



Building Baby's Brain Power

Caregiving strategies that help all infants blossom

Course Objective:

- Label a method to build a trustful relationship with each infant
- List strategies to promote optimal brain development

Key Takeaways:

- Infants need to learn to connect, get what they need, and trust their environment.
- Babies know what they need to learn, follow their lead.
- They will mainly learn through interactions with the environment – especially with you!
- You can build trust by:
 - Giving sensitive and responsive care
 - Reducing stress in the environment
 - Providing rewarding and reliable routines will bolster brain development
 - Taking time to connect
 - Helping the infant learn to soothe and calm
- What you do matters! You make a tremendous difference in an infant's brain development!

“ A new baby is like the beginning of all things...hope. A dream of possibilities. -Eda LaShan ”

Brain Basics:

- ✓ Humans are not just “born smart.” We need to cultivate and work our brains.
- ✓ “Not nature versus nurture, it is nature *through* nurture.”
- ✓ It is through everyday learning experiences that we realize our full potential.
- ✓ In the first few years, 700 to 1,000 new neural connections form every second.
- ✓ Infancy is a period of both great opportunity and greatest vulnerability.



“ Free the child's potential, and you will transform him into the world. -Maria Montessori ”

Babies Learning

- How the world works
- To trust, connect, and care about others
- Cause and effect
- Body mechanics: They are building "affordances"
- "People Sense" (By 5-6 months, infants have started to gauge people's goals/intentions.)
- "Number Sense"

How do They Learn?

- Automatic development
- Interactions with the environment
- Their senses

Learning and retention are most effective when learning includes:

***Social *Emotional *Cognitive *Physical**



What do you currently do to promote infant brain development and help infants learn about the world?



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1 Provide a Trustworthy Relationship

- * **Build Trust**
- * **Avoid negative caregiving styles:** *Alarmist *Intrusive
- * **Provide sensitive and responsive care:**
 - Attune
 - Respond to cues
- * **Videotape your interactions: Seeing is Believing Message**



2 Limit Stress:

- * **Remain calm**
- * **Watch for little signs of stress**
- * **Help the infant soothe and calm**
 - Repetitive action (anything comforting: sounds, sights, touches or smells)
 - Quiet space
 - Change of positions
 - Holding and snuggling
 - Sensory experience

“There is no development without relationships.”
-Jack P. Shonkoff, Harvard”



What does the adult try?

What works?

What does not work?

3 Incorporate Reliable Routines

- * **Provide transition cues (sing a song or chant)**
- * **Engage the baby**
- * **Provide physical touch**
- * **Build in "down time"**

“Children are constantly watching adults about what to think, what to feel, and what to do.”
-John Campos”



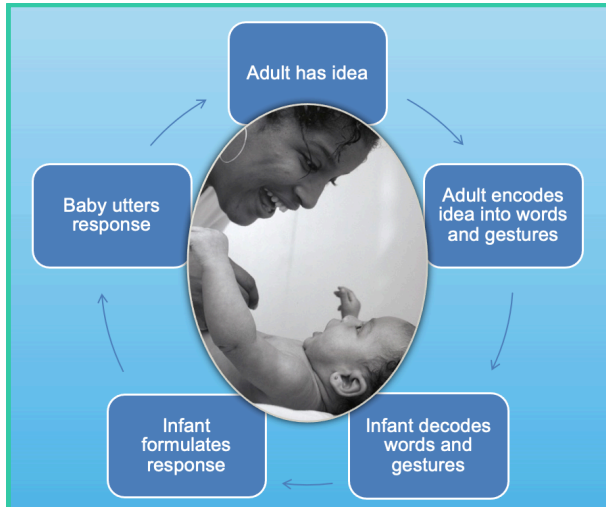
Your Insight:

- **When have you used calm and connecting routines with infants?**
- **What were the results?**



4 Communicate (a lot!)

The Process of Communication



***This process takes time and develops with age and practice.**

Humans learn through

- Individual and joint attention
- Observational learning or imitation
- What is reinforced



“ Let the child be the scriptwriter, the director, and the actor in his own play. - Magda Gerber ”

Promote Language Skills:

- * **Follow infant's lead:**
 - Where attention is, learning follows
- * **Observe, build on and encourage**
- * **Use spoken words, gestures and your gaze to help the infant focus their attention on what you're saying**
- * **Allow time for the infant to "get it" - even up to two minutes or more**
- * **Repeat sounds back (match speed, sound and tempo)**
- * **Slow down your language and use variations in pitch**
- * **Turn off background noise**



Video Analysis: What is the adult doing to promote communication skills?



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