

Activities to Promote Social and Emotional Health of Infants

Activity Title: That's my Name!

Age Range: Infant

Purpose of Activity: Babies like hearing their names used in positive and fun ways. This helps form bonds between adults and their babies. Exposing babies early to the use of people's names is a great way to begin promoting social and emotional development. This gives babies a secure base to help them establish trust, feel attached, and know they are safe to explore and learn new things.

Materials:

Nothing special is needed, but any family photos, children's books or songs would work!

Steps:

- 1.) Even though your baby will not understand your words, tell him the story of how he was named. Talk with your child about any special meaning around his or her name. Who decided what your child's name would be? Are there any family members with similar or the same name? What is the history of that name (if known)? Celebrate who he is!
- 2.) In an enthusiastic, caring voice, share what you know about how you got your name. Share about how other important family members got their names as well. Your baby will love hearing the sound of your voice and may even perk up when he hears a familiar name mentioned.
- 3.) Look at family photos together, on your phone, or in a family photo album. Name each family member and share positive stories about each person when you can. Smile and enjoy each other.
- 4.) When reading books together, replace the characters' names with names of your baby, for example, "Liz and the Three Little Pigs" or "When Amanda Gets Angry!"
- 5.) Sing the familiar songs below, inserting your child's name. Offer lots of hugs and kisses as you share songs together.

Try any familiar song, replacing your baby's name:

"_____ is My Sunshine" (Sung to the tune: "You are My Sunshine")

_____ is my sunshine. My little sunshine. _____ makes me happy, when skies are gray. _____ should know dear, how much I love her (him). Oh let's have some fun today!

Activity adapted from "Socially Strong, Emotionally Secure: 50 Activities to Promote Resilience in Young Children", by Nefertiti Bruce and Karen Cairone, with the Devereux Center for Resilient Children, 2011, North Carolina: Gryphon House, Inc.