

# Focusing on Relationships

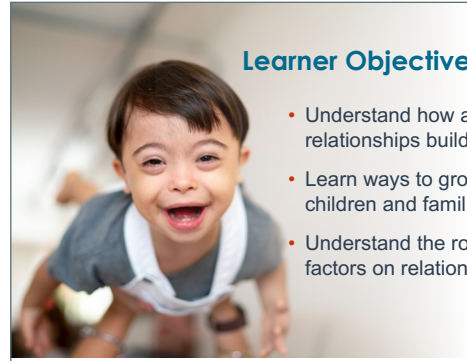


## Focusing on Relationships

Pyramid Model Infant-Toddler Training Series

National Center for  
Pyramid Model  
INNOVATIONS  
[ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org)

1



## Learner Objectives

- Understand how attachments and relationships build over time
- Learn ways to grow relationships with children and families
- Understand the role of culture and risk factors on relationships

2

## Agenda


- Setting the Stage: Relationships
- Forming & Sustaining Relationships with Young Children & Families: Attachment Relationships
- Building Relationships with Families
- Understanding Families:
  - Cultural Influences
  - Challenges & Strengths
- Wrap-Up & Reflection



3

## Our Learning Environment

- What can the trainer do to facilitate a safe learning environment?
- How can other training participants help make the training environment conducive to your learning?
- What are some agreements we can make?



4

## Possible Shared Agreements



- Confidentiality
- Take Care of Yourself and Others
- Demonstrate Respect for All
- Right to Pass
- Right to Take Risk
- Assume Positive Intent
- Recognize We Are All Learning

5

## Warm Up Activity: Partner Discussion



- What is something you really enjoyed learning about at a past training?
- If you have never been to an early childhood training before today, share something you think you'd enjoy learning more about.

6



## What Are Relationships?

### Relationships...

- Have emotional connections
- Endure over time
- Have special meaning between people
- Create memories and expectations in the minds of the people involved



7

## Activity: Reflective Inventory

### Handout 3: Reflective Inventory

- Name three things that make the relationship satisfying.
- What messages about relationships did you receive from your family or culture?
- Do you behave the same way (or differently) as adults who cared for you?



8

**“Be the person  
you needed  
when you were  
younger.”**

- Ayesha Siddiqi



9

## Forming & Sustaining Relationships with Young Children & Families



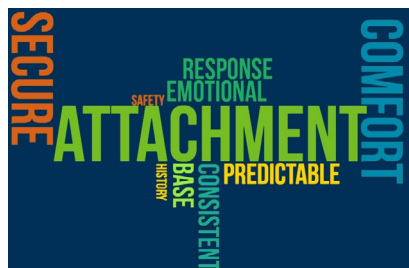
Attachment Relationships



10

## Attachment Relationships

Attachment is a pattern of interactions that develops over time as the infant or toddler and caregiver engage.



11

## Supporting Attachment



12

### Activity: Attachment Relationships



#### Handout 4: Attachment Relationships

What could the professional do to promote the infant-caregiver relationship?

### Attachment Relationships: Observation 1

- How is the caregiver participating in the relationship?
- What about the child?

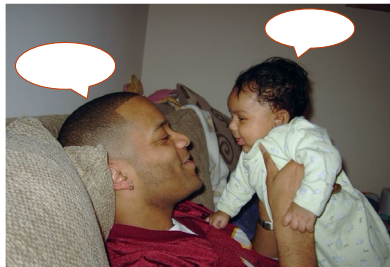


13

14

### Attachment Relationships: Observation 2

- How is the caregiver participating in the relationship?
- What about the child?



### Attachment Relationships: Observation 3

- How is the caregiver participating in the relationship?
- What about the child?



15

16

### Attachment Relationships: Observation 4



### Activity: What Do Your Relationships Look Like?

- Imagine someone is taking pictures of your interactions with children throughout the day...
- What kinds of interactions would be captured?
- What strengths would be identified?
- How many moments of these types of interactions make up the day for the infants and toddlers in your care?
- How might you increase joyful interactions like these in your care setting?

17

18



### Strategies to Build a Secure Relationship with a Very Young Child 1

Attempt to understand the child's behaviors, communication, and needs

Acknowledge and respond to a child as soon as possible

Use natural opportunities to be physically close and affectionate (holding, rocking, sitting near)



19

### Strategies to Build a Secure Relationship with a Very Young Child 2

Use a warm responsive tone

Join child's activities and follow the child's lead

Listen and respond to the child's communication

Use alternate strategies to communicate



20

### Strategies to Build a Secure Relationship with a Very Young Child 3

Use routines such as diapering and feeding as one-on-one time to interact individually

Acknowledge and mirror child's emotions

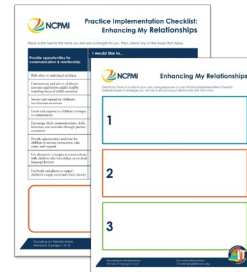
Support children who are frustrated or in conflict

Consider conversations reflecting the child's culture



21

### Activity: Enhancing My Relationships



#### Handout 5: Enhancing my Relationships

- List 3 things that you will do in the next three weeks to help "fill/refill" relationship tanks—things that will make a child feel really special, things that will help build a positive relationship with a child.



22

### Building Relationships with Families



23

### Activity: Building a New Relationship



- Find a partner you don't know
- Find a way to get to know your partner
- Write down how you started the conversation and highlight what you talked about



24

### Positive, Goal-Oriented Relationships Advance Family and Child Outcomes

“Positive goal-oriented relationships are based on mutual respect and trust and are developed over time, through a series of interactions between staff and families. Successful relationships focus on families’ strengths and a shared commitment to the child’s well-being and success.”

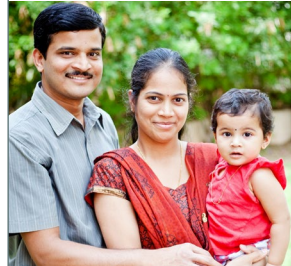


NCFMI

PBLM

25

### Supporting the Family-Child Relationship



- A child’s first and primary teacher is the family
- Supporting and enhancing the family-child relationship is one of the most important roles caregivers have
- Caring for infants and toddlers is caring for the family

NCFMI

PBLM

26

### Celebrating Families in the Classroom

- Photos of each family group in your classroom (names of family members labelled)
- Family celebration board (new baby, family event, family vacation)
- Acknowledgement of family events in home-classroom communication
- Photo of child’s family in their cubby
- Families invited to join group for play, routines, or sharing with the children

NCFMI

PBLM

27

### Family Books!



NCFMI

PBLM

28

### Strategies for Building Relationships with Families

- Communicate daily with families and let families choose their preferred ways to give and receive information (e.g., build a ritual at drop off or pick up)
- Greet family members, invite conversation, listen, and follow up
- Have regularly scheduled times for face-to-face meetings
- Respect families’ views and child rearing beliefs
- Seek family evaluations of the program and of your care

NCFMI

PBLM

29

### Strategies for Building Relationships with Families (Continued)

- Seek families’ knowledge
- Ask families questions
- Ask families to help
- Get to know family members
- Share something personal
- Share observations about their child

<https://challengingbehavior.org/document/teachers-guide-relationship-building-with-families/>

NCFMI

PBLM

30

### Understanding Families: Cultural Influences



NCPMI

PBLM

31

### How Culture Influences Caregiver Behavior

- Individual and culturally based beliefs, values, and perceptions affect caregiver attitudes about behavior
- Infants and toddlers don't come to care knowing what behaviors are appropriate in group care settings



NCPMI

PBLM

32

### Age Expectations for Feeding Milestones

Mean Age in Months

Skill	Caucasian	Puerto Rican	Filipino
Eat Solid Food	8.2 <sup>P</sup>	10.1 <sup>C,F</sup>	6.77 <sup>P</sup>
Training Cup	12.0 <sup>F,P</sup>	17.1 <sup>C,F</sup>	21.9 <sup>C,P</sup>
Utensils	17.7 <sup>F,P</sup>	26.5 <sup>C,F</sup>	32.4 <sup>C,P</sup>
Finger Food	8.9	9.4	9.5
Wean (breast or bottle)	16.8 <sup>F</sup>	18.2 <sup>F</sup>	36.2 <sup>C,P</sup>

Carlson &amp; Harwood (2009)

NCPMI

PBLM

33

### Implicit Bias

- We all have them!
- They are unconscious
- They are attitudes and stereotypes that influence our perceptions and actions
- They influence how we identify family strengths and build relationships.



NCPMI

PBLM

34

### Reflect on Your Implicit Bias

- Take a moment...
- Reflect on a time you had a negative impression of another person.
- What influenced that impression?
- Can you identify any unconscious biases that you explicitly work to not be influenced by?



NCPMI

PBLM

35

### Cultural Influences: Large Group Discussion

- How might differing cultural expectations among you and other caregivers and/or families impact your work with children and their social-emotional development?
- As a caregiver, can you think of any examples where you had differing values, beliefs and ideas about how to care for an infant?

NCPMI

PBLM

36

### Cultural Influences: Partner Discussion

- According to your cultural/family beliefs and values, toddlers should complete potty learning by 32 months. The family of a young child you care for expects their child to complete potty learning at 20 months.
- What can you do to best understand and support this child and family?



37

### Strategies for Supporting Cultural Influences

- Visit families' homes and communities
- Support children's home languages
- Develop cultural competency
- Share picture books where children in the stories come from around the world or diverse cultures
- Ask families to share a special lullaby or song from their culture
- Ensure photos and pictures in the center reflect the race and ethnicity of families served



38

### Table Talk: Classroom Practices

What are the cultural values or practices of the families in your classroom?

What strategies have you used to learn more about your families and represent them in the classroom?



39

### Understanding Families: Challenges & Strengths



40

### Possible Risk Factors Affecting Families

- Poverty
- Nonflexible work situations
- Little support from other family members or neighbors
- Challenging relationships with their own families
- Substance abuse
- Domestic violence
- Racial inequity or trauma
- Mental health
- Foster care
- Teen parents



41

### Possible Protective Factors Impacting Children and Families

- Nurturing and responsive caregivers
- Strong social support networks
- Having basic needs met
- Stable housing
- Access to high quality early care and education
- Access to health and mental health care
- Access to financial and economic help
- Family or other adults who are present and interested



42



### Parent or Family Depression

- A combination of symptoms that interfere with all aspects of work and family life.
- An illness that frequently
  - starts early in life
  - may have a biological component
  - can cause significant difficulty in functioning



NCPMI

PBL

43

### Depression Can Impact Child Development

- Birth outcomes
- A parent/family member's ability to bond and attach to their child
- A young child's language, cognitive, and behavioral development
- A family member's ability to follow appropriate health and safety guidelines



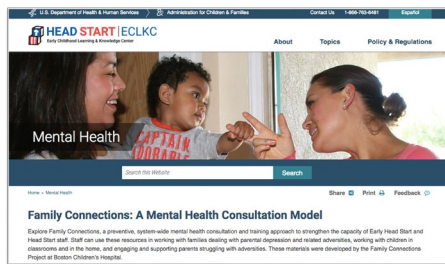
NCPMI

PBL

44

### Family Connections

A Mental Health Consultation Model



<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/mental-health/article/family-connections-mental-health-consultation-model>

NCPMI

PBL

45

### Four Things Caregivers Can Do

1. Inquire about family members' feelings at a time and place where you both feel comfortable
2. Listen without interrupting and avoid judgment
3. Ask the family member how they are feeling and if they would like extra support. If yes, use your resources to provide a referral to mental health resources in your community.
4. Provide information and referrals about home visiting programs.

NCPMI

PBL

46

### Wrap-Up & Reflection

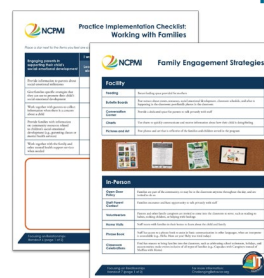


NCPMI

PBL

47

### Activity: Practice Implementation Checklist



#### Handout 6 & 7: Practice Implementation Checklist & Family Engagement Strategies

- Place a star next to your strengths
- Check ANY of the boxes that apply to you
- Fill out front and back

NCPMI

PBL

48



### Activity: Essential Positive Messages



- Please take a moment to generate a list of essential messages for young children and families. The messages should be about...
- How valuable they are to us
- How committed we are to them
- Think about, what are concrete behaviors that will convey the message(s)?



49

### Major Messages to Take Home

- It is within families that children learn to experience and communicate emotion.
- Early social-emotional wellness develops within the context of relationships.
- Caregivers are critically important to social-emotional development of infants and toddlers.
- Caregivers who use a variety of strategies will be better able to form close relationships with infants, toddlers, and their families.



50

### Thank You

The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #H326B170003. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.



51