Love and Learn!

Promoting the Importance of Healthy, Happy Babies

Infant Mental Health Project
What Are We Talking About Today?

The social and emotional development of infants and toddlers as they relate with their parents or caregivers.
Why Do Service Providers Care About Babies’ Emotional Well-Being?

You can support babies’ and parents’ emotional well-being through your relationships with them.
Promising Practices

These practices have proven their efficacy in promoting healthy emotional development.

- Focus on families and recognize each family’s strengths.

- Recognize that strengthening a healthy relationship between families & children is the most effective & longest lasting intervention for helping young children.
Promising Practices - continued

- Emphasize the promotion of secure & stable baby-family relationships.

- Train staff to be responsive to parents’ needs and wishes.

![Image of a mother and child]
Promising Practices - continued

- Provide for reflective supervision, ongoing peer support & learning among staff.

- Include **promotion, preventive intervention & treatment**.

- Include services and practices that recognize and integrate diversity and culture.
Healthy Parent-Child Relationships…

Nurture

Protect

Support
What is a Healthy Parent-Child Relationship?

- Patience
- Learning
- Love
- Tolerance
- Trust
How Do We Support a Baby’s Social-Emotional Well-Being?

By encouraging positive relationships between babies and their families.
Infant Mental Health Supports and Services: A Continuum

Promotion

Preventive Intervention

Treatment
More About the Continuum

• **Promotion** of early social and emotional development and positive parent-child interactions

• **Preventive Intervention** when there isn’t a “shared relationship” between the parent’s care giving & interaction style and the needs of the baby

• **Treatment** when the parent-child relationship is disturbed and interferes with care giving
All babies deserve sensitive, responsive, care-giving relationships...

... and all parents deserve support during this new learning period.

There are Ways to Help

Parents and babies can learn to adjust to one another and have a pleasurable, *positive relationship*.
Parents who understand their child’s development can effectively support their baby’s emotional well-being.

Some parents need help to learn to support their baby’s emotional well-being in a way that fits the baby’s needs.
How Can I Help?

In order to ensure that babies and parents have optimal relationships that nurture, protect and support, service providers may want to practice some of many effective service strategies to address the social and emotional development of babies and parents.
Effective IMH Strategies

- Screen
- Assess
- Find Solutions with Parents
- Brief Crisis Intervention
- Offer Emotional Support
- Give Parents Information
- Guide Parents
- Encourage Interaction
- Infant-Parent Psychotherapy
Screen

Identify possible problems in social-emotional development
Assess

How are social and emotional development progressing?
Find Solutions with Parents

Support for managing stress and meeting needs
Brief Crisis Intervention

Support families during times of crisis
Offer Emotional Support

Help parents who feel challenged
Give Parents Information

Build on what parents already know
Guide Parents

Focus on the capacities and strengths of the individual baby and parent
Encourage Interaction
Infant-Parent Psychotherapy

Therapeutic relationships help parents and their babies
Social-Emotional Development Makes Connections for Babies and Families
When we all pay close attention to each baby’s social and emotional well-being…

- Parents increase their abilities, **confidence** and self-esteem
- Baby considers the world to be **comforting** and comfortable.
Social & Emotional Growth and Changes

From Birth to 6 Months...

- Babies like to look at your face
- Babies like to be picked up, hugged and cuddled by people he knows

Social & Emotional Growth and Changes

At 6 months...

- Babies want a quiet and soothing environment sometimes and talking and playing other times
- A lot of the time, babies want their parents and no one else

Social & Emotional Growth and Changes

At 12 months...

- A baby may push things away he doesn’t like
- Babies are showing many emotions, such as happiness, sadness, discomfort and anger

Social & Emotional Growth and Changes

At 18 months...

- Toddlers let you know how they feel
- Toddlers turn to parents when they are in trouble

Social & Emotional Growth and Changes

At 24 months...

- Children have a lot of “big” emotions
- Children will play near other children, but not really with them

Social & Emotional Growth and Changes

At 30 months...

• Children want to be independent sometimes
• Children are beginning to learn about sharing

Social & Emotional Growth and Changes

At 36 months...

• A child may use words to describe her feelings.
• A child may seem bossy

Strong Foundations – Bright Futures

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