



Promoting Interactions that Nurture and Delight

The Road to Social and Emotional Well-Being

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Healthy Social and Emotional Development

- Infant Mental Health is the ability to:
 - Experience, regulate, and express emotions
 - Form close, secure interpersonal relationships
 - Explore the environment and learn

(ZERO TO THREE, 2001)

Early Head Start is about Relationships



What the Baby Brings

- “Hard-wired” to communicate & learn
- Biologically designed to form relationships that support being able to regulate all emotions
- Innate capacity to convey -needs, desires, pleasures, and what is distressing -in multiple ways

What the Adult Brings

- “Hard-wiring” to respond to a baby
- Ways of being with a baby learned in family and community
- Innate capacities and learned difficulties in forming relationships

What are the positive ingredients in relationships?

- Expressing reciprocal interest and warmth
 - Cultural variations in how this system looks
 - Communication
 - Physical Contact
- Learning to be together
 - Perfect coordination not the goal
 - Miscommunications and repairs

The Power of Being Held in the Mind of Another

One of the most basic human needs, beginning at birth, is to be gazed on by another. To be seen is to be real.

Gonzales(2003)

Pawl (1995)

The Power of Being Held in the Mind of Another

- How this looks in our work
 - Parent with child
 - Childcare provider with child and parent
 - Home visitor with family
 - Supervisor with home visitor
 - Manager with staff
 - Director with staff

How We Listen and “Hold” Each Other

- Observing
- Keeping complexity in mind
 - Biology, development, goodness of fit
- Identifying and sharing strengths
- Creating opportunities for interaction
 - Reflective supervision
 - Peer supervision
 - Staff meetings

How Do Program Practices Support Interactions?

- Screening and Assessment
- Curriculum & Individualization
- Physical Environments
- Management Systems
- Human Resources

Success & Challenge

- The joys and challenges of your work.
- The strengths and challenges of your program.

References

- Gonzales, L. (2003). *Deep Survival*. New York: WW Norton & Co.
- Pawl, J.H. (1995). *The Therapeutic Relationship as Human Connectedness: Being Held in Another's Mind*. ZERO TO THREE Journal, 15(4), pp3-5.
- Head Start Bureau. US Department of Health and Human Services. *Pathways to Prevention: A comprehensive Guide for Supporting Infant and Toddler Mental Health*.