- ✿ Parents may be able to avoid passing on hurt they experienced to their own child by thinking about childhood experiences when they felt understood, accepted, and loved. They can also become aware of situations that trigger hurtful responses.
- ✿ A child may be at risk for insecure attachment if:
  - a parent has mental health problems that interfere with her ability to respond to her child's needs.
  - the parent lacks social support.
  - a parent dies or is separated from the child.
  - the family is in conflict or has poor communication.
  - a parent had insecure attachment with own parent.
- ✿ A child may be at risk for insecure-disorganized attachment if:
  - the child is abused, neglected, or witnesses violence.
  - a parent has unresolved trauma or loss.

# Key Points

## Summary of Section IV: Promoting Secure Attachment

- ✿ Parents want to do a good job of raising their children, but they may not understand the importance of their relationship with their children.
- ✿ Even when a parent has not been providing the type of care that promotes a secure attachment, change is possible. The earlier a family receives support, the better chance there is for improving a child's future.
- ✿ When there are many or severe challenges with the parent-child relationship, the family needs to be referred to an appropriately trained professional.

To help families make change, you can:

- promote a supportive and trusting relationship.
  - provide education to help parents understand: what attachment is, why it is important, and how to promote a secure attachment relationship.
  - encourage parents to recognize and value what they already do.
  - encourage parents to wonder what their child is thinking and feeling, and meet their child's attachment needs regularly and consistently.
  - act as a role model by relating to parents in a sensitive and responsive way.
- ✿ Practical support for the parent is important, but it is not enough. Children can not wait for all the crises to be solved. It's important to educate and encourage a parent to work on their relationship with their child, even while dealing with crises.
  - ✿ The *Connections for Life* Attachment Activities can be used with parent groups to educate and encourage parents to use parenting behaviours that promote secure attachment relationships.



# Connections for Life



*Attachment Resource Kit*

**SECTION I:  
INTRODUCTION TO ATTACHMENT**



# Introduction to Attachment

## Main Ideas

### What is attachment?

Attachment is the deep and lasting connection that children form with the people they depend on for care and protection.

*Note – For simplicity, we will use “parent” when referring to the person a child has an attachment relationship with. This is with the understanding that anyone providing regular consistent care for a child is acting as a parent.*

### Attachment is:

- ✿ A biologically based (innate) connection children feel to their parent or caregiver on whom they rely to help them feel safe, cared for, and protected.
- ✿ Different from the “caregiving bond” parents feel for their children. Attachment is about the child needing care and protection from the parent whereas the caregiving bond is about the parent providing care and protection to the child.

### When does attachment develop?


- ✿ The process of attachment begins at birth.
- ✿ By six months, children have begun to form expectations of how their parent will respond when they are distressed.
- ✿ Typically, by the end of their first year children have a clear attachment to one or more of the people who provide regular care.
- ✿ Children can form attachments later in life.

### Who do children become attached to?

- ✿ Children become attached to people who take care of them regularly.
- ✿ The main attachment figure is usually the mother, as she often provides the most care.
- ✿ Most children form attachments to other caregivers as well (e.g. fathers, grandparents, other adult relatives, older siblings, daycare staff or babysitters).

### Does quality of care affect whether an attachment develops?

The quality of care determines the quality of attachment that develops, but it does not affect whether or not an attachment develops. The innate nature of attachment means that children become attached to their parents whether or not their physical or emotional needs are adequately met. In fact, nearly all children become attached, even to parents who neglect or abuse them.




### Learn More...

Factors that contribute to attachment:

- the amount of time spent caring for the child
- repeated presence across time in the child's life
- the emotional investment in the child

### Why are early attachment experiences so important?

Early attachment experiences can have a life-long impact on a child's personality and mental health.

 How a parent responds to a child can have an impact on:

- a child's developing brain structure
- the child's ability to self-regulate (manage and organize) emotions, physical states, and behaviours
- how well a child copes with new or stressful experiences
- a child's ideas of self and others, which influence the child's future expectations and behaviour in relationships.

*The importance of attachment is covered in greater detail in Section 2.*

## How do children try to get their attachment needs met?

Beginning in the first year of life, children naturally show they need care and protection through **attachment behaviours**. These include:

- ✿ crying
- ✿ clinging
- ✿ following
- ✿ proximity-seeking, (i.e. trying to be close)
- ✿ orienting (i.e. focusing attention on)
- ✿ signaling (i.e. cueing)
- ✿ cooing
- ✿ smiling.

When a child is distressed (*e.g. in pain, tired, sick, scared, or emotionally upset*), he may use attachment behaviour to try to bring and keep the parent close to meet his need for care and protection.

Specifically:

- ✿ Unpleasant behaviours, such as crying, bring the parent close to stop the behaviour.
- ✿ Once the parent is close the child may use smiling, vocalizing, clinging, or eye contact to keep the parent close.
- ✿ As children grow and develop, the attachment behaviours they use may change. For example, once a child can move around, she may approach and/or follow to get close to the parent.

*\* As with all child behaviour, it is important for parents to understand the developmental ages and stages of attachment. This helps parents to have appropriate expectations and responses.*



## Learn More...

### The Developmental Stages of Attachment

| Age & Stage<br>(Approximate)  | Attachment Behaviours  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Birth to 2-3 Months</b></p> <p>Caregiving accepted from anyone.</p>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not distinguish between people - can be soothed by anyone.</li> <li>• Responds in a way that makes continued contact more likely.</li> <li>• Signals and behaviours are mainly reflexive but encourage interest and caregiving, e.g. responds to human voice, and shows a preference for looking at a human face.</li> <li>• Expresses needs mainly by crying.</li> <li>• Reaching, grasping, clinging starts to develop.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>3 to 6 Months</b></p> <p>Responds differently to familiar caregivers.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starts to have control over behaviour.</li> <li>• Starts to respond differently to most familiar caregivers, e.g. stops crying when soothed, cries when caregiver leaves, smiles more readily, and vocalizes more.</li> <li>• Actively seeks interactions with familiar caregivers.</li> <li>• Will still usually smile at anyone who plays with him.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>6 to 24 Months</b></p> <p>Establishment of attachment.</p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remembers the sight, touch, smell, and voice of Attachment Figure established.</li> <li>• Prefers the primary Attachment Figure (usually the mother), but can be comforted by other Attachment Figures when she is not available.</li> <li>• Organizes behaviour to achieve goal (e.g. closeness).</li> <li>• May be frightened by and withdraw from a stranger and seek comfort from Attachment Figure.</li> <li>• Upset by separation from Attachment Figure.</li> <li>• Shows pleasure when Attachment Figure returns.</li> <li>• Prefers to be near Attachment Figure, especially on reunion or when distressed.</li> <li>• Uses Attachment Figure as a “secure base” for exploration, checking in by touching, looking at, or calling out. Ends exploration and attempts to get close if Attachment Figure moves away.</li> <li>• Uses Attachment Figure as a safe haven to return to when alarmed or distressed.</li> <li>• Clings to Attachment Figure when alarmed, ill or distressed.</li> </ul> |





## Learn More... (continued)

### The Developmental Stages of Attachment

| Age & Stage<br>(Approximate)  | Attachment Behaviours   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>2 to 3 Years</b><br/>Partnership is established with attachment figure.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moves away from Attachment Figure to explore more.</li> <li>• Attachment behaviour is at the same intensity and frequency as earlier stages.</li> <li>• Watches Attachment Figure's attention. When Attachment Figure is not paying attention to him, the child will show attachment behaviour to regain her attention.</li> <li>• Distressed by separation from Attachment Figure but will more often use calling and active searching rather than crying.</li> <li>• Tends to require a short period of physical contact with Attachment Figure after a separation.</li> <li>• Negotiates plans together with Attachment Figure.</li> </ul>                        |
| <p><b>3 to 6 Years</b><br/>Goal-corrected partnership.</p>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical contact becomes less central but is still important.</li> <li>• Less upset by brief separations when left with a friendly adult, but upset when left alone.</li> <li>• Increasingly uses physical orientation, eye contact, nonverbal expressions, affect, and conversations about separations, reunions, feelings and shared activities and plans.</li> <li>• Able to insert Attachment Figure's plans into own goals and plans and negotiate shared plans - a goal-corrected partnership.</li> <li>• Becomes more comfortable spending longer periods of time with peers and other adults.</li> <li>• Friendships with peers become important.</li> </ul> |

## What are children's attachment needs?

Children need their parent to be physically and emotionally available to:

- ✿ help them feel safe, cared for and protected
- ✿ help regulate (control, manage and organize) their feelings, physical states and behaviours.



## Learn More...

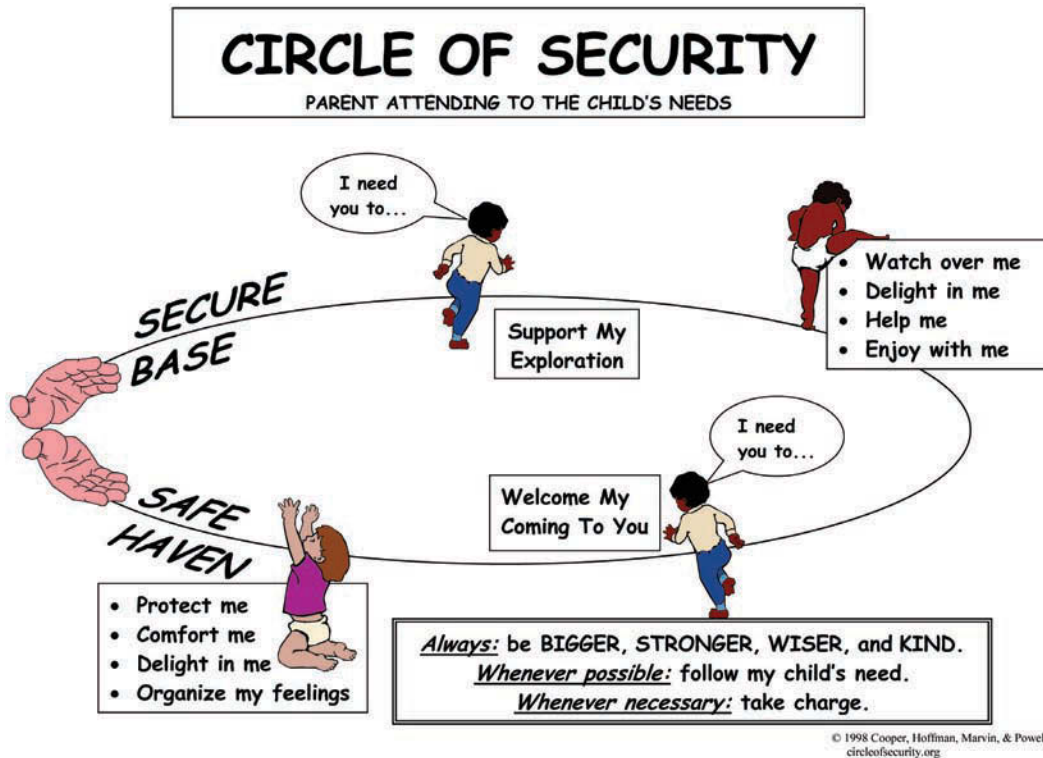
How much closeness a child needs depends on the child's:

- temperament
- age and stage of development
- level of distress
- confidence that the parent will be available when needed (based on past experience and current circumstances).

As children get older their need for closeness will generally lessen. If a child feels happy and healthy, perceives no danger, and feels comfortable that his parent is available if needed, he or she feels confident to explore the environment and play. However, if a child's need for attachment (comfort, care or protection) is activated (perhaps by separation from the parent, tiredness, unfamiliar surroundings or anxiety about the parents availability), the child's exploration and play is reduced and the child looks for contact with her parent. If the child is feeling highly distressed (e.g. sick or frightened) she may want direct contact with her primary parent. If the child is feeling mildly distressed (e.g. unsure of parent's location) she may only need the presence or soothing voice of a parent.

## The Circle of Security

Another way of understanding a child's attachment needs is the Circle of Security, developed by Cooper, Hoffman, Marvin & Powell (2000), shown in the diagram below.



This diagram shows how a child uses his or her attachment figure (*represented by the open hands*) as a **secure base** and as a **safe haven**.





Children need their parent to be a **secure base** from which they can explore their environment.

Children need their parent to:

- ✿ support their exploration
- ✿ watch over them
- ✿ enjoy what they are doing with them.



Children need their parent to act as a **safe haven** to return to in times of trouble or distress.

Children need their parent to easily welcome them “in” for:

-  protection
-  comfort
-  delight
-  organizing and making sense of their feelings and behaviour.



The smooth interactions between child and parent, represented by the Circle of Security, are often disrupted by the parent failing to meet the child’s needs. This failure could be caused by the parent not being able to respond (e.g. busy), distracted, or the parent misreading the child’s cues. Particularly when a child is distressed (e.g. frustrated, angry, crying, or whining), it can be difficult for a parent to understand what a child needs. Children need their parent to repair these disruptions in the smooth, comfortable interactions.

Repair is done by the parent:

-  going back and acknowledging the child’s feelings and needs as well as the reason for the disruption
-  responding appropriately to meet the child’s needs.

What is important is the parent’s ability to repair a disruption promptly, warmly and easily.

When this pattern of disruption and easy repair happens regularly, children learn:

-  that they can count on their parent to make things right
-  how to handle difficulties and develop self-reliance.

## What is the impact of different responses to attachment needs?

Children develop different attachment styles with each parent, depending on how well the parent meets the child's attachment needs.

*Note – It is important to remember that the information in this kit should not be used to diagnose attachment styles. Factors that influence attachment are very complex. Children can show the behaviours described for many different reasons. Diagnosing attachment styles requires supervised training on specific clinical procedures. Without this, we cannot know whether a child's behaviour is because of the attachment relationship or another cause.*

There are **two** main types of attachment:

- ✿ secure attachment
- ✿ insecure attachment.

## What is secure attachment?

Secure attachment can happen when a child is able to rely on the parent for comfort and protection.

Parents of children with secure attachment:

- ✿ respond sensitively and consistently to the child's needs
- ✿ have an easy, relaxed, and intimate pattern of caregiving.

Secure children:

- ✿ trust that their parent will be there for them when needed
- ✿ feel confident to explore and play
- ✿ seek comfort if distressed, are easily comforted by their parent, and then are able to return to exploration and play.

### **What is insecure attachment?**

Insecure attachment can happen when a child cannot rely on the parent to meet his attachment needs.

Parents of children with insecure attachment:

- ✦ ignore, reject, or respond inconsistently to a child's need to feel safe, cared for and protected.

Insecure children:

- ✦ are anxious about whether their parent will be available to provide care and protection when needed
- ✦ learn ways of behaving that keep their parents close and available in case of real danger, but may not serve them well in other relationships.

### **What is insecure-disorganized attachment?**

Insecure-disorganized attachment can happen when parents regularly behave in ways that frighten or confuse their infant, or appear frightened.

Insecure-disorganized children are unable to use their parent as a source of comfort and are therefore unable to develop an organized, effective response to distress.



## Learn More...

There are **three** types of insecure attachment styles:

- insecure-avoidant
- insecure-ambivalent/resistant
- insecure-disorganized.

**Insecure-avoidant attachment** can happen when a parent consistently ignores or rejects the child's attachment needs.

Insecure-avoidant children:

- avoid showing their need to be comforted and protected when moderately distressed.

**Why do they do this?**

- To avoid triggering a rejecting or ignoring response from their parent. This keeps the possibility that the parent will respond should a more serious threat occur.
- To avoid the unpleasant feelings they experience in response to their parent's unavailability and rejection.

**Insecure-ambivalent/resistant attachment** can happen when the parent responds *ineffectively* or *inconsistently* to the child's attachment needs.

Insecure-ambivalent/resistant children:

- are overly aware of where their parent is and whether the parent is available
- become highly distressed and show attachment behaviours even under conditions of mild threat
- are difficult to soothe.

**Why do they do this?**

- To keep their parent's attention focused on them in order to make sure that their unpredictable parent will be available in the event of a real danger.



## Learn More... (continued)

Both the avoidant and ambivalent/resistant insecure attachment styles are considered not as flexible and functional as secure attachment, since these children are anxious and preoccupied about the availability of their parent. As a result, they are less free to play and explore their environment and cannot achieve the same mastery of their environment and confidence in themselves as can securely attached children. On the other hand, these patterns of attachment are adaptive, organized strategies for having their attachment needs met. These adaptations allow them to keep their parent close and available in case of real danger.

**Insecure-disorganized attachment** can happen when the parent behaves in a way that is confusing or frightening to the child. This includes the parent behaving as though frightened.

Insecure-disorganized children:

- are unable to develop or maintain an organized way (or adaptive strategy) for having their attachment needs met
- may show a wide range of disorganized and seemingly conflicting behaviours in response to the parent's presence.

### ***Why do they do this?***

Since it is the parent that an infant or young child relies on to help cope with stressful experiences, a parent who is frightening or alarming is at once the source and the solution to the child's distress. The child is placed in a difficult situation in which he cannot approach the parent for comfort but is also unable to flee or find a way to comfort himself.





## Learn More... (continued)

Insecure-disorganized attachment behaviours of a child in response to the parent's presence can include:

- sudden unexplained changes in emotion
- severe distress followed by freezing or prolonged stillness
- expressions of fear or confusion upon reunion
- approaching parent with head averted
- rocking on hands and knees following a failed approach
- moving away from parent when frightened
- screaming for parent when separated, then moving silently away when reunited
- rising to meet the parent, then falling to the floor
- approaching the parent with hesitant, stop-start movements, or with a slow, limp, “underwater” quality.

By the time they reach school age, many children with disorganized attachment as young children organize their attachment behaviours into controlling behaviours toward the parent. This can take two possible forms:

- child takes on role of caregiver for the parent, or
- child controls the parent by acting out and giving the parent orders in a defiant way.



## Something to think about...

The following questions can be used for self-reflection, group discussion and/or staff presentation.

- ✦ Before reviewing this section, did you have a different understanding of attachment? If yes, how was your understanding different?
- ✦ What was the most important idea you learned from the information that has been presented so far?
- ✦ Can you think of some child behaviours that have puzzled or frustrated you in the past and that may have been an attempt to communicate an attachment need?
- ✦ Can you think of some reasons why trying to diagnose attachment styles based on the information in this kit could create a problem?
- ✦ Think of one way to address some of the information presented in this section in a group or individual setting with parents.



# Connections for Life



*Attachment Resource Kit*

**SECTION II:  
THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTACHMENT**



# The Importance of Attachment

## Main Ideas

### Why is attachment important?

Early attachment experiences have an impact on a child's later social, emotional, and academic development by influencing:

- ✦ brain development
- ✦ how children respond to experiences
- ✦ expectations and behaviour in relationships throughout life.

### How does attachment influence brain development?

How a parent interacts with their infant determines the types of experiences and stimulation the infant has. This has an influence on early brain development. An infant's brain becomes "wired" for the ways of thinking and interacting that the infant experiences regularly. This in turn influences the types of experiences a child has in the future. For example, a child who consistently experienced rejection by her parent since infancy will expect others to reject her, will see others as rejecting, and will respond as though she has been rejected.



## Learn More...

The brain is made of many cells called neurons. It is the connections between these neurons that determines how we think. Around birth, an infant's brain forms far more neural connections than is necessary. This excess of connections between the neurons of a newborn's brain makes the brain noisy and inefficient. Shortly after birth and throughout the first two years of life, an infant's brain goes through a pruning process, during which the little-used neural connections are gradually lost and the connections used regularly are strengthened. The developing brain becomes adapted to the infant's everyday experience. The brain becomes wired for the ways of thinking and interacting that the infant experiences regularly.

## How does attachment influence responses to experiences?

Early attachment experiences influence the brain structure, which in turn affects how well children are able to manage and organize how they respond to experiences. Managing and organizing responses to experiences is called regulation. At first, infants need their parent to help regulate their responses to experiences.

Infants need help regulating their:

- ✦ emotions
- ✦ physical states (e.g. arousal, temperature, hunger, tiredness)
- ✦ behaviour (as they become able to act on things).

Sensitive parents help regulate their infant by:

- ✦ reading and understanding their infant's signals and needs
- ✦ responding with appropriate emotions, level of arousal and behaviour (for example, if baby bumps head, acknowledge the bump, wait to see if baby is really hurt. If not, calmly encourage the baby to resume activity. If baby is hurt, acknowledge baby's hurt and distress, comfort baby appropriately and as much as baby needs to get feelings under control and then help baby get back to activity.)
- ✦ responding to the infant's cues that she has had enough (i.e. looking away) by waiting until the infant shows she is ready for more attention.





Infants need a parent to continuously provide regulation by adjusting to match or complement the infant's:

- ✦ emotional state
- ✦ social attention
- ✦ behaviour/stimulation
- ✦ arousal.

How much help a child needs with regulation changes over time. One-year-olds have learned a lot already, but still need help regulating a lot of the time. Two-year-olds especially need help regulating during interactions with others, particularly around aggression. Gradually, children will learn to be in control of their own feelings and behaviour. They do this best if they get lots of help from parents.

How well a parent provides this regulating experience early in life influences how a child's brain develops and how well the child is able to self-regulate as he gets older. Children who are able to self-regulate well are better at adapting to new, unpleasant, or unusual experiences. They are better able to learn new information and develop more effective coping strategies.

Children who find it hard to self-regulate will have difficulty:

-  regulating emotions, behaviour and physical states
-  coping with stress
-  making changes and adapting to experiences
-  continuing to develop.

Because of these difficulties, children with poor self-regulation may be more likely to develop mental health problems.

### **How does attachment influence future relationships?**

Early attachment relationships provide a model for future relationships. Through experiences in the attachment relationship, particularly in times of distress, infants gradually develop ideas about both themselves and others. Ideas about whether they deserve love and care, and whether others are available and trustworthy. When a parent provides care that is sensitive and consistent, a child will feel she deserves care and that others can be trusted to be there when needed. When the care provided is not sensitive and consistent, the child will come to feel that she does not deserve care and that others cannot be trusted. These ideas influence what a child will expect from others and how he will behave in relationships throughout life.



## Learn More...








Over time, children develop internal working models of themselves and significant others based on the quality of care they have experienced. If the care provided meets the child's attachment needs in a sensitive and consistent way, the child develops positive internal working models. He sees himself as worthy of love and care and sees others as trustworthy. If the care provided does not consistently meet the child's needs, the child will develop negative internal working models. He sees himself as not worthy of care and sees others as not trustworthy. These internal working models influence the child's perceptions and behaviours in all future social relationships throughout childhood and adulthood.

Once developed, the internal working models tend to remain constant, although they may change through a significant and consistent change in the quality of care provided. On the other hand, the specific attachment behaviours a child uses at any particular time will change based on the child's circumstances and level of development.

When parents do **not** consistently meet their children's attachment needs, the children may develop negative ideas or models of themselves and others. These children develop insecure attachment.

### What problems are children with insecure attachment at risk of developing?

Children with an insecure attachment are at risk of developing behaviour problems and potentially mental health problems. They are more likely to have problems such as:

-  poor social skills
-  low self-esteem
-  anxiety
-  impulsive behaviour
-  angry and aggressive behaviour
-  withdrawing when upset
-  giving up easily.

The degree of risk of developing these problems is related to many factors, including attachment.



## What problems are children with insecure-disorganized attachment at risk of developing?

Insecure-disorganized attachment is one of the most significant childhood risk factors for poor long-term adjustment.

Children with insecure-disorganized attachment are even more likely to experience the difficulties associated with insecure attachment. They are also more likely to experience the following:

- ✿ poor self-regulation (management and control of emotions, behaviour and arousal)
- ✿ depression
- ✿ being rejected by their peers
- ✿ difficulties in school
- ✿ unusual or bizarre behaviours, including symptoms related to dissociation (person goes into her own world and experiences a lack of connection with things around her).

As adolescents, these individuals are more likely to deliberately harm themselves and have higher rates of mental health problems generally.

## Does insecure attachment cause personality and mental health problems?

It is important to know that insecure attachment, even insecure-disorganized attachment, does not directly cause personality or mental health problems. Rather, early insecure attachment starts children along a path that could lead to future problems, depending on other factors.

Other factors that influence long-term adjustment include:

- ✿ characteristics of the child
- ✿ other parenting practices
- ✿ family stress
- ✿ trauma
- ✿ social support.



Children who experience two or more of the above risk factors are more likely to have poor long-term adjustment, in comparison to those with only one risk factor. On the other hand, if the child has several positive experiences, these protective experiences combine to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for the child.

### What are the benefits of secure attachment?

Children with a secure attachment generally do better than those with insecure attachment.

Securely attached children are more likely to:

- ✦ be happy
- ✦ trust that good things will come
- ✦ be cooperative
- ✦ trust the people they love
- ✦ have greater empathy
- ✦ have better relationships
- ✦ do better in social situations
- ✦ have higher self-esteem
- ✦ have a strong sense of self
- ✦ be better problem solvers
- ✦ be better able to cope with stress
- ✦ be resilient (i.e. deal well with and recover from difficulties)
- ✦ form secure attachment relationships with their own children.



### Learn More...

Even when a child has an insecure attachment with her primary attachment figure, secure relationships with alternative attachment figures (e.g., father, grandparents) can provide a “buffer” or protection against future developmental difficulties.



## Something to think about...

The following questions can be used for self-reflection, group discussion and/or staff presentation.

- ✦ How important do you think it is that parents receive support to help them develop a secure attachment relationship with their child?
  
- ✦ When do you think support for the attachment relationship should be provided?
  
- ✦ Who should provide families with support for the attachment relationship?
  
- ✦ What could you tell parents to motivate them to work on their relationship with their child?
  
- ✦ Think of one way to address some of the information presented in this section in a group or individual setting with parents.





# Connections for Life



*Attachment Resource Kit*

**SECTION III:  
FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ATTACHMENT**



# Factors that Influence Attachment

## Main Ideas

### What factors contribute to *secure* attachment?

The development of attachment depends on many different factors, the most important being how the parent or caregiver behaves towards the child and responds to the child's attachment needs. Caregiving behaviours that help children develop secure attachments are listed below.

### Sensitive Responding

Children need to know that they are important and that their parents will respond when they need them.

A sensitive and responsive parent:

- ✿ is emotionally there for the child
- ✿ notices the child's signals
- ✿ understands the meaning of the signals (most of the time)
- ✿ responds to the child's signals promptly and appropriately.

### Comforting

An important part of sensitive responding is learning to read when a child needs comforting, even when the child's signals are not obvious. A sensitive parent comforts their child, especially when the child is upset, sick, hurt, frightened, or lonely. When children are comforted regularly and predictably, they learn to feel safe with their parent and trust that their parent will be there when needed.

### Reciprocity

Reciprocity is when a parent responds to a child's signals by adapting his behaviour to suit the needs of the child. The goal is to keep the interaction smooth and to soothe the child when necessary.

Reciprocity includes a parent:

- ✿ learning to read the infant's signals
- ✿ getting to know the infant's temperament, sleep-wake cycle, attention span, and unique responses to experiences.

## **Repair**






Parents cannot always respond sensitively to their child. They may misread the child's cue or may not be able to respond immediately because they are busy or distracted. In this situation, it is important for the parent to fix or repair this break in the smooth, comfortable interaction as soon as possible. The parent should acknowledge the child's need, let the child know that they misunderstood or were unable to respond and then respond appropriately.

## **Supportive Play**

To develop self-confidence, children need to experience their parent supporting their exploration and play. Parents need to play with their child, letting the child lead the play and delighting in and sharing enjoyment with the child. If the child needs help, the parent should provide only enough help so the child can do it by himself.

## **Protect/Take Charge**

It is important for parents to find a balance between encouraging a child to explore the world and ensuring that the child is safe and cared for. It is important for parents to:

-  make the child's environment as safe as possible to allow exploration
-  warn the child about immediate dangers
-  protect the child from knowing about frightening and overwhelming situations
-  help a child regulate their emotions, behaviours and physical states, particularly in response to frightening or overwhelming situations
-  set appropriate limits in a predictable and kind way.



## Loving Care

To help children learn to value themselves and develop trust in others, it is important that basic care, such as feeding, bathing, dressing, and putting to sleep, is provided in a predictable, warm and loving way. Loving care includes:

- ✦ establishing structure and predictable routines
- ✦ showing positive feelings and expressing genuine love and affection while caring for the child.

## Closeness

Children need physical and emotional closeness. Parents need to touch, hold, and make eye contact with their child in appropriate, warm and loving ways.





Each of these behaviours contributes to the development of a secure attachment relationship. It is not possible for parents to respond to their children using these behaviours all of the time. What matters is that they use these behaviours most of the time when interacting with their child.

## Does a parent's childhood influence how they parent?

Most people parent the way they were parented. Our own attachment style, which developed based on the caregiving we experienced as a child, has a strong influence on how we respond to our children's attachment needs. In this way, attachment styles are passed from one generation to the next.

If a parent was hurt emotionally or physically, or neglected as a child, the parent can repeat with her infant the same sorts of early experiences in which she felt helplessness and fear, without even realizing it.



To keep from repeating the hurtful experiences a parent can:

-  recall moments in which he felt understood, accepted, and loved as a child, and draw on these experiences for a sense of security and self-worth and for a sensitive, nurturing model of caregiving
-  become aware of the sorts of interactions that trigger a hurtful response
-  notice when she is engaging in problematic behaviour that could potentially hurt her child emotionally or physically
-  avoid problematic situations and figure out what to do instead.


### What factors contribute to *insecure attachment*?

Risk factors that affect a parent's ability to respond appropriately and therefore put a child at risk of developing insecure attachment can be found within the parent, the child, or the external environment.




Risk factors within parent:

-  depression, anxiety or other mental health problems
-  being an adolescent parent without adequate support.

Risk factors within child:

-  Child has a chronic illness or disability that interferes with:
  - the child's ability to communicate his or her needs
  - the parent's ability to read the child cues
  - the parent's ability to meet the child's needs.

Risk factors within environment:

-  lack of social support for the parent
-  loss of a parent or other important caregiver
-  family conflict / poor communication.

Having a single risk factor is not likely to lead to insecure attachment. However, as the number of factors increases, the risk of insecure attachment also increases.

### What factors contribute to *insecure-disorganized* attachment?

As mentioned before, *insecure-disorganized* attachment is particularly concerning. Risk factors that can contribute to disorganized attachment include:

*Risk factors within the parent-child relationship:*

- ✿ abuse
- ✿ neglect

*Risk factor within environment:*

- ✿ domestic violence

*Risk factor within the parent:*

- ✿ unresolved trauma or loss

When a parent has not resolved or come to terms with a traumatic experience (such as their own experience of abuse) or loss of an important person (an attachment figure), memories are sometimes triggered by interactions with an infant or young child. When recalling memories from trauma or loss, the parent may experience confusion and behave in unpredictable ways. Disorganized attachment can develop when the parent **regularly and consistently** behaves in ways that confuse, alarm or frighten the infant.



## Learn More...

The following are parent behaviours that can confuse, frighten or alarm a child:

### **A mismatch between child's cues and parent's response**

For example, the parent may:

- not attempt to soothe an upset child
- laugh when the child is distressed.

### **Contradictory or mixed messages from the parent to the child**

For example, the parent may:

- invite the child to play, then not let the child play
- use a friendly tone yet looking threatening.

### **The parent putting own needs before the child's**

When a parent asks a child to meet her emotional needs, this makes the child worry about the parent. For example, the parent may:

- ask the child for attention, affection, advice, or reassurance
- use sexualized behaviours toward the child such as whispering in hushed intimate tones or stroking in a sexualized manner.

### **Fear**

The parent behaves in a way that suggests fear or tension. For example, the parent may:

- use a high-pitched, squeaky, or strained voice
- be deferential or submissive toward the child.

### **Disorientation**

The parent may behave as though disoriented or confused when with the child. For example, the parent may:

- act spaced out
- have sudden and unexplained changes in mood, including loss of emotion
- handle the infant as though not real.



## Learn More... (continued)

### **Intrusive / negative behaviour**

These are physical or verbal behaviours that are frightening or confusing for the child. For example, the parent may:

- be physically rough
- be in the child's face
- mock the child (e.g. "Look at the cry baby")
- scare the child (e.g. "I'm going to get you" or "I'm going to call the police on you")
- speak harshly
- make negative comments about the child.

### **Not being there for the child**

This is when the parent withdraws physically or verbally from the child needing comfort or attention. For example, the parent may:

- not respond to child
- hold the infant away from body with stiff extended arms
- redirect the child to toys and away from self
- interact silently with the child.

*Every parent at times shows some of these problematic caregiver behaviours. Insecure-disorganized attachment is associated with a parent who **repeatedly** shows these kinds of behaviours as part of a pattern of caregiving behaviour.*



## Something to think about...

The following questions can be used for self-reflection, group discussion and/or staff presentation.

- ✿ Can you think of families you work with who experience risk factors discussed in this section?
  
- ✿ Can you think of parents you work with who have experienced risk factors in their childhood?
  
- ✿ Thinking of the families you work with, including the families with risk factors, can you think of some positive parent behaviours that you can comment on and encourage?
  
- ✿ Think of one way to address some of the information presented in this section in a group or individual setting with parents. Remember that focusing on the positive is generally far more helpful than focusing on the negative. If a parent has a behaviour that you feel it is important to address, remember to do it respectfully, one-on-one (not in a group setting), and to balance your constructive comments with as much positive feedback as you can.



## Questions for Self-Reflection...

Do not feel you have to share your thoughts on the following questions with a group, but it is important to do some thinking about these questions. If these questions raise any concerns for you, find someone you trust to talk to.

It is common for people learning about attachment to reflect back and think about how their own childhood experiences have contributed to who they are.

- ✦ Based on what you have learned, do you have any thoughts about how your own childhood experiences have impacted how you think, feel and respond to certain situations?
- ✦ Can you think of things about yourself that you need to be aware of when working with families?
- ✦ Do some of your present experiences or interactions trigger responses that are unhelpful because of experiences you had in your childhood? If yes, can you think of ways to change your response or avoid the triggering event?
- ✦ Can you think of positive experiences in your childhood that you can draw on to give you a sense of security and a model for how to provide sensitive, responsive care?







# Connections for Life



*Attachment Resource Kit*

**SECTION IV:  
PROMOTING SECURE ATTACHMENT**



# Promoting Secure Attachment

## Main Ideas

There are many factors that influence a parent's ability to care for their child. Parents want to do a good job of raising their children, but they may:

- ✿ not understand the importance of their relationship with their child
- ✿ get confusing messages from family, friends, and others, particularly about spoiling their child and encouraging independence
- ✿ not know how to behave to promote a secure attachment relationship.

Even when a parent has not been providing the type of care that promotes a secure attachment, **change is possible**. The earlier a family receives support the better chance there is for improving a child's developmental outcomes.

## When should I refer?




You will come across many families that are struggling with the parent-child relationship. Some of these families will have many severe challenges in this area. You may wonder what to do in these situations. Appendix 1 is a Referral Checklist. This checklist will give you an indication of when it is important to refer families to an appropriately trained mental health professional for additional support. There are also suggestions of what you could do if there are no appropriately trained professionals in your area.

## What can I do to help promote the development of secure attachment?

It is important that you develop a supportive, trusting relationship with a parent before you try to help the parent make changes. There are many things you can do to develop a good relationship with the parents you work with. You need to be:

- ✿ respectful
- ✿ sensitive
- ✿ responsive
- ✿ non-judgmental.

Once you have a trusting relationship, you can help promote the development of secure attachment by providing parents with:

-  education
-  encouragement
-  practical support.

## Education

The three main areas to provide education on for parents are listed below.

### 1. *The Attachment Relationship*

Important things for parents to know:

- Children naturally seek comfort, care and protection from, and form an attachment relationship with those they depend upon for care.
- When a parent behaves in ways that help a child feel comforted, cared for and protected, the child can develop a healthy, secure attachment relationship with that parent.
- The typical attachment behaviours for different ages and stages of development. Understanding these will help parents respond appropriately to their child's needs.

*(See the Learn More - Developmental Stages of Attachment in Section 1 of the Guide.)*

### 2. *The Importance of Attachment*

A secure attachment relationship is the foundation for:

- good behaviour
- independence
- healthy child development.

*(For details see the benefits of secure attachment in Section 2 of the Guide and DVD.)*

Understanding the importance of attachment will provide many parents with the motivation they need to work on improving their relationship with their child. But motivation may not be enough. Often parents do not know what to do to improve their relationship, particularly if they did not experience a secure attachment relationship in their own childhood.

### 3. *Promoting a Secure Attachment Relationship*

It is important that you help parents understand what they can do to build a secure attachment relationship with their child. Teach them about the caregiver behaviours that contribute to secure attachment relationships:

- Sensitive responding
- Comforting
- Repair
- Reciprocity
- Supportive play
- Protect/take charge
- Loving care
- Closeness.

*(These behaviours are described in more detail in Section 3 of the Guide and the DVD.)*

### Encouragement

Along with education, it is important to *encourage* parents to use the caregiver behaviours that promote secure attachment.

**✿ Encourage parents to do more of the positive behaviours they are already doing.** Look for opportunities to help (all) parents recognize what they are already doing that helps their child feel loved, cared for and protected. Help them build on their existing strengths by encouraging them to do these things even more.

Examples of positive behaviours to note:

- getting down to the child's level
- being face to face with the child
- watching the child's face
- making eye contact and smiling
- being generally positive and upbeat
- following the child's lead / letting the child choose the activity
- any of the caregiver behaviours that promote secure attachment.

- ✿ Encourage parents to think about what their child is trying to communicate and how they should respond. The Circle of Security group has developed a series of prompts you can ask parents about their interactions with their child. These prompts are designed to help bring a parent from the level of simply describing their child's behaviour to a level where they are reflecting on what their child is thinking and feeling, essentially putting themselves in their child's shoes. There are also questions to encourage parents to think about what they are doing to support their child, and to start examining what they are thinking and feeling during their interaction with their child.

*Seeing, Guessing and Reflecting Prompts:*

**Describing Child Behaviour**

- What is your child doing?
- What do you think interests your child right now?

**Reflecting on Child**

- What do you think your child needs right now?
- What is your child thinking?
- What is your child feeling?

**Describing Own Behaviour**

- What are you doing?
- What are you doing to show your child you support her play or support what she's interested in?

**Reflecting on Self**

- What are you feeling?
- What are you thinking?

There are times when it may be difficult to understand what the child needs. When a child is upset his cues may not be clear and he may not even know what he needs. It is important to remain calm and kind and to help the child understand what he is feeling and needs. This is particularly the case for disrupted attachment, when a child has experienced a disruption in the attachment relationship by being separated from the parent for a length of time. It is important to know that in the case of a **disrupted attachment** the child's behaviour may not encourage a caring response, but it is still very important to respond in a warm and caring way. When upset, such children may behave in avoidant or difficult ways. This behaviour can make it very difficult to respond sensitively, but it does not make it any less important. For more information on how to work with families that have disrupted attachment histories, see the Appendices of this Guide.

✿ **Encourage parents to try new behaviours to meet their child's needs.** Ask them “What else could you be doing to meet your child's attachment need?”

**Remember:** It is important that you act as a role model. By relating to parents in a sensitive and responsive way, you provide them with a model of how to be with their child. Encourage parents to think about how they feel when someone responds to them in a respectful and caring way, and how it might feel the same for their child. For example you could say, “What are some of the things you find comforting? When someone takes the time to listen to you and let you know that they are here to help you sort out your problem, do you find this comforting? Do you think your child would feel the same if you did that for him?”

When parents use positive caregiver behaviours that contribute to the development of a secure attachment, help them to recognize and value the positive impact these behaviours have on their relationship with their child.

For example:









- child is happier
- child behaviour improves
- parent-child relationship is stronger
- child feels more comfortable playing and exploring independently
- child turns to parent for comfort, care and protection when needed.

✿ **Encourage parents to use the behaviours that contribute to a secure attachment regularly and consistently.**

## Practical Support




When working with families with many challenges, efforts to promote secure attachment are more likely to be successful if provided along with practical support. A parent will be better able to benefit from education and encouragement when she is supported in those areas she is experiencing difficulty.

Some areas where practical support is important include:

-  reducing stress, depression and other mental health problems
-  ending abuse and domestic violence
-  improving the parental relationship
-  improving social support for the parent
-  increasing parent's self-esteem
-  finding good quality alternative childcare
-  improving family functioning and organization in the home
-  improving health of parent and child.

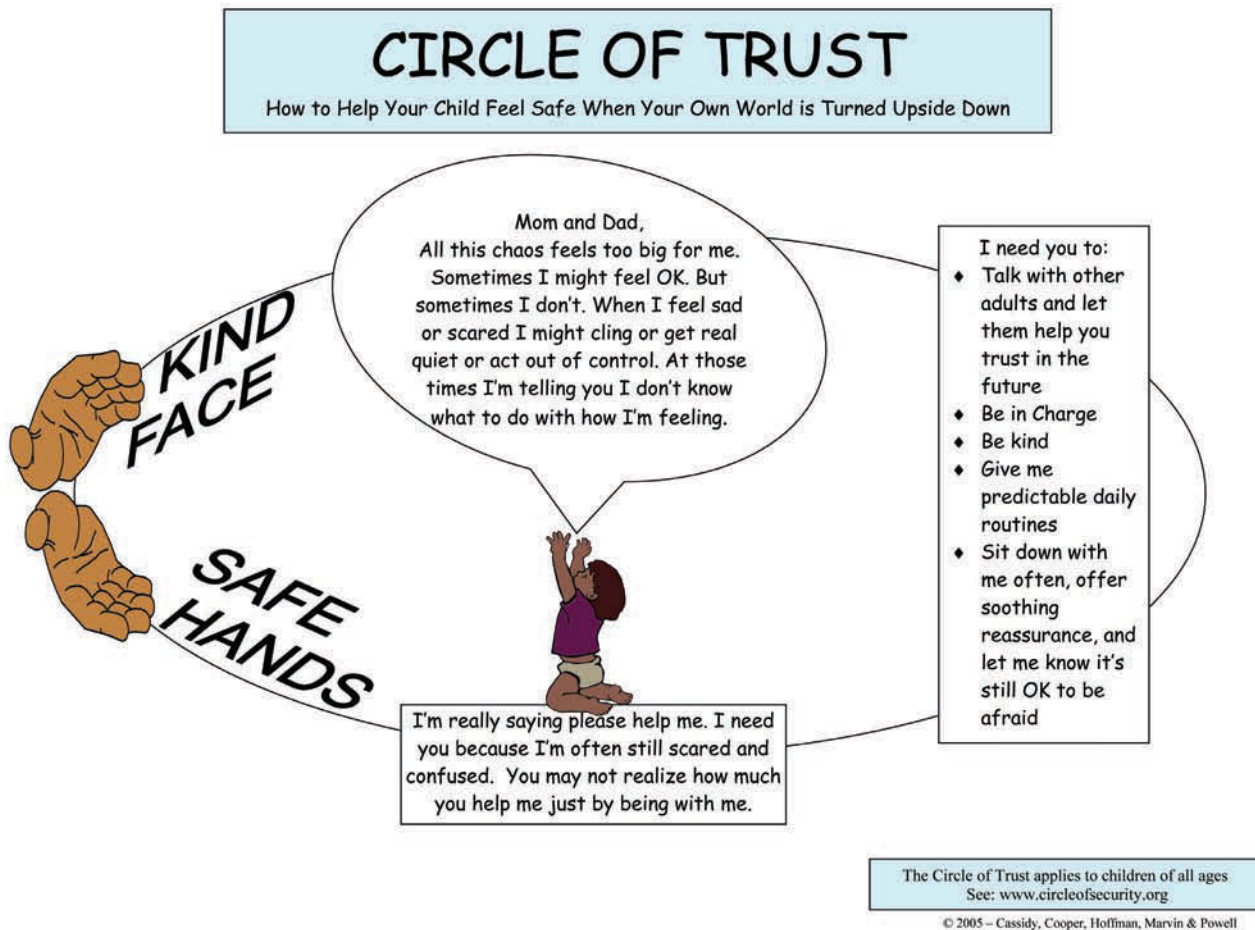
*Important: Practical support is important, but it is not enough. While helping parents to meet their basic needs or solve crises, you need to find opportunities to educate and encourage parents to behave in ways that promote a secure attachment. Children can't wait for the all the crises to be solved. It's important to encourage parents to work on their relationship with their child, even while dealing with crises.*

While providing practical support, find opportunities to remind parents to pay attention to and meet their child's needs. Remind them that taking the time to do this will:

-  help prevent misbehaviour (to get their attention)
-  be good for their relationship with their child
-  contribute to better long-term outcomes for their child.



The Circle of Trust is another image developed by the Circle of Security group (Cassidy, Cooper, Hoffman, Marvin and Powell, 2005).



The Circle of Trust is about how a parent needs to make their child feel safe when their own world is turned upside down. When a parent is in crisis, the child is likely experiencing fear and stress as well. It is important for parents to take steps to ensure that their child's life is as stable as possible at all times.



## Something to think about...

The following questions can be used for self-reflection, group discussion and/or staff presentation.

- ✿ What sorts of supports can you provide within the context of your project to help promote the development of secure attachments in the families you work with?
  
- ✿ What other supports are available to families in your community that can help support the development of secure attachments?
  
- ✿ What supports are needed but not available in your community?
  
- ✿ What could you (and others) do to help strengthen the attachment-related supports available in your community?



# Connections for Life



*Attachment Resource Kit*

**SECTION V:  
INTRODUCTION TO THE ATTACHMENT ACTIVITIES**



# Introduction to the Attachment Activities





Within the *Connections for Life* Attachment Resource Kit are the *Attachment Activities*. These activities are designed to be used with parent groups to educate and encourage parents to use caregiver behaviours that promote secure attachment relationships. There are 7 activities that parents can do with their children to help build healthy relationships. There are also activities that pregnant moms can do to start their relationship off on the right track. Each *Attachment Activity* includes guidelines and suggestions for running a group session introducing the parent-child activity, and a handout for parents with a simple description of the activity.

## The Attachment Activities:

- ✦ promote parent behaviours that contribute to secure attachment
- ✦ are enjoyable activities that can become part of a parent's regular care routine
- ✦ give parents an opportunity to experience success with their child
- ✦ can be done with a child of any age.

Each activity is independent of the others. You may decide to cover them all, or just particular activities as needed. Some activities may be more detailed, and therefore take more time to cover for older children than for infants. Some may also have a slightly different focus for different age groups, although the goal will be the same. It is up to the facilitator to review the activities and determine which are appropriate for their group, how much time will be needed to introduce the activity to a given group, and whether any additional information or activities would enhance the group session.

The group sessions introducing the activity will help parents to:

-  recognize and value what they already do
-  learn how to do the activity, building on existing strengths
-  understand the benefit of the activity
-  think of ways to make the activity a regular part of caring for their child.

The Attachment Activities resource also includes some other useful information for working with families to promote secure attachment. These include:

### **What We Have Learned**

This is a list of corrections to common parenting myths that can help you lead a discussion on myths about caring for children and what we now know to be true. Be sure to make it very clear what is the myth and what we now know. Language barriers and learning disabilities can sometimes mean that individuals only take in part of what is said, and we don't want them to take home the wrong message. Put your focus and emphasis on what we now know to be true. It is best not to provide the myth in a written format. You may want to provide the correction to the myth in writing.

### **Follow-Up Questions**








It is helpful, whenever possible, to be able to check-in with participants in the weeks following the introduction of an activity to see if they have done the activity and how it has gone for them. This gives you an opportunity to encourage them to make the activity a regular part of their routine and to help them solve any problems they may have had. This can be done either with a group or individually. Some suggested questions are provided to help you start a discussion.

The following is a chart to identify which of the caregiver behaviours identified in this resource as promoting secure attachment are addressed by each of the Attachment Activities.

| Attachment Activities  | Caregiver behaviours that promote secure attachment |            |        |             |                 |                      |             |           |
|------------------------|---|------------|--------|-------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------|-----------|
|                        | Sensitive Responding                                | Comforting | Repair | Reciprocity | Supportive Play | Protect/ Take Charge | Loving Care | Closeness |
| Special Playtime       | ✓   |            |        | ✓           | ✓               |                      |             |           |
| Positive Attention     |   |            |        |             |                 |                      | ✓           |           |
| Snuggle Time           |   |            |        | ✓           |                 |                      | ✓           | ✓         |
| Mommy/ Daddy Detective | ✓   |            |        | ✓           |                 |                      |             |           |
| Making Daily Care Fun  |   |            |        |             |                 |                      | ✓           | ✓         |
| Make It Better         | ✓   | ✓          | ✓      |             |                 |                      |             |           |
| Take Charge            |   |            |        |             |                 | ✓                    | ✓           |           |
| Before Baby's Born     | ✓   |            |        |             |                 |                      | ✓           |           |
| What We Have Learned   | ✓   | ✓          | ✓      | ✓           |                 | ✓                    | ✓           |           |

## Group Session Suggestions

If this is your first time facilitating a group session, this section will provide some guidance and tips to help you do the best job possible. Even if you have experience facilitating groups, this section should provide a good review of various approaches and techniques used in group sessions. The basic ideas and topics covered include:

-  your role
-  getting to know your learners
-  planning a session
-  welcoming the learners
-  setting the learning climate
-  getting the most from Think, Tell & Do
-  teaching aids.

## Your role

For these group sessions, your role will be as a facilitator not a teacher. Your task is to provide an environment where everyone can learn together, in a setting that is not just safe but encouraging of open communication and the exchange of ideas. Most likely, you will also learn some new things, gain some new insights, and will grow as a result of your time spent with your learners.

## Getting to know your learners

It is important to understand who your learners are, what they are expecting from the group sessions, and how you can best provide a good learning experience for them. Like you, your learners bring their own unique set of attitudes, abilities, and interests to the class. While each may come with different expectations, you will need to be clear about what the goals are for the sessions and what they can expect. Adult learners want to be able to apply what they learn to their lives, so being clear how the material relates to them is important.



## Planning a session

It is important to feel confident about facilitating each session to introduce an activity. One thing that can help tremendously is being prepared, and that means having a plan. You should think about what you'd like to do during the session, what resources you need, and how much time it will take. The guidelines for each *Connections for Life* activity are designed to provide you with all the information you need to introduce the activity.

In addition, the following are a few things to think about when planning a session:

- ✿ estimate the amount of time it will take for each component (you may want to rehearse the session)
- ✿ if possible, review the background of your learners so you can anticipate any issues that might affect your session
- ✿ organize all your materials (e.g. flipchart paper and markers)
- ✿ think about the room that you will using and how you will set it up (chairs, tables, equipment, refreshments).

## Welcoming the learners

Before you actually get into the activities for the session, there are a few things you can do to make everyone comfortable.

- ✿ Warmly welcome everyone; smile, make eye contact, try to relax.
- ✿ Tell them a little about yourself.
- ✿ Get everyone to do a brief introduction of themselves (e.g. name and one other piece of information).
- ✿ Ask learners what their expectations are for the session or quickly review what will be covered and answer any questions that may arise.
- ✿ Indicate break times.



## Setting the learning climate

Some of your learners may be a little nervous about attending group sessions. They may feel like this for a number of reasons, including shyness, unknown expectations, or prior learning experiences which were unpleasant. It is important for you to “set the climate” for learning so that it is a safe and productive place to learn and grow together. Help everyone feel like he or she can share information with the group and not be judged.

- ✿ Model acceptance, support, and empathy.
- ✿ Communicate in ways that establishes trust and safety.
- ✿ Be genuine and honest (e.g. admit that you may not know something).
- ✿ Set the ground rules for the sessions (e.g. respect for others’ opinions, listening to others, can pass if you want to).
- ✿ Rather than saying a response is ‘wrong’, say something like, “Lots of people think this is true...” or “Now with new research we are learning that...”

## Getting the most from Think, Tell & Do

The guidelines for running the group sessions that are part of each of the Attachment Activities use three types of group learning techniques; Think, Tell, and Do. The following information will help you get the most from each of these techniques.



## Think

This is where you encourage the learners to think about what they already know and do.

### Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a way to get learners interested in a topic and to find out what they know about it already. Here are a few tips to use when brainstorming:

- ✿ set aside about five to ten minutes for the exercise; keep to the time
- ✿ explain the purpose and the rules of the activity to the group
- ✿ ask someone to record the ideas (preferably where everyone can see), or take on that role yourself
- ✿ end the activity when the time is up or when the group is running out of ideas
- ✿ discuss the ideas together and make categories (e.g., most practical), if necessary.

Brainstorming is an effective technique, and it works best if everyone understands and agrees to the ground rules. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- ✿ the idea is to come up with as many ideas as possible
- ✿ all ideas are good
- ✿ no one should judge an idea or a learner
- ✿ learners should keep their responses simple and short.

### Asking Questions

One of the most important, but often neglected, facilitation skills involves asking good questions. Questioning shifts the focus from you to the learner and encourages everyone to participate in the discussion. Here are some tips to keep in mind when asking questions in your session:

- ✿ don't single people out for answers; let learners volunteer
- ✿ give them enough time to think about the question and their answer
- ✿ sometimes, have learners discuss the question with a neighbour
- ✿ if you get a wrong answer, ask the group what they think, then correct
- ✿ encourage learners to explain the reason for the answers they gave
- ✿ throughout the session, give learners opportunities to ask questions.



## Tell

This is where you teach your learners new information about a topic. To help your learners understand this information:

- ✦ speak clearly and loudly enough so everyone can hear
- ✦ use gestures (hand, head, body movements) to emphasize your points
- ✦ use your voice to stress important points and to keep learners interested in what you have to say.
- ✦ maintain eye contact, move your gaze around the room
- ✦ change your position, move around the room
- ✦ use silence or pauses to encourage thinking, questions, etc.
- ✦ focus attention by using the personal (“I didn’t know this, but...”)
- ✦ use language that your learners will understand and watch to see that they are getting the information
- ✦ ask lots of questions and allow learners to ask questions.



## Demonstrations

People learn best by doing. First, show learners a skill and then ask them to try it out. When doing this type of activity, think about the following ideas.

- ✦ use real examples and stories for situations
- ✦ tell learners what you expect them to do and provide feedback
- ✦ give clear instructions for the activity
- ✦ use a handout or wall chart to show how an activity will be done
- ✦ start with what learners already know then move to new information
- ✦ let the learners practice the skill or technique
- ✦ act as a coach and provide positive feedback and corrections, followed by more positive feedback
- ✦ explain how learners can use the skill or technique at home.

## Teaching Aids

Everyone learns differently, so having some aids besides your voice can help your learners. Most people learn best when the information is presented both orally (speaking) and in writing. Some teaching aids that you may use include:

- ✦ handouts
- ✦ flipcharts
- ✦ blackboard.

When presenting information using these aids, keep in mind these tips:

- ✦ use print large enough for everyone to read
- ✦ only put on as much information as is necessary
- ✦ organize the information to make it easier for learners to follow and remember (e.g. charts, tables, numbers)
- ✦ use simple drawing to help show ideas.

Using a flipchart is an effective and easy-to-use way of recording the group’s ideas, the discussion, or, for reinforcing things you want them to remember. The large sheets of paper, usually mounted on an easel, can be flipped over (hence the name) to continue recording ideas, responses, etc. If the discussion warrants, you can easily flip back to earlier ideas recorded. Also, the sheets can be torn off and mounted to walls around the room (using tape or sticky tack). Some tips for using this simple teaching aid include:

- ✿ ensure you have enough paper for the session
- ✿ test the stability of the easel
- ✿ practice tearing off a sheet or two to ensure you are not fumbling later
- ✿ have tape or sticky tack on hand
- ✿ have a variety of coloured, water-based, “chisel-tip” pens on hand
- ✿ use the different colours to contrast, alternate, organize, or highlight
- ✿ don’t write down everything! Abbreviate and paraphrase
- ✿ write no more than eight lines, and not below table height
- ✿ pace your recording, interject questions for clarification and discussion
- ✿ don’t talk to the flipchart; write, then turn around and interact
- ✿ don’t block the view and feel free to walk around
- ✿ always ask permission to paraphrase; ask for clarifications
- ✿ if using prepared sheets, reveal only when the time comes.

Feel free to have participants use the flipchart themselves; you don’t always have to be in charge (or recording).

### A final word...

Facilitating is a skill that is honed with practice. While you might be somewhat nervous about how you will do the first time, simply understanding this fact will help alleviate the stress. Everyone makes mistakes when facilitating or teaching, and very rarely are they serious. Relaxing with the process and acknowledging the fact that you are there to learn with the learners will go a long way in making this an enjoyable learning experience for everyone!



# Connections for Life



*Attachment Resource Kit*

**SECTION VI:  
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**





## Attachment Resources

### *A Simple Gift Video Series*

The Hospital for Sick Children - Infant Mental Health Promotion (IMP) in Toronto has developed two award winning videos on attachment: *A Simple Gift: Comforting your Baby* and *A Simple Gift: Ending the Cycle of Hurt*. These resources present well-researched information about the importance of an infant's relationship with their caregivers.

For further information on IMP or to order the *A Simple Gift* videos go to: [www.sickkids.ca/imp](http://www.sickkids.ca/imp)

Or, contact IMP by phone at: (416) 813-7654 ext.1082  
or via e-mail: [imp.mail@sickkids.ca](mailto:imp.mail@sickkids.ca)

### *Attachment*

This is a series of 6 articles on attachment, by Dr. Susan Goldberg, an internationally recognized researcher in the area of attachment, based out of Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. This six-part series explores patterns of attachment, the implications of attachment across the child's life, and the various influences on attachment.

To view and print these articles go to: [www.aboutkidshealth.ca/News/SeriesArchive.aspx#Attachment](http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/News/SeriesArchive.aspx#Attachment)

### *BabyCues: A Child's First Language*

*The BabyCues* resource can be used to help parents, home visitors and other caregivers become more "tuned into" a baby or young child's feelings and needs by learning to understand and respond to their behavioural cues. This resource is available as a set of 52 cards or as a video.

To learn more about and order this resource go to: [www.ncast.org/p-baby-cues.asp](http://www.ncast.org/p-baby-cues.asp)

### ***The Centres of Excellence for Children's Wellbeing / Early Childhood Development***

*The Centres of Excellence for Children's Wellbeing* produce an Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development and a Bulletin. The Encyclopedia presents up-to-date information on a variety of topics, including attachment. This information includes how important it is, what do we know, and what can be done. It is presented in a synthesis and more detailed format. There are also articles presenting the perspectives of experts in the field. The Bulletin is produced twice a year and regularly includes articles related to attachment.

To view, print, or order these resources go to: [www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca](http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca)

### ***The ChildTrauma Academy***

*The ChildTrauma Academy* (CTA) is a unique collaborative of individuals and organizations working to improve the lives of high-risk children through direct service, research and education. By creating biologically-informed, child and family respectful practice, programs and policy The CTA seeks to help maltreated and traumatized children. A major activity of the CTA is to translate emerging findings about the human brain and child development into practical implications for the ways we nurture, protect, enrich, educate and heal children. Services and resources available include: training and education through a range of live, web-based and distance training; and multimedia educational materials including video, slide and print materials.

To learn more about the CTA and what they offer go to: [www.childtraumaacademy.org](http://www.childtraumaacademy.org)

### ***Circle of Security***

*The Circle of Security* (COS) group has developed user-friendly graphics / visual representations of different aspects of attachment, and other information sheets, that can be used to help parents better understand the needs of their children. These are part of an attachment intervention called the *Circle of Security*.

To download these resources go to: [www.circleofsecurity.org/downloads.html](http://www.circleofsecurity.org/downloads.html)

***Family, Front and Centre: A Support Resource Promoting Healthy Child Development***

The development of this resource was funded by the National Projects Fund of the Public Health Agency of Canada. *Family Front and Centre* is intended for frontline workers of Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) and Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) funded projects. The goal is to help CAPC/CPNP staff identify, understand and support children, families and communities using a strength-based approach to mental health. This resource is made up of a set of five practical, relevant, and easy to read books (available electronically) on topics important for healthy child development: attachment, attention, anxiety, aggression and self-esteem.

To view and download the *Family Front and Centre Resource*: [www.familyfrontandcentre.com](http://www.familyfrontandcentre.com)

***Feelings***

Prepared by the Public Health Agency of Canada, this book is for the parents of children from birth to age five. It's about children's feelings, how they express those feelings and how parents can respond to their children's feelings. The *Feelings* booklet focuses on the development of positive parent-child relationships, and promotes non-physical discipline of children. The book serves as a guide to enable parents to find alternative ways of understanding and dealing with their children's emotional responses as well as their own.

To order this book go to: [www.fedpubs.com/subject/health/feelings.htm](http://www.fedpubs.com/subject/health/feelings.htm)

***First Connections... make all the difference***

This Resource Kit on Infant Attachment was developed by Health Canada (now the Public Health Agency of Canada) with the expert guidance of professionals and researchers. The purpose of the resource and information sheets is to assist you in your work with expectant mothers and new parents in order to promote secure infant attachment. The Kit contains both professional resources and information for parents and other primary caregivers.

To view and download the *First Connections Resource Kit*:  
[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/mh-sm/mhp-psm/pub/fc-pc/index.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/mh-sm/mhp-psm/pub/fc-pc/index.html)

To order copies please contact: Health Canada Publications, 0900C2  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9

Telephone: (613) 954 5995      Fax: (613) 941 5366      e-mail: [info@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:info@hc-sc.gc.ca)

***The First Years Last Forever***

The Canadian Institute of Child Health has produced booklets and a video titled *The First Years Last Forever* for parents and caregivers on how they can promote a young child's healthy development. These include information on attachment.

To obtain copies go to: [www.cich.ca](http://www.cich.ca) and click on Resources and Publications.

To order the video by phone: 1-888-447-3400

Contact Info: Canadian Institute of Child Health  
384 Bank Street, Suite 300  
Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 1Y4

Tel: (613) 230-8838      Fax: (613) 230-6654      e-mail: [cich@cich.ca](mailto:cich@cich.ca)

***Sharing Attachment Practices Across Cultures: Learning from Immigrants and Refugees***

Beliefs, values, and practices regarding the attachment relationship differ around the world. There is an increasing number and diversity of immigrants and refugees coming to Canada from countries where attachment practices may differ from those which are dominant in Canada. This resource provides community-based information on parent-child attachment practices gathered across cultures, to inform program and service delivery. The development of this resource was funded by the National Projects Fund of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

To view and download the *Sharing Attachment Practices Across Cultures*:  
[www.attachmentcrosscultures.org](http://www.attachmentcrosscultures.org)

## Programs

The following are intervention programs designed to help improve the child-parent attachment relationship. To be able to offer these programs staff would require training.

### *Circle of Security*

*The Circle of Security*<sup>™</sup> (COS) Project is an innovative, first-of-its-kind early intervention program designed to alter the developmental pathway of parents and their young children. It is a user-friendly, visually based approach to helping parents better understand the needs of their children (utilizing extensive use of both graphics and video clips). It is based extensively upon attachment theory and current affective neuroscience. COS is a basic protocol that can be used in a variety of settings, from group sessions (20 weeks) to family therapy to home visitation.

To learn more about the *Circle of Security* go to: [www.circleofsecurity.org](http://www.circleofsecurity.org)

### *Les Services intégrés en périnatalité et pour la petite enfance* [Integrated Services for Vulnerable Families from Birth to First Years]

The ministry of health and social service in Quebec (ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec, 2005) in collaboration with the Quebec national institut of public health (Institut national de santé publique du Québec) has developed an intervention for vulnerable families and for young parents, *les Services intégrés en périnatalité et pour la petite enfance pour les familles vivant en contexte de vulnérabilité*. The program's goal is to maximize the potential for health and well-being and to incorporate the birth of children from vulnerable situations into successful life projects. One of the objectives is to foster complete child development by promoting attachment security and enhancing parental skills. A specific guide was created directed at promoting secure attachment by improving the caregiver behaviour as well as parent well-being and social support. This guide, called *l'Attachement au cœur du développement du nourrisson*, is based on an innovative theoretical framework and on best practices from around the world (Van den Boom, 1994 & 1995; Krupka, 1998; Bakermans-Kranenburg et al., 2003; Anisfeld et al., 1990; Culp et al., 1998; Olds, 1997 & 2002).

The guide and the program are available in French only at: [www.msss.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca)

### ***Make the Connection***

*Make the Connection* is a program for parents with babies, birth to one year. *Make the Connection* helps parents interact with their babies in ways that promote secure attachment, communication and brain development. This intensive and enjoyable program combines hands-on activities, parent reflection and discussion as well as personalized video feedback. *Make the Connection* can be offered to parents and babies in a nine-week group format, in home-visits or adapted for drop-in programs. *Make the Connection* training qualifies participants to become registered group leaders as well as increase their skills in supporting the parent-infant relationship, communication and early learning.

To learn more about this program go to: [www.firstthreeyears.org/programs.php](http://www.firstthreeyears.org/programs.php)

### ***Modified Interaction Guidance***

Interaction Guidance is an intervention method that has been used to reach caregivers who are difficult to engage, young and inexperienced, burdened by social adversity such as poverty, violence, and lack of education, have a limited capacity for introspection and/or cognitive limitations, and have resisted previous offers of help using more traditional psychotherapeutic methods. The *Modified Interaction Guidance* uses the principles of the traditional Interaction Guidance to improve sensitive responsiveness and promote secure attachment, but also focuses on reducing and/or eliminating caregiver ‘atypical’ behaviours associated with disorganized attachment.

Modified Interaction Guidance was developed by:

Dr. Diane Benoit, M.D., FRCPC  
Infant Mental Health Researcher, Practitioner and Educator  
The Hospital for Sick Children  
555 University Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario, M5G 1X8

Main number: (416) 813-1500      e-mail: [diane.benoit@sickkids.on.ca](mailto:diane.benoit@sickkids.on.ca)

### ***Pathways to Competence for Young Children: A Parenting Program***

*Pathways to Competence for Young Children* is a comprehensive yet flexible and practical program designed for parent educators and other professionals working with children and families. With this program professionals can help parents understand and manage their child's behaviour and take an active role in guiding social-emotional development. Although the focus of the program is broader, there is a section devoted to attachment. Developed from Sarah Landy's highly regarded child development book, *Pathways to Competence*, this manual-and-CD set shows how to set up, lead, and evaluate a parenting program for parents of children from birth to age seven.

To learn more about this program and to order the manual and CD go to:  
[www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/landy-8620/index.htm](http://www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/landy-8620/index.htm)

### ***Promoting First Relationships***

*Promoting First Relationships* is a curriculum (book, video and handouts) developed by NCAST for service providers to help parents and caregivers meet the social and emotional needs of young children by building nurturing and responsive relationships.

To learn more about this program go to: [www.ncast.org/p-pfr.asp](http://www.ncast.org/p-pfr.asp)

### ***Seeing is Believing***

*Seeing is Believing*<sup>®</sup> is a program that helps parents increase their sensitivity and responsiveness to their babies' cues. Through videotaping and guided viewing, *Seeing is Believing*<sup>®</sup> promotes perspective-taking by giving parents a chance to see, from the camera's point of view, what happens between them and their baby.

To learn more about this program go to:  
[www.education.umn.edu/ceed/coursesandtrainings/trainings/steepsib.htm](http://www.education.umn.edu/ceed/coursesandtrainings/trainings/steepsib.htm)

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# Connections for Life



*Attachment Resource Kit*

**APPENDICES**





# Appendix 1

## Referral Checklist

If you feel that a child is **not** receiving appropriate comfort, care or protection from the parent(s), you may need to refer the family for more intensive services. Complete the following checklist, then review the instructions for evaluating whether a referral is indicated.

### Parent Indicators

- the mother experienced depression or anxiety during pregnancy
- parent is currently suffering from depression, extreme anxiety or other mental health problems
- parent has unresolved trauma or loss of a significant person in their life
- death of a parent or other primary caregiver
- parent separation/divorce or high level of conflict
- parent is abusing substances and this interferes with the ability to appropriately respond to the child's needs or safely care for the child
- parent's lack of understanding of child development results in unrealistic expectations that are harmful or dangerous.

### Child Indicators

- child has chronic illness or disability that affects communication of attachment needs and/or the parent's ability to meet the child's needs
- child has experienced a disruption or break in a primary attachment relationship for an extended period of time (e.g. spent time in care)
- child is often emotionally upset, sad, anxious or worried beyond what can be expected from a child of that age
- child is unresponsive to parent or others beyond what can be expected for a child of that age

### **Parent-Child Relationship Indicators**

- parent behaves in a way that confuses, frightens or alarms a child repeatedly over time. This includes the parent:
  - responding in a way that does not match the child’s cues
  - giving mixed messages from the parent to the child
  - putting own needs before the child’s
  - showing fear or disorientation
  - being intrusive / negative toward the child
  - not being there for the child
- parent is physically or emotionally abusive or neglects the child
- parent repeatedly fails to protect the child from danger
- parent does not respond appropriately to the child’s attachment needs (i.e. consistently ignores or rejects the child’s needs or responds inconsistently).

When a child experiences one or more of the above risk factors regularly and intensely, or is regularly experiencing two or more, then it is very important for the family to be referred to an appropriately trained professional for an assessment and attachment intervention (if determined necessary).

Ideally, referral should be to a professional who has received supervised training in an attachment intervention. If this is not possible, then refer the family to an “infant and/or child mental health clinician” who is familiar with attachment and the factors that influence it.

#### *What You Can Do if There is No One To Refer To*

*If neither of the above are found in your community, you may want to bring together interested people from your community to explore the possibility of having members of your community trained in an attachment intervention. For a list of interventions you may want to consider, go to the programs in the Additional Resources section of this Guide.*

## Appendix 2

### Disrupted Attachment

Children with disrupted attachment histories frequently have difficulty eliciting nurturing care from caregivers.

Dr. Mary Dozier and colleagues have worked extensively with children who have disrupted attachment histories and their caregivers and have identified three key characteristics of children with disrupted attachment histories.

1. *Children with disrupted attachment histories, when experiencing distress can be highly avoidant or disruptive.* So rather than trying to illicit nurturing care from the caregiver when they're distressed, they will avoid the caregiver or engage in a behaviour that's very disruptive of the interaction with the caregiver. It's very important for parents of children with disrupted attachment histories to be able to interpret the child's cues accurately. These avoidant and/or difficult behaviours are how the child behaves when upset and it is very important to be able to provide them with the nurturing care that they are not necessary eliciting at those times.
2. *Parents of children with disrupted attachment histories can find it difficult to comfort the child when the child is highly distressed.* Parents need to explore that for themselves; to understand why it is that it's difficult for them to provide comfort for this highly distressed child, to become aware of what it elicits within themselves, and be able to recognize that in the moment, and come up with strategies that they can use to comfort the highly distressed child. Support from others can be helpful in doing this.
3. *Children with disrupted attachment histories often have difficulties with self-regulation.* The key strategies for parenting a child with disrupted attachment history is to be able to identify the early warning signs of distress, and to intervene at that point when the child's behaviour is escalating, but ideally prior to when the child is experiencing a full-blown meltdown. To be able to, in that moment, use empathy with that child. Reflect back to the child what the child seems to be experiencing emotionally. Say to the child, "looks like you're starting to have a hard time. I'm here to help. We can work it out together."

# Appendix 3

## Reactive Attachment Disorder

Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) is a diagnosis that can be given to children who show one of two patterns of inappropriate social behaviour.

- 1) Strongly contradictory or hostile social responses.
- 2) Indiscriminate seeking of comfort and nurturance.

The RAD diagnosis has been criticized by attachment researchers as not accurately representing attachment and is not commonly used by experts in the field of attachment.



## Before Baby's Born

Even before your baby is born, take time to think about and do things with your baby.

### Guidelines for introducing Before Baby's Born to a group:

#### Building on what you already do...



#### Think

Ask the participants to think about and share some things they do right now that focus on their expected baby. To help them get started, share some examples of things that you have done while pregnant or that other pregnant moms have done. Some examples include:

- ✦ paying attention to when the baby moves and responding by talking to the baby
- ✦ singing to or playing music for the baby

Ask participants when they think our relationship with our babies begins.



#### Tell

Research suggests a parent's relationship with their baby starts before the baby is even born and that this relationship is important right from the start. The quality of the relationship you develop with your baby will have an impact on how your child feels, thinks and behaves throughout life. You can help to start that relationship off on the right path by spending some time now focusing in a positive way on your baby and doing special activities that you can continue to do with your baby after your baby is born.

#### What is Before Baby's Born?

Provide the **Before Baby's Born** handout to participants.



#### Tell

**Before Baby's Born** is a way to start developing a good relationship with your baby right from the start. Spending time with your expected baby means thinking happy thoughts about your baby and doing special activities while your baby is still inside you. Many of these activities you can continue to do after your baby is born.

**Describe and discuss** the following important steps to **Before Baby's Born**. Use the additional information to enhance the discussion.

**Special activities you can do before your baby is born...**

- ✿ **Take time to notice if your baby is moving around.** When you feel your baby moving respond by talking to your baby.
- ✿ **Notice how your baby reacts to different things you do.** What do you notice after you've just eaten, exercised, gotten up from a rest, been in a loud place, sung to your baby, etc. ? Notice how your baby reacts and talk to your baby about it.
- ✿ **Spend time thinking about your baby.** Wonder what your baby is feeling and thinking. Think about what your baby will be like after she is born.
- ✿ **Sing, talk or read aloud to your baby.** For example during your bath or bedtime. Do this regularly. After your baby is born, keep doing these things.
- ✿ **Listen to soothing music with your baby.** Play the same music after the baby is born.
- ✿ **Learn some songs, finger plays or rhymes.** Practice saying them to your baby.
- ✿ **Encourage others** in your life to notice when baby is moving, to think about the baby, and to sing and talk to the baby.
- ✿ **Take time to take care of yourself.** Keep your stress level down, eat well, rest often, etc... This will be good for you and your baby.

★ **Continue to do these things after your baby is born.**



**Remember!!**

Come up with your own special time with your baby!



**Do**

Have participants think of an activity that they can do while pregnant, or give them some ideas. Teach them a simple lullaby or finger play nursery rhyme they could do now and continue to do after the baby is born. For example, you could teach the following finger play nursery rhymes:

*Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man.  
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.  
Roll it and pat it and mark it with "B"  
And put it in the oven for Baby and me.*

**Say it to your baby while doing the actions on your tummy, e.g. rolling, patting and marking a B.**

*Eency, Weency spider; Climbed up the waterspout  
Down came the rain; And washed poor Eency out.  
Out came the sun; And dried up all the rain  
And Eency, Weency spider  
Went up the waterspout again.*

**Say this to your baby while using your hand to be the spider that climbs up your tummy and the rain that washes down.**

Have participants try these out. Ask them how it feels to be focusing on their baby in their tummy. If they feel awkward, assure them it is common to feel this way at first, but that it will get easier and more enjoyable the more they do it.

### Why is Before Baby's Born important?



#### Think

**Brainstorm** reasons why **Before Baby's Born** is important. Be sure to include such points as:

- ✦ reminds you to think positive, happy thoughts
- ✦ helps you to get to know your developing baby
- ✦ helps you to prepare for when your baby is born
- ✦ gives you special activities to continue to do with your baby after she is born
- ✦ provides a good start to the relationship that is developing between you and your baby
- ✦ this relationship influences how your child will feel, think and behave throughout life

### Wrap-up



#### Think

Encourage participants to share their ideas on how they will spend time with their baby – **Before Baby's Born**. If they feel awkward or uncomfortable about focusing on and talking to their baby before the baby is born, encourage them to:

- ✦ think about how it is helping give a good start to their relationship with their baby
- ✦ give it a chance, it will become easier with practice
- ✦ set aside quiet time each day to spend time with their baby
- ✦ talk to other pregnant moms about what they do



## Before Baby's Born

*Even before your baby is born, take time to think about and do things with your baby.*

Your relationship with your baby starts before your baby is even born. The relationship you develop with your baby will have an impact on how your child will feel, think, and behave throughout life.

**Before Baby's Born** is a way to start developing a good relationship with your baby right from the start. Spending time with your expected baby means thinking happy thoughts about your baby and doing special activities while your baby is still inside you. Many of these activities you can do even after your baby is born.

### Special activities you can do Before Baby's Born...

- ✿ Notice if your baby is moving and respond by speaking to your baby
- ✿ Notice how your baby reacts to different things you do
- ✿ Spend time thinking about your baby – what is she thinking, what will she be like?
- ✿ Sing, talk or read aloud to your baby
- ✿ Listen to soothing music with your baby
- ✿ Learn some songs, finger plays or rhymes and practice saying them to your baby
- ✿ Encourage others to notice when the baby is moving, think about the baby, sing and talk to the baby
- ✿ Take time to take care of yourself

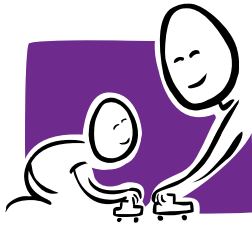
★ Continue to do these things after your baby is born.



**Remember!**

Come up with your own special time with your baby!





## Special Playtime

*A time to play where your child leads and you follow.*

### Guidelines for introducing Special Playtime to a group:

#### Building on what you already do...



#### Think

Talk about the many roles that parents play. Have participants **brainstorm** a list of their roles as a parent. If they get stuck, give them some suggestions: teacher, playmate, protector, limit-setter, role model, provider of comfort, meeting needs, etc.



#### Tell

*An important role for a parent is to be a 'secure base'; someone your child can rely on to be there for her as she explores and learns about the world. This helps your child learn to trust you. **Special Playtime** is a way to practice 'being there' for your child.*

#### What is Special Playtime?


Provide the **Special Playtime** handout to participants.



#### Tell

***Special Playtime** is a time to give your child your undivided attention, to follow your child's lead and learn what your child feels and thinks. This helps your child know that she is important to you. **Special Playtime** is important for children of all ages.*

**Describe and discuss** the following important steps to **Special Playtime**: Use the additional information to enhance the discussion.



## Important!

Pay attention to your child's emotional needs!

- ✦ **WATCH** your child's face, notice cues about what he is thinking and feeling,
- ✦ **WAIT** until your child invites you to play, and
- ✦ **WONDER** what your child is feeling and thinking.



**For infants (before your baby can sit independently):**

- ✿ Place your baby in a safe place where he can move freely e.g. on the floor or on your lap.
- ✿ Get close and face your baby so you can see her face and look into her eyes.
- ✿ Follow your baby's lead; copy his emotional tone, gestures, sounds, expressions, etc.
- ✿ Show joy and delight. Watch and respond to your baby's face and actions with interest.
- ✿ Describe to your baby what she is doing and feeling e.g. "You're smiling because you like it when I talk to you."



**Remember!!**

Babies tell you when they've had enough by turning away. Pause and watch. If baby continues to turn away, change activities. Try to do this before baby gets frustrated and fussy.

Babies do not misbehave.

**When your child can sit independently:**

- ✿ Focus on your child. Give your child your full attention.
- ✿ Say: "Let's have your Special Playtime. What would you like to do?"
- ✿ Have toys within reach. Have a variety of age-appropriate toys.
- ✿ Get close and face your child so you can see her face and look into her eyes.
- ✿ Let your child pick and direct the activity. Follow your child's lead. Sit quietly and only join in when invited to do so. Your child may invite you using words or motions and eye contact.
- ✿ Ask no questions and give no commands! Do not try to teach or draw attention to things.
- ✿ Show joy and delight and that you find her play interesting. Watch and respond to your child's face and actions with interest.

Sometimes toddlers or older children misbehave. **If your child misbehaves**, turn away for a few moments. If the misbehaviour could damage something or harm someone or if the misbehaviour continues, **take charge in a kind way**. Say calmly "Special Playtime is over for now. We will have Special Playtime again soon." If you can, say when, then stick to it.



**Do**

**Demonstrate Special Playtime** with a willing child or have a parent role play. Describe what you are doing as you do the activity. **\*Make the point you need to let the "child" lead the play.**

Have a volunteer parent role play a child playing, then try to teach, take over or interfere with her play. Ask the volunteer to describe how this makes her feel. Then **demonstrate Special Playtime** by letting the volunteer lead the play and ask how this makes her feel.

## Why is Special Playtime important?



### Think

**Brainstorm** reasons why **Special Playtime** is important. Be sure to include such points as:

- ✦ helps your child learn to trust you
- ✦ your child feels important and this helps build self-confidence
- ✦ creates physical and emotional closeness - promotes good feelings and cooperation
- ✦ helps to build a healthy relationship (resulting in fewer behaviour problems).

## How to include Special Playtime



### Think

**Brainstorm** ways to give a child your full attention. Include the following points:

- ✦ remove distractions, e.g. turn off the TV, try not to do it when upset, busy, or rushed
- ✦ sit at your child's level so that you can see his face and look into his eyes
- ✦ if you have more than one child - give each child their own **Special Playtime**. If this is not possible, try and give each child moments of your full attention.



### Tell

Have **Special Playtime** regularly (at least 2 to 3 times a week). Your child will come to look forward to **Special Playtime**. Try and stick to a regular time to avoid disappointing your child.



### Think

**Brainstorm** good times to have **Special Playtime**. Some suggestions include:

- ✦ after nap or snack (i.e. when a child is active and less fussy)
- ✦ after a separation (i.e. when a child may want that extra attention).



### Tell

How long you spend doing **Special Playtime** depends on two factors:

1. Your child's age – for older children, up to 20 minutes is reasonable. For infants and younger children, try shorter, more frequent sessions.
2. Yours and your child's comfort - at first it may feel awkward, but as you both become more comfortable and confident with this style of play, it will be easier and more enjoyable.

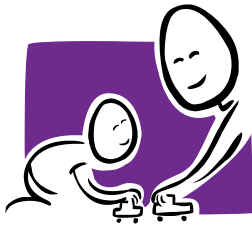
The actual play may not be interesting to you, since it will be at the child's level. What is important is to show an interest in what your child is feeling and thinking.

## Wrap-up



### Think

Review the importance of **Special Playtime**. Encourage participants to share their ideas on how they will include **Special Playtime** in their regular care for their child.



## Special Playtime

*A time to play where your child leads and you follow.*

**Special Playtime** is a time to give your child your undivided attention, to follow your child's lead and learn what your child feels and thinks. This helps your child know that she is important to you. **Special Playtime** is for children of all ages.



### Important!

Pay attention to your child's emotional needs!

- ✦ **Watch** your child's face - notice what he is feeling and thinking
- ✦ **Wait** until your child invites you to play
- ✦ **Wonder** what your child is feeling and thinking

### Infant

- ✦ **Place your baby in a safe place where he can move freely**
- ✦ **Get close, face your baby, and look into her eyes**
- ✦ **Follow your baby's lead**
- ✦ **Show joy and delight**
- ✦ **Describe to your baby what she is doing and feeling**



### Remember!

- Babies tell you when they've had enough by turning their eyes away.
- Babies **do not** misbehave!

### When your child can sit independently

- ✦ **Focus on your child**
- ✦ **Say: "Let's have your Special Playtime. What would you like to do?"**
- ✦ **Have a variety of toys within reach**
- ✦ **Get close and face-to-face**
- ✦ **Let your child pick and direct the activity**
- ✦ **Ask no questions and give no commands**
- ✦ **Show joy and delight and that you find her play interesting**

If your toddler or older child misbehaves, turn away for a few moments. If the behaviour could damage something or harm someone, or continues, **take charge in a kind way**. Say: "**Special Playtime** is over now. We'll have **Special Playtime** again soon."



### Remember!

Give your child your full attention during **Special Playtime**.



## Take Charge

Keep your child safe, regulate emotions, teach appropriate behaviour and set reasonable limits by Taking Charge in a kind way.

### Guidelines for introducing Take Charge to a group:

#### Building on what you already do...



#### Tell

There are times when you need to **Take Charge** in a firm but warm and loving way to keep your child safe, help regulate or manage emotions, teach appropriate behaviour, and set reasonable limits.



#### Think

Have participants **brainstorm** the different ways that they already **Take Charge**. Some examples include:

- Keep infant/child safe (e.g. from falling or being burned)
- Have child help clean up
- Help infant/child go to sleep at a regular time
- Help infant/child calm down when upset

#### What is Take Charge?

Provide the **Take Charge** handout to group participants.



#### Tell

When you **Take Charge** in a firm but warm way consistently, it helps your children feel safe, protected and cared for, and learn to regulate (or manage) their emotions and behaviour on their own.

**Describe and discuss** the ways parents need to **Take Charge** for their infants and children. Use the additional information to enhance discussion:

#### Infant (before child can move about on own)

- ✳ **Keep your baby as safe as possible.** For example, keep your baby safe from falling, things that could fall on baby, sharp objects, getting burned, people that might harm them, etc.
- ✳ **Protect your baby from frightening or overwhelming situations.** For example, keep your baby from experiencing violence in real life or on television.
- ✳ **Regulate (manage) your baby's emotions by responding appropriately.** For example, encourage positive emotions by showing delight when your baby's is delighted, smiling back when your baby smiles at you. When your baby becomes distressed, let her know you understand how she feels and then help her to return to a calmer, happier state. \*Refer to page on **Take Charge for Babies** at the end of these Guidelines to guide further discussion on regulating emotions.
- ✳ **When working with groups of parents with only infants, you may or may not choose to cover the following information, which is more relevant to older children.**



Once your child is able to move about on her own, it is important for you to find a balance between encouraging your child to explore the world and ensuring that your child is safe and cared for.

**Once a child can move about on own and understand you:**

- ✿ **Make the surroundings as safe as possible so that your child is free to explore.** For example, remove dangerous objects from reach, put up baby gates at stairs, etc...
- ✿ **Warn your child about things that can hurt him.** For example, warn about things that can burn, cars on the road, dogs that can bite. For older children; warn about people that might hurt them, unsafe places to play, etc.
- ✿ **Protect your child from frightening and overwhelming situations.** For example, keep child from experiencing or seeing violence in real-life or on television. If your child does have a frightening or upsetting experience, help your child to review the experience so that the memories can become part of the child's self-narrative (story about self).
- ✿ **Help your child to regulate emotions.** For example, helping her to calm down when upset and return to a positive, calm emotional state. By helping your child deal with overwhelming emotions you help her learn to eventually do this for herself.
- ✿ **Teach appropriate behaviour.** Be a role model and give praise for appropriate behaviour, describing what you are praising.
- ✿ **Set reasonable limits in a predictable and kind way.** Make consequences brief, immediate, and relevant. Be consistent and always follow through with the consequences that have been set. Do not suggest consequences you will not or can not carry out.



## Remember!!

Try to **Take Charge** in a calm and kind way as much as possible. The idea is to keep your child safe and to teach your child, not to punish!



## Think

**Brainstorm** appropriate behaviours to teach and limits to set for children. Examples include:

- ✿ child's behaviour is safe
- ✿ child respects the needs and feelings of others
- ✿ child's behaviour does not hurt others or damage things
- ✿ child participates in cleaning up after play



## Tell

It can be difficult to **Take Charge**. You may at times become angry, or not know what to do. Sometimes you may worry your child will get mad or not love you if you **Take Charge**. It is OK for your child to get angry with you. This will not make your child stop loving you. When your child becomes angry, calmly acknowledge your child's feelings but continue to **Take Charge**.



## Think

Have participants talk about how they feel when they **Take Charge**. **Brainstorm** ways to **Take Charge** in a firm but kind and loving way. Some ideas to consider:

- ✦ Change the environment or suggest another activity for your child.
- ✦ Ask for help with a job, make it into a game.
- ✦ Suggest other ways to do things.
- ✦ Show your child what you expect.
- ✦ Keep requests simple.
- ✦ Give your child information and reasons.
- ✦ Consider giving choices rather than orders. (Limit choices to a few you can live with.)
- ✦ Try to understand the feelings and needs behind your child's behaviour. Don't take it personally.
- ✦ Make sure your expectations are reasonable for your child's age and developmental level.
- ✦ If you feel angry, take time to calm yourself. When necessary, put your child in a safe place and walk away.



## Do

You may want to have participants role play, where one is a child misbehaving or doing something that could put her in danger, and the other is the parent using one or more of these strategies in a kind way.

### Why is Taking Charge important?



## Think

Ask participants to think about their own childhood. Do they recall having a parent or other adult in their life that would **Take Charge** e.g. keep them safe, set limits etc. How did this make them feel? **\*Remember this could be a sensitive and emotional topic for some.**

**Brainstorm** the benefits of **Taking Charge**. Be sure to include the following:

- ✦ child feels cared for and protected
- ✦ child is kept safe
- ✦ child learns over time to regulate (manage) own emotions and behaviours

### Wrap-up



## Think

Review the importance of **Take Charge**. Encourage participants to share when they will **Take Charge** and how they will do this.





## Take Charge for Babies

### Parents need to Take Charge for babies to regulate emotions:




Parents of young babies know that they must do everything for their babies, who are totally dependent on them. Babies do best when their parents **Take Charge** in a calm, confident, loving way, to help keep them calm and happy as much as possible.

Parents are able to **Take Charge** when they can figure out their babies' cues and respond before the babies get really upset, for example:




-  they recognize when their babies are tired and help them to sleep
-  they can tell when their babies are hungry and feed them.

When parents can respond to their babies' cues quickly and appropriately, their babies learn to use other signals than crying to get their needs met. Crying gradually becomes a last resort.





### How do parents learn to read and understand their babies' cues?

-  Stopping and thinking about what might be causing their baby distress, e.g. by asking themselves, "What is my baby feeling right now? What does my baby need at this moment?"
-  Figuring out by guessing and trial and error what will help calm their baby.
-  Paying attention to see what works and what doesn't over time.

### What happens when parents regulate their babies' emotions regularly?

-  Baby gets to practice what it feels like to be calm, and return to calm.
-  Baby's calming reflex is triggered more and more quickly as the parent repeats the soothing behaviours.
-  Baby comes to anticipate that the parent will respond to his distress. This develops trust that the parent is reliable and dependable and develops the baby's sense of well-being.

### How does a parent providing regulation regularly help babies and children learn to regulate their own feelings (self-regulate)?

-  As their brains develop and they can remember more and more, these children learn to trust that they can depend on their parents to help them.
-  Eventually, children who have experienced this learn to figure out what they need for themselves. Gradually, they learn to identify their own feelings and to ask for what they need.
-  Over time and with lots of experience of their parents calmly regulating their emotions, toddlers gain enough experience and skill to begin to calm themselves (i.e. trigger their own calming reflex).
-  Self-regulation of emotions is a long process of trial and error for children and parents. Children still need their parents to help them get through difficult emotional times in different ways throughout their growing-up.





## Take Charge

*Keep your child safe, regulate emotions, teach appropriate behaviour and set reasonable limits by Taking Charge in a kind way.*

There are times when parents need to **Take Charge** in a firm but warm and loving way to keep their child safe, help regulate emotions or manage emotions, teach appropriate behaviour, and set reasonable limits. When parents do this consistently, it helps their children feel safe, protected and cared for, and eventually learn to regulate their own emotions and behaviour.

### Infant (before child can move about on own):

- ✦ **Keep your baby as safe as possible** e.g. safe from falling or getting burned.
- ✦ **Protect your baby** from frightening or overwhelming situations e.g. protect from experiencing or seeing violence in real life or on television.
- ✦ **Regulate (manage) your baby's emotions** by responding appropriately e.g. encourage positive emotions and help calm when distressed.

### Once a child can move about on own and understand you:

- ✦ **Make the surroundings as safe as possible** so that she is free to explore e.g. remove dangerous objects from reach and put up baby gates at stairs.
- ✦ **Warn your child** about things that can hurt her e.g. warn about things that can burn, cars, dogs; for older children; people that might hurt them and unsafe places to play.
- ✦ **Protect your child** from knowing about frightening and overwhelming situations e.g. violence in real life or on T.V. If this is not possible, help your child to review upsetting experiences.
- ✦ **Help your child** to regulate emotions e.g. help an upset child to calm down and return to a more positive, calm emotional state.
- ✦ **Teach appropriate behaviour** e.g. be a role model and give descriptive praise.
- ✦ **Set reasonable limits** in a predictable and kind way e.g. make consequences relevant, be consistent, and follow-through.



## Remember!

Try to **Take Charge** in a calm and kind way as much as possible. The idea is keep your child safe and to teach your child, not to punish!



## Make it Better

When you are not able to meet your child's needs for comfort, care and protection right away, it is important to help your child feel better.

### Guidelines for introducing Make it Better to a group:

#### Building on what you already do...



#### Think

Ask participants to **brainstorm** about times when their child wanted something while they were busy. For example they were:

- in the middle of making dinner
- on the way out the door
- on the phone
- grocery shopping
- putting children to bed
- visiting with company

**Ask** about times when they didn't understand what their child wanted. Maybe they were distracted or their child was having a temper tantrum.

**Ask** about how their child reacted when they did not meet their child's need. How did this make them feel?



#### Tell

*Parents cannot always meet their child's needs right away. This may happen because you are busy, distracted by other things, or do not understand what your child needs. For example, when your child is upset and out of control, you may have a hard time reading your child's cues or knowing how to help.*

Children become distressed when their parents do not meet their needs. When this happens parents often feel guilty or that they are not "good enough". However, it is through experiencing distress and then having the parent help **Make it Better**, that children learn that the safe and secure relationship with their parent will set things right. These experiences help children learn to deal with difficulty and that others have needs too.

It is important, however, to recognize that these delays can be painful for a child. Even though this is a part of normal, everyday life, a child feels the pain of having to put aside his needs and feelings much more than the parent does. Children don't have enough life experience to know that their parents can still love them when the need that feels so important to them is not met immediately.



#### Think

To encourage participants to reflect on how not having their needs met might feel for their child, ask how it would feel if someone they looked to for support didn't return their calls.



## Tell

When you delay meeting your child's need, what is important is that you take the time to help your child feel better. If you take time to quickly and consistently reassure your child that her needs and feelings are important to you, she will feel trust and security in the relationship. Being loved and valued by you is what your child needs the most.



## Think

Ask participants about ways that they have helped their child feel better when upset.

### What is Make it Better?

Provide the **Make it Better** handout to group participants.



## Tell

You may not always be able to meet your child's needs right away. This could be because you do not understand what your child needs, are distracted by thinking of other things, or are busy. Children become distressed and upset when their parents do not meet their needs. This is natural and OK. But it is important to help your child feel better when this happens. **Make it Better** is about helping your child feel better by comforting and meeting her needs.

**Describe and discuss** each of the steps to **Make it Better**. To enrich the discussion emphasize the following points:

- ✿ **Comfort your child** - It is important to comfort a child who is distressed (upset, hurt, frightened or ill) as soon as possible. Taking care of the child's feelings can happen right away, even if you are unable to take care of your child's need right way.
- ✿ **Figure out what he needs** - A distressed child may not be clear about how they feel or what they need – be a detective and look for clues. \*To help parents understand their child's feelings and needs behind difficult behaviour, you may want to review the "Circle of Repair".
- ✿ **Tell him you now understand what he needs** - It is important to let your child know that you understand what his need is. If you did not understand the need earlier, apologize. This helps your child understand that you care and his needs are important to you.
- ✿ **Meet her need for comfort, care or protection as soon as you can** - Respond in a calm, warm and kind way. Your child learns from you how to deal with difficulty.
- ✿ **Try to meet your infant's needs as quickly as you can** - When caring for an infant it can sometimes be difficult to tend quickly to an infant's needs and keep up with other expectations. Until the infant is a little older, you may need to lower you expectations of what you can do. To meet your child's needs you could: wait until your baby doesn't need your attention to do other things, carry your baby while doing things, or ask for help. The reward will be an infant who gradually learns to cry less over time.

### When you are too busy to respond right away:

Do the **Comfort**, **Figure out** and **Tell** already described – Once you know what your child's need is:

- ✦ **Determine whether you can put off meeting your child's need** while you finish what you are doing. It's okay to occasionally put off meeting your child's needs until a better time, unless your child is an infant or the need is urgent (e.g. the child is hurt, in danger, very upset or very uncomfortable).
- ✦ **Explain that you need to finish what you are doing** - This helps your child learn that you have needs too.
- ✦ **Make a plan with her for when you can meet her need** as soon as you can - When making a plan with your child to meet his need, make eye contact and be sure your child understands the plan.
- ✦ **Follow your plan and meet her need when you said you would** - Do what you say you will. This lets your child know that you care and are willing to help. This helps your child learn to trust you.



### Do

**Brainstorm** ways to **Make it Better** in the various situations described by participants at the beginning of the session.

### Why is Make it Better important?



### Think

**Brainstorm** reasons why **Make it Better** is important. Be sure to include:

- ✦ lets your child know you cares and think he is important
- ✦ helps your child learn to trust you
- ✦ helps your child feel some control over what happens to her
- ✦ helps your child learn to deal with difficult situations (first with your help and eventually on his own)

### Wrap-up



### Think

Review the importance of **Make it Better**. Encourage participants to share their ideas on how they will **Make it Better** for their child when they are not able to meet their child's need right away.



## Make it Better

*When you are not able to meet your child's needs for comfort, care and protection right away, it is important to help your child feel better.*

You cannot always meet your child's needs right away. This can either be because you do not understand what your child needs, are distracted or are busy. Children may become distressed and upset when this happens. **Make it Better** is about helping your child feel better by comforting your child and meeting her need as soon as you can in a calm, warm and kind way.

### To Make it Better you should:

- ✦ **Comfort** your child
  - ✦ **Figure out** what he needs
  - ✦ **Tell** him you now understand what he needs
  - ✦ **Meet his need** for comfort, care or protection as soon as you can
- ★ **Try to meet your baby's needs as quickly as you can.** You could:
- ✦ **Wait** until your baby doesn't need your attention to do the things you need to do
  - ✦ **Carry your baby** while doing things, when possible (e.g. in a sling or other carrier)
  - ✦ **Ask for help** when your baby is showing he needs you and other things need doing

### If you are busy and your child can understand a plan to meet her need later:

- ✦ **Do the Comfort, Figure out and Tell** described above
  - ✦ **Determine** if you can put off meeting your child's need and finish what you are doing
  - ✦ **Explain** that you need to finish what you are doing
  - ✦ **Make a plan with her** for when you can meet her need as soon as you can
  - ✦ **Follow your plan** and meet her need when you said you would
- ★ **Respond to and meet your child's needs in a calm, warm and kind way.**



## Remember!

There are times when a child's need for comfort care and protection should not or cannot wait. For example, if the child is an infant; or the child is hurt, in danger, very upset, or very uncomfortable.



## Mommy/Daddy Detective

You are a detective solving the mystery of what your child is feeling and needs by looking for “clues” in your child’s behaviour.

### Guidelines for introducing Mommy/Daddy Detective to a group:

#### Building on what you already do...



#### Think

Ask participants to **brainstorm** the signals and behaviours that their children use to give clues about what they are feeling and need. Encourage them to think of as many clues as possible. If they get stuck, write the larger categories (e.g. making faces) and a few examples to get them started. Some examples of clues include:

- ✳ **Making faces:** smiles, frowns, scrunches up nose, sticks tongue out, makes eye contact, copies caregiver’s gestures, looks relaxed and interested, etc.
- ✳ **Making sounds:** fusses, coos, babbles, cries, screams, grunts, giggles, etc.
- ✳ **Moving their bodies:** squirms, reaches towards or away from you, turns away, closes eyes, yawns, pushes or pulls away, looks unsettled, rooting and sucking gestures, fingers in mouth, rubs eyes, pulls on ear, throws a temper tantrum, etc.



#### Tell

*All children (even babies) give clues about what they are feeling and what they need. A child’s clues could be saying that he needs attention, that he needs you to do something or change what you are doing, or that he’s had enough of something. Particularly before they can talk, children use behaviour and body language to tell us things. But even after children learn words, they still use their bodies, faces and behaviour to let others know what they are feeling and need.*

**Brainstorm** some things children may be feeling and need when they give clues. Write the ideas down. Some examples include:

**Hungry** - needs to be fed  
**Uncomfortable** - needs to be changed  
**Cold** - needs to be warmed up  
**Bored** - needs attention  
**Afraid or sad** - needs comfort

**Tired** - needs to rest or sleep  
**Happy** – needs to share happiness  
**Over-stimulated/had enough** – needs to stop  
**Frustrated** - needs help (just enough)  
**Stress/anxious** – needs to be removed from cause or cause removed

### What is Mommy/Daddy Detective?

Provide the **Mommy/Daddy Detective** Handout to participants.



### Tell

*Mommy/Daddy Detective is a fun way to try to understand and respond to your child's clues. You are a detective looking for "clues" in your child's behaviour. Your mission is to solve the mystery of what your child is feeling and needs. When you solve the mystery, you will be rewarded by a happier child. The importance of being a detective starts right when your baby is born and continues throughout your child's life, with new mysteries to solve every day.*

**Describe and discuss** the following important steps to **Mommy/Daddy Detective**. Use the additional information to enhance the discussion.

With a child of any age:

- ✦ **Describe out loud your child's clues** - These clues will be in your child's behaviour, face and body language.
- ✦ **Try to figure out what the clues mean** - Think of your child's likes and dislikes. Does your child like quiet or dislike sudden changes? Think of your child's daily schedule. Is it close to naptime? Mealtime? Playtime? Quiet time? \*Don't expect to understand every clue right away. You may not know immediately what your child needs, but don't give up. Even if you can't figure out the reason for your child's behaviour, your child will appreciate that you are responding and that you are trying to help.
- ✦ **Say what you think your child is feeling and needs** – Even when children can talk, they do not always have the words to tell you what they are feeling and need. Help your child by giving him words for his feeling and needs. Try to avoid asking your child what he is feeling and needing, since he may not know. Your role is to help him figure this out.
- ✦ **Test your idea** - By responding to meet the need you think your child has.
- ✦ **Watch for new clues** – Watch how your child responds. Your child's expressions, movements, and reactions are clues about whether you have it right.
- ✦ **Follow your child's new clues** - If your child responds to you and shows interest in what you are doing, continue what you are doing. If your child does not like or is not interested in what you are doing, do more detective work and try something else.



### Do

**Demonstrate Mommy/Daddy Detective** by using the list of clues the group has generated by brainstorming. Have a participant say one of the clues out loud. Ask her to try to figure out what the clue means, or make it a group activity. Show how a detective does not always get it right at first and may need to try out different things before she can solve the mystery.



Give volunteers other clues and ask them to be a detective and work through the steps.

The following are examples of some clues and what a **Mommy/Daddy Detective** might say:

- ✿ “You are making happy noises and looking at me when I look at you and speak to you. You like it when I talk to you... Now you are looking away and getting a bit fussy, I think you’ve had enough of that, let’s try something else. I’ll pick you up and rock you and see if you like that.”
- ✿ “You look a little uncomfortable and squirmy. I’ll check and see if your diaper needs changing... No. Let me feel you and see if you are too warm... Yes, you feel warm, let’s take some clothes off.”
- ✿ “I see you are rubbing your eyes and getting a bit fussy. I think you are tired. Let’s try lying you down and I’ll sing you a lullaby... No, you don’t want that. Let’s try snuggling up and I’ll read you a story.”
- ✿ “I see you are upset and crying. I wonder if you are sad because Daddy left. Would you like a hug? No? Maybe you are frustrated and angry because Mommy is not helping you. Would you like Mommy to help you?”



## Tell

*Sometimes, no matter how hard you try, you simply cannot figure out what your child is trying to tell you. If you have done your best, this is ok. Just holding or being there for your child helps your child know that you care. If you become frustrated and need to calm down, be sure your child is safe and walk away until you have calmed down. If you need to - ask for help.*

*Remember, infants and children are also learning how to read and understand the parent’s behaviour and signals. Do your best to be clear about what you are doing and why.*

## Why is Mommy/Daddy Detective important?



## Think

**Brainstorm** the benefits of being a **Mommy/Daddy Detective**. Be sure to include:

- you get better at recognizing and understanding your child’s clues
- your child feels you care and are paying attention
- your child learns to trusts that you will be there when needed
- your child feels he can influence what happens to him
- your child learns words to express what she feels and needs
- your child has fewer behaviour problems because his needs are understood and responded to

## Wrap-up



## Think

Review the importance of being a detective. Encourage participants to talk about times they can practice their detective skills.





## Mommy/Daddy Detective

*You are a detective solving the mystery of what your child is feeling and needs by looking for "clues" in your child's behaviour.*

**Mommy/Daddy Detective** is a fun way to try to understand and respond to your child's clues. When you solve the mystery you will be rewarded by a happier child. The importance of being a detective starts right when your baby is born and continues throughout your child's life, with new mysteries to solve every day.

### To solve the mystery of what your child is trying to tell you:

- ✦ Describe out loud your child's clues
- ✦ Try to figure out what the clues mean
- ✦ Say out loud what you think your child is feeling and needs
- ✦ Test your idea by responding to meet the need you think your child has
- ✦ Watch for new clues in how your child responds
- ✦ Follow your child's new clues



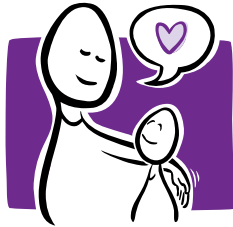
### Remember!

Don't expect to understand every clue right away. Don't give up. Even if you can't figure out the exact reason for your child's behaviour, your child will appreciate that you are responding and trying to help.



### Important!

Even when children can talk, they do not always have the words to tell you what they are feeling and need. Help your child by giving him the words. Try not to ask your child what he is feeling and needs, as he may not know and need your help to figure that out.



## Positive Attention

Notice your child doing positive things then let your child know what he did that was positive and why it was positive.

### Guidelines for introducing Positive Attention to a group:

#### Building on what you already do...



#### Think

Have participants **brainstorm** things they praise their children for and how they do it.

#### What is Positive Attention?

Provide the **Positive Attention** handout to participants.



#### Tell

**Positive Attention** reminds you to notice the positive things your child does throughout the day. Look for your child doing something positive and then tell your child what she did that was positive and why it was positive. Do this as often as possible. Try to do this at least three times a day, no matter how small the behaviour might be. **Positive Attention** is good for all ages.

**Describe and discuss** the following important steps to **Positive Attention**. Use the additional information to enhance the discussion.

#### To give Positive Attention you should:

- ✦ **Pay attention to your child.** Notice anything your child does that is positive.
- ✦ **Focus on the positive.** This helps your child know how to behave.
- ✦ **Show your pleasure.** This could be with a smile, a hug, a pat on the back, a squeeze on the arm, a kiss on the cheek, etc...
- ✦ **Give descriptive praise.** Say what the child did that was positive and why it was positive. Do this right away. Use simple, direct statements. For example, you could say, "I really liked the way you helped your friend find the toy she wanted. It showed you are caring and helpful."



**With an infant:**

- ✿ **This is a good time to practice saying positive things to your child.** Do all of the things described on page one. It is never too early to start! Your baby may not understand your words at first, but she will understand the look on your face and the tone of your voice. Before you know it, she will understand the words too. Being positive from the beginning will help you to make it a habit as your child grows.
- ✿ **Watch and describe your infant's behaviour out loud.** For example, when your baby smiles, tell him how special his smile is.
- ✿ **Have a conversation with your baby.** When your baby is babbling, tell her what a wonderful story she is telling. Let your baby know that you see how hard she is trying to pick up or reach for something.



**Remember!!**

Noticing and providing **Positive Attention**, such as descriptive praise, even for the smallest of behaviours, can make a difference in how your child feels and behaves.



**Do**

**Demonstrate** by using descriptive praise to tell participants something positive they have done and why it was positive, e.g. "I sure liked the way you smiled and said hello when you came in, it made me feel you were happy to see me."

**Why is Positive Attention important?**



**Tell**

*It is easy to say negative things, but they can be very hurtful. The goal of this activity is to practice and get into the habit of giving our children **Positive Attention**. Children like to please their parents but often do not know how. Descriptive praise lets your child know how to behave, rather than how not to behave. Also, when you are consistently positive towards your child, you are actually teaching your child how to behave in a positive way with others.*



**Think**

Ask participants to think of two different kinds of praise they've received;

- 1) A general statement about them as a person e.g. "you're a good person", and
- 2) A description of what was appreciated and why, e.g. "You're a good listener. I feel better when somebody really listens to me".

Ask them to share how each type of comment made them feel. Discuss the importance of how praise is worded.



## Tell

Praise works better when it is descriptive and focuses on what someone has done rather than who they are. It is usually more believable, and easier to do it again. When praising your child, instead of saying “Good boy”, say something like “You’re a big help picking up the toys.”

### How to include Positive Attention



## Think

**Brainstorm** other positive behaviours they could praise. Encourage them to think of even the smallest things. Add these to the list of positive behaviours they already comment on.

**Brainstorm** ways to say what their child did that was positive, ways to say why it was positive, and ways to show **Positive Attention**. Write them down. Include some of the suggestions below:

#### Ways to say what was positive

- “It’s nice when you...”
- “You must feel proud of yourself for ...”
- “That was terrific the way you...”
- “You did a great job of ...!”
- “Just for behaving so well, you and I will...”
- “I always enjoy it when we...like this”
- “Wow! Thank you for...”
- “What a nice thing to do...”
- “You did that all by yourself..., way to go!”

#### Ways to say why it was positive

- “That made me feel good”
- “You showed you care ...”
- “I can see you are trying hard”
- “It really helps me out”

#### Ways to show Positive Attention

- hug
- pat on the head or shoulder
- smile
- placing arm around child
- light kiss
- thumbs-up sign
- wink

★ **Try saying and showing Positive Attention together!**



## Do

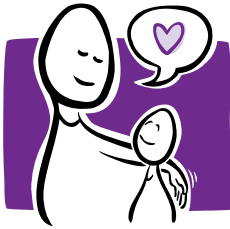
It is helpful to provide participants with a list of ways to give **Positive Attention**. This could be a copy of the list the group developed or the list provided on the parent handout.

### Wrap-up



## Think

Review the importance of **Positive Attention**. Encourage parents to share ideas for when and how they can give their child **Positive Attention**.



## Positive Attention

*Notice your child doing positive things then let your child know what he did that was positive and why it was positive.*

**Positive Attention** reminds you to notice the positive things your child does throughout the day. Look for your child doing something positive and then tell your child what she did that was positive and why it was positive. Do this activity as often as possible. Try to do this at least three times a day, no matter how small the behaviour might be. **Positive Attention** is a good activity for all ages.

### With a child of any age be sure to:

- ✦ **Pay attention to your child**
- ✦ **Focus on the positive**
- ✦ **Show your pleasure**
- ✦ **Give descriptive praise right away.** Say what the child did that was positive and why it was positive. Use simple, direct statements.

### Infant

- ✦ **Practice saying positive things to your child** - do all of the things described above
- ✦ **Watch and describe your infant's behaviour out loud**
- ✦ **Have a conversation with your baby**



## Remember!

Noticing and providing **Positive Attention** even for the smallest of behaviours, can make a difference in how your child feels and behaves.

### Ways to say what you like

“What a nice thing to do...”  
 “That was terrific the way you...”  
 “You did a great job of ...!”  
 “I always enjoy it when we...like this”  
 “Wow! Thank you for...”  
 “You did that all by yourself... you must feel proud of yourself”

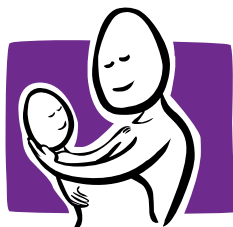
### Ways to say why you like it

“That made me feel good”  
 “You showed you care ...”  
 “I can see you are trying hard”  
 “It really helps me out”

★ **Try saying *and* showing what you like!**

### Ways to show you like something

- hug, or place arm around child
- light kiss
- smiling
- pat on the head or shoulder
- a wink
- a thumbs-up sign



## Snuggle Time

*Time you spend being close and affectionate with your child.*

### Guidelines for introducing Snuggle Time to a group:

**Building on what you already do...**



### Think

**Brainstorm** close and loving activities participants already do with their children or remember from their own childhood. **\*Remember to be sensitive. This may be a difficult topic for those who have experienced abuse or cannot recall experiencing healthy, affectionate closeness.**

### What is Snuggle Time?

Provide the **Snuggle Time** handout to participants.



### Tell

***Snuggle Time** is about being close to your child. It is about finding special, loving ways to be close to each other that you both enjoy. Try and find a regular time each day that you can have **Snuggle Time**. Having **Snuggle Time** regularly will help you and your child feel closer. Both of you will come to look forward to your time together. **Snuggle Time** is important for all ages.*

**Describe and discuss** the following ways to have **Snuggle Time**. Use the additional information to enhance the discussion. Encourage parents to try those that they and their child will feel comfortable with and enjoy.

- ✿ **Cuddle with your child.** Gently hold, give a hug to, or put your arm around your child.
- ✿ **Cradle your child in your arms so that you can look into his eyes.** This is particularly important for babies, but older children often enjoy it as well.
- ✿ **Gently rock and sing to your child.** Do this before bed time. Start this with your baby and continue as long as you and your child enjoy it.
- ✿ **Sit with your child snuggled close and read a story out loud.** Talk about the pictures. Encourage an older child to point to pictures.
- ✿ **Do finger play,** e.g. This Little Piggy, Pat-a-cake, or Itsy Bitsy Spider. Touch your child in a gentle, loving, and fun way. Smile and use a happy voice.
- ✿ **Spend time sitting close to your child and talking.** Talk about how his day was, what her favourite things are, tell a story about you as a child, etc.



- ✱ **Give your child a gentle loving massage.** Infant massage can be a great way to help your baby relax. Rubbing back, hands, or feet; or stroking hair, can help your child of any age go to sleep.
- ✱ **Carry your infant or young child close to your body.** This is particularly important for babies and young children. Use a sling or other carrier so that you can carry your baby or child while doing things around the house or going for a walk. Talk about what you are seeing and doing.



## Remember!!

**Snuggle Time** is best when there are no distractions. Have the television off and try to do it when you are not busy or rushed.



## Do

Demonstrate various **Snuggle Time** activities using a willing child, a doll, or by showing pictures. Have participants practice a **Snuggle Time** activity with a child or doll.

### Why is Snuggle Time important?



## Tell

*All children, both boys and girls, need to experience warm, affectionate closeness and positive, healthy touch from their parents. They need to be held, rocked and hugged. This is particularly important for a distressed child. Children who are touched like this regularly will feel a strong connection to their parents. This connection helps children to trust that their parents will be there for them when they really need them. These children feel strong, confident and secure. They can be independent, but are still able to come to their parents for support when they need to.*



## Think

Have the participants think about whether there have been people in their life who have provided them with a sense of trust through positive, healthy closeness. Ask them to share how these experiences have affected how they feel about that relationship and themselves. **\*This could be a very sensitive topic for some and may lead to sharing of difficult experiences.**

### How to include Snuggle Time



## Think

Have participants think about the kinds of conveniences that are used that reduce physical contact (e.g. strollers, play pens, baby swings etc.) Discuss whether holding children is valued and encouraged in our society. Discuss ways they can include more holding and touch in caring for their children.

**Brainstorm Snuggle Time** activities participants could do with their child. Draw from the list they brainstormed earlier, and add any new ideas they have. Discuss ways they could use some of the ideas in their life.



## Tell

Children need to be able to choose how close they want to be to another person. Each child has her own likes and dislikes for snuggling. For example, some children do not like to be touched, or some may not always feel like being held. Let your child show you what is comfortable for him or her. Follow your child's lead and cues. **Snuggle Time** will only help to build trust if you pay attention to and respect when and how your child wants to snuggle.



## Think

Have participants think about how their child has responded to closeness and touch. **Brainstorm** ways to tell when a child is enjoying or not enjoying closeness. Add what they don't think of.

- ✿ A child enjoying: relaxes, snuggles in, smiles, makes happy noises, etc.
- ✿ A child not enjoying: turns away, stiffens body, pushes away, says "no", scowls, etc.



## Tell

Adults also have different feelings about being touched and closeness. It is important to think about your own feelings about closeness. If you feel uncomfortable with closeness you can learn to manage your own discomfort so that you can meet your child's needs for closeness.



## Think

Have participants think about whether they have ever felt uncomfortable with closeness. **Brainstorm** ways to stay calm while being close. For example:

- ✿ Find ways of being close that are more comfortable for you (e.g. try finger plays).
- ✿ Prepare yourself for closeness.
- ✿ Focus on your child's enjoyment.
- ✿ Set a time limit that you are comfortable with.
- ✿ Breathe deeply and relax during **Snuggle Time**.

\*There may be parents not up to talking about their discomfort with closeness, particularly in group settings.

## Wrap-up



## Think

Review why **Snuggle Time** is so important and encourage participants to share their ideas for how they will make **Snuggle Time** a part of their regular routine with their child.





## Snuggle Time

*Time you spend being close and affectionate with your child.*

**Snuggle Time** is about being close to your child. It is about finding special, loving ways to be close to each other that you both enjoy. Try and have **Snuggle Time** everyday. You and your child will come to look forward to it. **Snuggle Time** is important for all ages.

The following are suggested ways to have **Snuggle Time**. Try those you and your child are comfortable with and would enjoy:

- ✦ **Cuddle with your child**
- ✦ **Cradle your child in your arms and look into his eyes**
- ✦ **Gently rock and sing to your child**
- ✦ **Snuggle close and read a story out loud to your child**
- ✦ **Do finger play (e.g. Itsy Bitsy Spider)**
- ✦ **Spend time sitting close and talking with your child**
- ✦ **Give your child a gentle loving massage**
- ✦ **Carry your infant or young child close to your body**



### Remember!

**Snuggle Time** is best when there are no distractions; have the television off and try to do it when you are not busy or rushed.



### Important!

Let your child choose how much closeness is comfortable for him or her.

***Just as Important!!*** Find ways of being close that are comfortable for both your child and you. If you feel uncomfortable with closeness, you can: think of ways of being close that are more comfortable for you e.g. doing finger plays, prepare yourself for closeness, focus on your child's enjoyment, set a time limit that you are comfortable with, breath deeply and relax.



## Making Daily Care Fun

*Making the things you need to do regularly to care for your child fun and enjoyable for both you and your child.*

### Guidelines for introducing Making Daily Care Fun to a group:

#### Building on what you already do...



#### Tell

*There are many things we need to do to care for our children. These can be a chore and difficult if your child is not happy. By doing special, fun activities that help you and your child feel good and create a feeling of warm connection, while doing the daily care tasks; you can make these tasks more enjoyable and easier for both you and your child.*



#### Think

Have participants **brainstorm** daily care they provide. Then have them **brainstorm** special activities they already do with their child during this routine care. Some examples include:

- ✦ Helping to sleep:
  - a song, prayer or story
  - playing music
  - reading a book
  - hugs and kisses at bedtime or in the morning
- ✦ Feeding:
  - a particular way of setting the table
  - a song or play activity while feeding a baby or toddler
- ✦ Bathing / Changing:
  - having toys just for in the tub or while changing
  - a song or play activity done while undressing, changing, or bathing
- ✦ Leaving and returning:
  - hugs and kisses before or after a separation
  - saying something special before or after a separation

#### What is Making Daily Care Fun?

Provide the **Making Daily Care Fun** handout to group participants.






#### Tell





***Making Daily Care Fun** is a reminder to make the routine things you need to do to care for your child fun and enjoyable for both your child and you. This will help to make these tasks easier.*

*Including special, fun activities as part of taking care of your child will also help your child to feel special and connected to you. **Making Daily Care Fun** is for children of all ages.*

**Describe and discuss** the steps of **Making Daily Care Fun** with the participants. Use the additional information to enhance the discussion.





-  **Think of daily tasks that you do to care for your child** – Think of tasks that you and/or your child find difficult, unpleasant or boring.
-  **Think of special activities that you could do while doing these tasks that would make them more fun.**
-  **Make these special, fun activities a regular part of these daily care tasks.**

**With an infant it is important to:**

-  **Be gentle** - when touching your baby, make sure you are not hurting or scaring him.
-  **Smile and look into your baby’s eyes** and wonder what he is thinking and feeling.
-  **Talk with a friendly voice to your baby** and listen to his response.
-  **Watch closely** to see if your baby is enjoying the activity – if not, stop.




**Babies tell you when they’ve had enough by turning away.** Pause and watch. If your baby continues to turn away, change the activity. Try to do this before baby gets upset and fussy.

Some ideas for special activities include:

-  Nursery rhymes / finger games (e.g. Itsy Bitsy Spider, This Little Piggy, Peek-a-boo) \*Older children could take turns and do the activities to you or with you.
-  Sing a lullaby or children’s song (e.g. Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star)
-  Tell a Story (e.g. made-up story, family story, fairy tale, or from a book)
-  Affectionate actions (e.g. hugs, kisses, tickles, gentle massage)



## Remember!!

-  Choose one or two daily care tasks and make special activities a regular part of them.
-  Make sure that the activity is fun for both you and your child.
-  Remember to be flexible. If your child is not enjoying the activity, try something else.



## Do

Demonstrate and teach the participants one or more nursery rhyme / finger game, lullaby or children’s song they could do with their child during routine care tasks. Examples include:

*“This is the way we wash our hands,  
Wash our hands, wash our hands.  
This is the way we wash our hands  
So early in the morning.”*

**substitute: Brush our teeth, Give a hug etc**

*“After a bath, I try, try, try.  
To wipe myself till I’m dry, dry, dry.  
Hands to wipe, and fingers and toes,  
Two wet legs and a shiny nose.  
Just think how much less time I’d take,  
If I were a dog, and could shake, shake, shake!!”*

Examples of nursery rhyme/ finger games you could teach continued...

*“These are my ears, I have two  
These are my eyes, I see you  
This is my chin, that moves to talk  
And I use my legs to take a walk  
See how I breathe, through my nose  
I have to bend, to touch my toes  
Shoulders and chest, arms and legs  
And with all of them jump into bed”*

**Point and do actions with your own body or gently with your infant’s body. Older children can do the actions with you.**

*“Skinnamarinkydinkydink, Skinnamarinkydoo  
I - Love - You!!  
Skinnamarinkydinkydink, Skinnamarinkydoo  
I - Love - You!!  
I love you in the morning and in the afternoon  
I love you in the evening, underneath the moon  
Skinnamarinkydinkydink, Skinnamarinkydoo  
I - Love - You!!”*

**While singing “Skinnamarinky...” move your child’s or your arms in a fun, gentle way. For “I-Love-You”, point to self, cross arms over chest, then point to child.**

Have participants try one of the activities with their child, or try it while pretending their child is there.

### Why is Making Daily Care Fun important?



#### Think

Discuss the benefits of **Making Daily Care Fun**. Be sure the following benefits are mentioned:

- ✿ makes daily care more enjoyable and easier for both parent and child
- ✿ child cooperates and behaves better
- ✿ helps to create a feeling of special connection between parent and child
- ✿ helps in developing consistent routines



#### Tell

*Routine is important for children. Doing the same things around the same times each day (e.g. mealtime, naptime, bedtime, playtime) helps babies and children learn to regulate their bodies (e.g. when they get hungry, sleepy, alert). Routines help children to set their inner clock.*

### Wrap-up



#### Think

Review the importance of **Making Daily Care Fun**. Ask participants to share their tasks that could do with some fun and their ideas for what they could do to make these more fun.



## Making Daily Care Fun

*Making the things you need to do regularly to care for your child fun and enjoyable for both you and your child.*

**Making Daily Care Fun** is a reminder to make the routine things you need to do to care for your child fun and enjoyable for both your child and you. This will help to make these tasks easier. Including special, fun activities as part of taking care of your child will also help your child to feel special and connected to you. **Making Daily Care Fun** is for children of all ages.

✿ **Think of daily tasks** that you do to care for your child. Examples include:

- Feeding
- Leaving and returning
- Bathing/Changing
- Helping to sleep

✿ **Think of special activities** that would make these tasks more fun

✿ **Make these special, fun activities a regular part of these daily care tasks**

### With an infant it is important to:

- ✿ **Be gentle**
- ✿ **Smile and look into your baby's eyes**
- ✿ **Talk with a friendly voice to your baby**
- ✿ **Watch closely to see if your baby is enjoying the activity** – if not, stop

**Babies tell you when they've had enough by turning away.** Pause and watch. If baby continues to turn away, change activities. Try to do this before baby gets fussy.

### Some ideas of special, fun activities include:

- ✿ Nursery rhymes / finger games
- ✿ Sing a lullaby or children's song
- ✿ Tell a story
- ✿ Give hugs, kisses, tickles or gentle massage



## Remember!

- Choose one or two daily care tasks and make special activities a regular part of them.
- Make sure that the activity is fun for both you and your child.
- Remember to be flexible. If your child is not enjoying the activity try something else.



## What We Have Learned

There are some common beliefs about parenting that we have learned are not true.

### Guidelines for introducing What We Have Learned to a group:

#### Building on what you already do...



#### Think

Ask participants if they have ever been given parenting advice that made them feel bad or uncomfortable. Ask them to share how this has made them feel and how they have responded to this advice.



#### Tell

Some advice that family, friends and strangers give us are parenting myths. A myth is something that many people think is true, but through research and experience we have learned is not true.

The following is a list of common parenting myths. You could read these out to participants and ask them to indicate whether they think each of the following statements are true or false.

*Note – Be sure it is clear that these are Myths – not true. It is recommended that you do not write the Myths out, as some participants may not understand that these are not correct.*

**Myth #1** – Responding to your crying baby or child will spoil him.

**Myth #2** - Praising your child will spoil her.

**Myth #3** – When your child cries he is trying to manipulate you or make you mad.

**Myth #4** – The important thing is how much time you spend with your child. As long as you are with your child all or most of the time your child will grow up healthy and happy.

**Myth #5** – You owe your child the best material things.

**Myth #6** – Parenting should come naturally.

**Myth #7** – Your child will not love you if you make her angry or sad.



## What We Have Learned...

Provide the **What We Have Learned** handout to participants.



Do

Choose some myths to discuss. Ask the group if they have heard of the myth. Use the **What We Have Learned** corrections to the myths as a basis for discussion. These corrections are based on research findings and the careful observation and experience of many parenting experts. Make it clear what the myth is and focus on **What We Have Learned**. Feel free to add to the discussion from other sources of information. Invite participants to share their experiences and concerns. If there is resistance to ideas presented, do not feel you need to convince everyone of the truth. By raising this discussion you are planting a seed that may one day take root and grow.

## The following is a list of corrections to common parenting myths:

### *#1 – Picking up a crying baby or child does not spoil your child.*

By responding appropriately to your baby's cries or other signals of distress you are letting your baby know that you are there for him. Crying is how your baby lets you know she needs your help. Responding to a child is **not** spoiling the child or the child controlling you. When you respond to your child's needs consistently, your child learns to trust that you will be there for her when she needs you. When babies' needs are responded to consistently at an early age they tend to cry less as they get older. Over time parents learn how to read their child's needs and decide how quickly they need to respond.

### *#2 - You cannot spoil your child through praise.*

Praising your child lets him know that he is valued and that you are proud of what he does, big and small. By telling your child how proud you are and what you are proud of will lead to better behaviour. Children like to hear what you like and why you like it.

### *#3 - Your crying baby or toddler is not trying to punish you, manipulate you or make you mad.*

When a baby is crying or a toddler is having a tantrum you can feel that you are being punished. However unpleasant these experiences are your child is not punishing you. Your child is trying to tell you something. Children do not always have the words to say what they are thinking, feeling or needing. Try to figure out your child's thoughts and feelings by watching what he is doing. Most importantly, think about what he needs and try to help. When your child is really upset, he will need help understanding his feelings, calming down and dealing with the situation.

### *#4 - Spending time with your child is not enough. The quality and consistency of care is also important.*

A child needs to know that his parent is available both physically and emotionally to take care of him. The quality and consistency of attention you give your child matters as much as being there.

### #5 - *You do not owe your child the best material things.*

The most important thing you can give your child doesn't come from a store. Children need love, protection, and consistency. Material things do not equal love. The thing your child needs most is you.

### #6 – *Not all parenting comes naturally.*

Parents are humans who make mistakes and work it out as they go along. We all wish at times that children came with “how-to” manuals. Mistakes are only a problem if you continue to repeat them. Feelings of guilt may be a sign that you need to change something. It is okay to ask others for help or advice when you're not sure what to do. By learning from our mistakes we show our children how they can too.

### #7 – *Your child will love you even if what you do makes her feel angry or sad.*

Seeing your child unhappy is hard but necessary. Children need to know that all feelings are okay and make sense. Everyone needs their feelings validated. When something you have done has made your child angry or sad, let her know that what she is feeling is okay, but still continue with what you need to do. For example, “You are very angry. I understand that. We are still going to bed”.



## Tell

*Children and parents learn together and from each other. There is no such thing as a perfect parent or a perfect child. There is no one way or right way to parent. How you parent will change as you learn more about your child and his changing needs.*

## Wrap-up

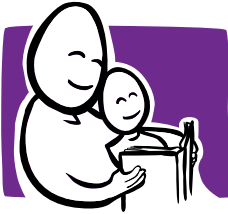


## Think

Review **What We Have Learned**. Have the group discuss what they will do when family, friends or strangers give them parenting advice that is based on **What We Have Learned** is a myth. Some suggests include:

- ✿ Say something like “Thank you for your concern. A lot of people believe that, but there is new information that says that...”
- ✿ Smile pleasantly and continue doing what you were doing
- ✿ Say “I’ll think about that.”





## What We Have Learned

*There are some common beliefs about parenting that we have learned are not true.*

### The following is a list of corrections to common parenting myths:

- #1 - Picking up a crying baby or child is not spoiling him.
- #2 - You cannot spoil your child through praise.
- #3 - Your crying baby or toddler is not trying to punish you, manipulate you or make you mad.
- #4 - Spending time with your child is not enough. The quality and consistency of care is also important.
- #5 - You do not owe your child the best material things. The thing your child needs most is you.
- #6 - Not all parenting comes naturally.
- #7 - Your child will love you even if what you do makes her feel angry or sad.



## Remember!

Children and parents learn together and from each other. There is no such thing as a perfect parent or a perfect child. There is no one way or right way to parent. How you parent will change as you learn more about your child and his changing needs.

# Follow-Up Questions

These are suggested/optional questions you can ask to facilitate group discussion when following up on an activity. Some questions you may choose to ask at the end of a session introducing the activity if participants have had an opportunity to try the activity. Or you may ask these at a later time (e.g. the following week), when participants have had an opportunity to try the activity at home. If you are asking the questions at another time, remind the participants what the activity was to refresh their memory and to ensure that if anyone was missing they know what was done.

- ✿ Were you able to try the activity with your child(ren)?
- ✿ What was it like?
- ✿ What kept you from doing the activity?
- ✿ How did you start the activity? What was that like?
- ✿ What did you like about doing the activity with your child?
- ✿ Did you find anything difficult about doing the activity?
- ✿ What did you notice about your child(ren) when you did the activity?
- ✿ What was your child(ren)'s response or reaction? Did your child(ren) react the way you expected? Explain what you mean.
- ✿ What would you have done differently? / What will you do differently the next time you do the activity?
- ✿ What were some of your experiences?
- ✿ Is there something you did or learned that you think others (in the group) might find helpful?
- ✿ Do you have any questions?



## Remember!!

Whenever we set out to learn a new skill it takes time and practice. Learning how to start and do these activities with your child will also take time and practice, but your efforts will be rewarded with a closer, stronger, happier relationship with your child.