

Forming Close and Secure Relationships



Babies and toddlers need:

Warm and responsive caregivers

Meaningful adult and peer interactions

Opportunities to positively connect with others

Caregivers can:

- ✓ Warmly welcome babies and toddlers
- ✓ Smile, make eye contact, and use positive facial expressions
- ✓ Use a calm voice
- ✓ Hold, rock, cuddle, and sit close

- ✓ Get to know children's families
- ✓ Work to understand the meaning of a child's behavior and quickly respond to their physical and emotional needs
- ✓ Make meaningful connections with children one-on-one during routine care
- ✓ Show your joy and pleasure in a child's efforts, play, and accomplishments



Close and secure relationships support babies and toddlers to:



Feel valued and safe



Know they belong



Securely explore their environment



Understand and manage emotions



Babies and toddlers who engage in **nurturing, consistent, and responsive** interactions with caregivers are more likely to have **strong mental health**.



Experiencing, Managing, and Expressing Emotions



Babies and toddlers need:

Adults to show them how to identify, manage, and express emotions

Help with identifying feelings and emotions in others

Responsive and attentive caregivers to support development

Caregivers can:

- ✓ Respond quickly and consistently to children's physical and emotional needs
- ✓ Acknowledge, label, and talk about children's emotions
- ✓ Reflect on and positively express your own feelings

- ✓ Calmly mirror what children are feeling and expressing
- ✓ Play games, sing songs, and read books about emotions
- ✓ Teach toddlers strategies to manage strong feelings (e.g., deep breathing or coming to an adult for help)
- ✓ Model positive relationships between adults and children in the care setting



Experiencing, managing, and expressing emotions support babies and toddlers to:



Understand their own feelings



Form and sustain relationships



Identify and recognize emotions in others



Develop empathy



Babies and toddlers experience a **wide variety of feelings** and emotions and are **not born with the ability to understand and manage their feelings**.



Exploring the Environment and Learning

Babies and toddlers need:



Spaces that meet their development needs



Safe and secure environments



Interactions with adults and peers



Variety of materials and experiences

Caregivers can:

✓ Create a space that is welcoming, calming, inclusive, and engaging by

- Ensuring there are soft and comfortable places to sit together
- Offering easy access to a variety of age-appropriate materials and activities
- Using appropriately sized furniture
- Displaying family photos on children's eye level
- Arranging furniture so there is space for movement and ample supervision



The **spaces** surrounding babies and toddlers influence **what they do, how they feel, and the ways they interact** with others.

Exploring the environment and learning supports babies and toddlers to:

Feel safe and secure, which encourages exploration, independence, and a sense of belonging

Grow positive relationships with caregivers and peers

Develop a strong sense of self

