

## Activities to Promote Resilience in Infants & Toddlers

# ATTACHMENT/RELATIONSHIPS

*Attachment/Relationships refers to the ongoing, emotional connection the child builds over time with a familiar adult through nurturing interaction.*



### **Provide safety and security.**

Gently touch or pick up your infant or toddler in the presence of unfamiliar adults to reassure her that she is safe. Stay close by as she plays and explores. Your child looks to you for reassurance. When you respond with a smile or a nod or by picking her up when needed, she learns you are reliable and trustworthy. In the future, this will help her to trust and care for others in her life, such as a pet, a sibling, or a friend.

### **Use a gentle voice.**

Speak calmly and gently to your infant or toddler throughout the day, and avoid using a loud or abrupt voice that can startle a young child. Children listen and learn about how to communicate with others from hearing our tone and words. Model kindness and patience in your voice.

### **Redirect.**

Gently guide your infant or toddler to a better choice when needed. Little ones often need redirection for their own safety. If an infant or toddler is moving toward something in the environment that is not safe, adults should remove the item or redirect the child to something more interesting. Infants and toddlers are curious. They seek to touch, taste, and smell almost everything! Keeping the environment safe is an important job.

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## INITIATIVE

***Initiative*** is the child's ability to use independent thought and action to meet his or her needs.

### Show your joy.

Show pleasure in your child's accomplishments by smiling, clapping your hands, and getting down to her level. "Wow, Joselyn, you scooted all the way to the toy. Way to go!" Celebrating her efforts helps a child learn to take things step by step.



### Provide help as needed.

Offer help just until your child can do it on his own. You might move a toy closer as your infant learns to reach and grasp. You might turn a puzzle piece to face the right direction but let your toddler put it in place. Completing the challenging task will make him eager to try again next time. Asking too little or too much can lead to boredom or frustration.

### Have family time.

For example, you may do some of the following:

- Eat breakfast together every day
- Read stories every night before bedtime
- Go out for a walk every Saturday morning

Having regular family routines and activities helps children participate. Knowing what comes next helps children be prepared and take an active role in the family fun.

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# SELF-REGULATION

***Self-Regulation*** is a child's ability to gain control of bodily functions, manage powerful emotions, and maintain focus and attention (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).



### **Watch, wonder, and respond.**

Listen and watch for the ways your child tells you he is hungry, tired, bored, wet, and so on. This will help you know how to respond. *“Oh, Joshua, you sound tired. Let me hold you for a while.”* As your child grows, he will learn to notice the signs in himself and will be able to get a snack, engage in a fun activity, or go to sleep when he is tired.

### **Accept mistakes.**

Children make mistakes. Adults make mistakes. It is how we all learn and grow! Talk through mistakes with children: *“Andrew, you pulled yourself up and plopped back down. Let’s try again!”* or *“Paula, your juice spilled. Let’s get some paper towels to wipe it up.”*

### **Offer calm guidance.**

Remain calm and supportive during your toddler’s struggles with independence: *“Karina, you want to take your animals for a ride in the wagon. We need to keep the wagon on the sidewalk.”* Then, comment when your toddler follows limits: *“Karina, you remembered to keep the wagon on the sidewalk when you walked your animals. Thank you.”*

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