

## Building Relationships and the Gift of Strong Attachment

### Talking Points

The bond you build with your child is a lasting connection you will have with them for the rest of your life, and early bonds of love set the stage for how children will view their future relationships with others. Babies crave human interaction; and every baby deserves to be eagerly anticipated before they are even born!

It is these early days and months of life that begin to establish an expected pattern that all healthy children need...each child needs to know that a loving adult will meet their daily needs, and even the way we respond to their cries and their dirty diapers will teach them how much we love them and will always do our best to care for their needs.

**By being available and responsive to your child, you are helping your baby understand you are dependable and they will be able to freely explore the world knowing you will always be there when they need you.**

Raise your hand if you have taken your child to a new park or a new friend's house and they seemed to cling right on to your leg or suddenly become shy?

That is normal; your child is using you as their secure or safe base. Their actions are telling you, "I don't know about this new place," and they are waiting to see what you do. Are you going to enjoy it? Are you going to interact with this new environment? They are watching your face to see if you are afraid, if you are happy or if you are worried....

These are important skills that our brains must practice so that as adults we have the ability to make wise decisions about people, places and relationships...but it starts in the first few days and years of life!

**When children have healthy relationships with others, their brains are able to devote more time to learning new things such as language and math skills because they aren't worrying about their security.**

Healthy, nurturing and secure relationships are easily built and maintained with everyday moments such as reading a story together, singing songs together and simply making eye contact and talking back and forth together. Even the basic act of feeding your baby conveys to them that you will meet their needs. Did you know that long before your little one is able to use words, they are communicating with their eyes, their body language, their cries and coos and even the way they move their arms and legs!

# TALKING IS TEACHING | FAITH-BASED OUTREACH

When you talk to your baby, listen for coos or babbles and mimic the same noises...as your baby's language skills increase, you will begin to hear familiar sounds of letters and even simple words! It's important during the early years to imagine your "conversation" as being a back and forth one, and it's something we call, "serve and return." Simply turning the TV off, putting your phone down, looking into your little one's face and cooing or talking back and forth with them is helping their brain grow and preparing them to do well in school! It's really that simple!

Taking advantage of everyday moments, such as diaper changes and bath time can not only establish fun routines for your family, but it also adds up to thousands of brain building moments each year! As you change your baby's diaper, sing a favorite song to them. As you give your little one a bath, name body parts and blow soap bubbles.

Does anyone have any examples of these everyday relationship building moments they would like to share? It's often the simple things we do that make the biggest impact! *(allow audience members to share some ideas....may prompt with bedtime routines or car ride games and songs, mealtime questions)*

When you are reading our book today, think about how you are engaging with your child and being responsive to their cues. Is your baby patting the page? Is your toddler pointing to a picture? Is your preschooler describing what is seeing? Take advantage of these moments to copy their actions and use words to describe.

Hold your little one in your lap, rock them back and forth, and make eye contact...remember your bond lasts a lifetime and any moment can be made into a "bonding" moment that they will cherish for a lifetime!

It's often the **MOST SIMPLE** acts that are the most important for brain building and secure attachment... the next time you change your baby's diaper or help your child clean up their toys, think of the wonderful way you are letting your child know how special they are to you!