

Viewers Guide | Episode 3

## RESPONSIVE RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE HEART OF INFANT/TODDLER CURRICULUM

### SUMMARY

#### CONTENT OVERVIEW:

Responsive relationships truly make up the heart of what you do in your work with young children and families. For infants and toddlers, all learning happens in the context of their relationships with the important adults in their

lives. Within relationships, the interactions that happen each moment contribute to the growth of developing brains. That means that when you are holding a baby and feeding him, gently talking about that yummy bottle, you are actually helping to build his brain!

### MATH MINUTE WITH CARRIE GERMEROOTH

You can use math concepts in response to what children are already interested in. Help children learn math concepts by using words that give children a name for their math experiences. Feel free to hang this up where you will see it!

Number and Operations: counting, first, second, last, how many, add/take away

Geometry and Spatial Sense: over, under, up, down, behind, next to, beside, between, top, bottom, next to

Point out shapes and their attributes: "That circle is round, the triangle has three sides."

Patterns: Create and point out patterns of size, color, and texture. Describe daily routines with language like, "First we go outside, next we come in and wash hands, then we have snack."

Measurement: big, little, medium, hot, cold, heavy, light, fast, slow, old, young, tall, short, long

### GUEST EXPERT SANDY PETERSEN

Responsive interactions physically create connections in the brain! Use respect, reflect, and relate to support responsive relationships and build the architecture of children's brains.

Respect: Look for the intention in the young child's actions; observe while interacting.

Reflect: Take a moment to wonder about the

child's intentions and consider what might be the most responsive words or facial expressions or actions you can take.

Respond: Do something—or nothing. Take the action that best expresses you are interested, you are appreciative of what the child is doing, and, best of all, you are somehow expanding the experience.

## RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITH AMY HUNTER

Early positive relationships are the foundation for healthy development and learning! From early relationships young children learn:

- Their own self-worth – will people care for me?
- What relationships are like – will people respond to my needs in a way that feels good?

- Expectations for the world – their world is small with just a few important adults right now. As young children grow they will come to expect others to treat them in ways that match their early experiences.

## RESILIENCY AND WELLNESS

To be responsive to the interests and needs of very young children, you have to take care of yourself. Stressed adults are less able to be responsive.

The important adults in a young child's life can support each other's resiliency and wellness.

Take the time to:

- Take care of yourself! Take the time to do what you love. Reading, exercise, or being with friends are some ways to take care of yourself.

- Notice your own good work. Pay attention to when you are being responsive to young children. Remember that you are building future brains!
- Support parents in their journey. Parenting is not easy! Comment when you see parents respond to their baby's coos or recognize what their toddler needs.

## TRY IT OUT!

Take a moment and watch an infant or toddler playing. Are you tempted to put your hand in and show her how to use the toy? Stop yourself. Respect. Look for her intentions. Reflect. What would be most supportive? A small hint? A word of encouragement? A smile? Just staying nearby? Respond.

What happened? Share it with us in the Teacher Time Community on MyPeers!

## ELOF MINUTE WITH PETER PIZZOLONGO

- ELOF: A framework that represents the continuum of learning for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers: what children should know and be able to do during their formative years—from birth through age five.
- ELOF is organized in a way that can help teachers and families understand child development and guide the ways in which we help children learn. You can learn more about ELOF by going to the ELOF pages on the ECLKC Website—the Office of Head Start’s Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/sr/approach/elof>
- Today’s topic: Responsive Relationships Are the Heart of Infant-Toddler Curriculum—ELOF segment focus is on the domain Social and Emotional Development.
- Domain Relationships with Adults, Goal IT-SE1: Child develops expectations of consistent, positive interactions through secure relationships with familiar adults.
- Video viewed earlier during the episode: An infant—Brooklyn—was communicating to her teacher that she wasn’t ready to be fed, there was back and forth communication, Brooklyn became interested in the teacher’s watch, and when she was ready to have her bottle, the teacher was there to feed her.
- The video shows an excellent example of the developmental progression for the goal regarding a child’s expectations of consistent, positive interactions. You can see the warm, loving relationship between Brooklyn and her caregiver. You see how she knows that her actions will be responded to by her caregiver.
- From birth through 9 months—typically a child will interact in predictable ways with familiar adults—the behavior that children demonstrate that leads to the goal.
- Next—8 – 18 months: The developmental progression includes “Looks to familiar adults for emotional support and encouragement. Reacts or may become distressed when separated from familiar adults.”
- 16 – 36 months: “Engages in positive interactions in a wide variety of situations with familiar adults. Looks to or seeks familiar adults for comfort when distressed or tired.”
- During the preschool years: children continue to engage in positive interactions with adults—and their ability to communicate allows them to talk with adults about their ideas, wants, and dislikes.

## RESOURCES:

Brain Development – This landing page has many resources about how responsive relationships support brain development. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/cde/brain-dev>

Highlights from the Brain Development landing page:

- Early Essentials: The First Three Years – This webisode explores the rapid growth and development that occurs in the first three years of life. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/comp/program-design/ee-orientation-2.html#link4>
- News You Can Use: Early Experiences Build the Brain – This resource gives research based information and strategies about how early connections are built through responsive relationships. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/cde/brain-dev/nycuearlybraindev.htm>

Serve and return interactions shape brain architecture! That is the message in this series of resources from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. Watch the video and read the brief for a deeper understanding of how responsive relationships support brain development. <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/serve-and-return/>

Positive Parent-Child Relationships are critical for infants and toddlers! This research to practice resource offers strategies that teachers and home visitors can use to support parents as they build relationships with their infants and toddlers. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/parent-child-relationships.pdf>

Relationships as the Foundation of Quality Infant and Toddler Care - Ready to dig a little deeper? Use this series of four online lessons to learn more about supporting early relationships with infants, toddlers, and their families. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/comp/program-design/index.html>

Observation: The Heart of Individualizing Responsive Care – Observation is an important aspect of accurately responding to infants and toddlers. This resource provides both research and strategies about observation. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/cde/saeo/ehsta15.htm>

Infants and toddlers develop and refine math concepts and skills through everyday routines, experiences, and most important, caring interactions with trusted adults. In this News You Can Use, we discuss ways adults can be more intentional in how they support young children's math learning—and school readiness. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/cde/curriculum/nycuearlymathlear.htm>

The Little Voices for Healthy Choices (LVHC) is a national initiative for Early Head Start (EHS) and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) programs. It was developed to promote wellness in infants, toddlers, and expectant families. The initiative includes training and resources with strategies designed to address healthy nutrition, physical activity, brain development, and sleep for children birth to 3, their families, and communities. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/healthy-active-living/little-voices/little-voices.html>

## HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

### Information in this episode reflects the following Head Start Program Performance Standards

§1302.31 Teaching and the learning environment

(b) Effective teaching practices

(1) Teaching practices must:

(i) Emphasize nurturing and responsive practices, interactions, and environments...

(ii) Focus on promoting growth in the developmental progressions described in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework...

(iii) Integrate child assessment data in individual and group planning; and

(iv) Include developmentally appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, social and emotional development, math, science, social studies, creative arts, and physical development...

(2) For dual language learners, a program must recognize bilingualism and biliteracy as strengths and implement research-based teaching practices that support their development.

(c) Learning environment

(1) For infants and toddlers, promote relational learning and include individualized and small group activities that integrate appropriate daily routines into a flexible schedule of learning experiences

Subpart F—Additional Services for Children with Disabilities

§1302.60 Full participation in program services and activities

A program must ensure enrolled children with disabilities...receive all applicable program services...and that they fully participate in all program activities.



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