



# Promoting the inclusion of infants and young children with disabilities in child care

## Instructor Guidelines

## **Relationships with Infants & Toddlers**



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Child and Family Studies Research Programs at  
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## **PIN ~ Philadelphia Inclusion Network**

Campbell, P.H., Milbourne, S.A., & Silverman, C. (2002). [Philadelphia Inclusion Network, Participant Materials.](#)

Campbell, P.H., Milbourne, S. (2002). [Philadelphia Inclusion Network, Instructor Guidelines.](#)

Both are available from Child and Family Studies Research Programs, TJU, OT, 130 S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, 215-503-1608.  
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**April 2005**  
**PIN, a program of:**  
**Child & Family Studies Research Programs**  
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# SESSION OUTLINE

Topic	Activity	Time	Cum. Time
<b>I Welcome the Group</b>	Introduce yourself and talk briefly about PIN. Promoting the inclusion of infants and toddlers with disabilities in child care settings is a primary purpose of PIN.	10 min.	:10
<b>II Introductions</b>	Ask participants to introduce themselves by telling: their name and briefly describe one person with whom they like to spend time.	10 min.	:20
<b>III Guiding Principles</b>	#1 True or False?	30 min.	:50
<b>IV Relationships Are the Key!</b>	#2	40 min.	1:30
	<b>Break</b>	15 min.	1:45
<b>V Responsive Caregiving is Relationship-Based</b>	#3	35 min.	2:20
<b>VI Summing up</b>		10 min.	2:30

**Notes:**

**What you will need:**

- ' Extra copies of previous modules
- ' Extra copies of Participant Project materials
- ' Timer or Bell
- ' Chart Paper
- ' Markers
- ' Tape
- ' 2 colors of file cards
- ' TV/VCR
- ' Video: [Getting in Tune: Creating Nurturing Relationships with Infants and Toddlers](#) (24 minutes)

# Session: Relationships with Infants and Toddlers

## OVERVIEW

### What this workshop will accomplish:

Nurturing relationships are a key to infant/toddler mental health, learning, and development. Babies and young children who feel loved and supported are happy, secure, and self-confident. Many young children today are cared for by non-parental caregivers either through child care, relative care, foster care, or other arrangements. The relationships that these caregivers develop with infants and toddlers are crucial to children's learning, confidence, and well being.

During the infant-toddler years, children learn about themselves, their feelings, and other people. Their experiences in developing socially and emotionally can be quite challenging for caregivers!! Philip's caregiver turns her head for one moment and when she turns back, she sees Philip precariously perched on a stack of blocks trying to reach a toy that is on the top shelf of the bookcase. Miss Lucretia bends over to pick up and comfort a crying Destiny only to find that Harrison is busy exploring the toy chest by throwing everything in the chest out onto the floor. Keeping older infants and toddlers safe as they explore and learn about the world beyond them can be quite a challenge!! Sara screams every time her mother drops her off in child care — and she used to smile and reach out to you!! Justin follows Merci around only to catch her and pull her long, blond hair. When David seems to be frustrated or angry, he lies down and bangs his head on the ground.

Notes:

This session is about supporting the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers by forming positive relationships that help babies develop self-confidence and an image of themselves as competent people!! Caregivers who use relationship-based strategies with infants and toddlers use positive strategies that provide young children with safe, nurturing environments in which they can learn about themselves, explore their feelings, and develop positive relationships with other children and with adults.

### **From this session, participants will gain understanding about:**

- i describe the importance of developing positive and supporting relationships with infants and toddlers.
  
- i identify how infants learn about themselves, their feelings, and other people.
  
- i identify how to provide relationship-based care.
  
- i describe how to provide caregiving that is responsive to each child's unique strengths and needs.

**Notes:**

## BACKGROUND

Building relationships with infants and toddlers in child care seems natural.

Everyone loves babies – or do they? Caring for infants and toddlers can be enjoyable but also stressful. Sara and Jose are happily sitting in the baby swings when all of a sudden, Sara starts to cry. Jose looks over and starts crying, too. Jose’s mother has told you many times that he is a fussy baby and should be left to cry it out. But, you worry that something might be wrong and you don’t want to ignore his crying. We don’t always think about anyone needing “training” or “education” about building relationships with infants and toddlers, but recent research on brain development and learning indicates that nurturing, supportive, and trusting relationships between infants/toddlers and their caregivers provide the basis from which infants experience their worlds. Relationships are not only important – they are critical.

Infant caregivers may build relationships with babies and toddlers on the basis of the caregiver’s own feelings, mood, or expectations about behavior and development. Lila goes over to Sara and Jose and starts talking calmly to them as she lifts each one out of their swing and holds them together on her lap. Pretty soon, they both stop crying. Lila asks 9 month old Sara “Were you tired of swinging. Want to do something else?” Sara smiles and points in the direction of the toys. Lila puts her down on the mat and gets out some toys while asking Jose “How about you? Do you want to swing or be with Sara?” Jose looks to the swing so Lila carries him over to the swing and cranks it up to swing again. The next thing she hears and sees is Jose laughing and giggling with pleasure as he swings back and forth. Lila has used an important principle in building nurturing relationships. She has recognized that behavior is meaningful –even crying!!

Notes:

Caring for a lot of babies or toddlers at one time can be challenging. Many caregivers interact with children “naturally” which means that they interact with and build relationships with children in the ways that seem natural to them. What seems “natural” is likely to be based on each of our personal life experiences as well as on our values, expectations, and even on how we feel at a moment in time. Lila might have come to work late because she missed her normal bus as her alarm clock did not go off, and she may have been feeling stressed before she even got to work. When the babies began to cry, she may have interpreted their crying behavior on the basis of her feelings and responded very differently to the same situation. A lot of how we interact with others is “natural”, but each of us can develop strategies that can help us build positive and supporting relationships. Because these relationships build lifelong foundations for infants and toddlers, it is important not just to relate to infants and toddlers the way each of us sees as best but to insure that we use principles and specific strategies to build and maintain nurturing relationships.

### Guiding Principles

Six principles have been developed that can guide relationship-building with infants and toddlers (Pawl & John, 1998).

**1. Behavior is meaningful.** Behavior results from many influences – temperament, developmental competence, knowledge & skill, cultural background, and expectations of oneself and other people, and the environment. How we interpret behavior depends on these same factors. If we “see” infants, for example, as being people that need to be cared for but who cannot express themselves yet, we are likely to interpret the crying behavior of Sara and Jose differently than if we believe that even the youngest baby is telling us something through behavior –even crying. If we believe that babies cannot yet express themselves (they, after all, are not yet talking), then we may miss Jose’s glance at the swing. If we understand that a child with a feisty temperament is intense and moody,

### Notes:

we may be more accommodating and supportive than if we interpret that same child's behavior as "being bad". Our first interpretation or understanding of behavior may not be accurate. Maybe, Sara started crying because she wanted someone to talk with her – not because she needed or wanted to be in a different place.

**2. Everyone wants things to be better.** Some people think that they know what other people should want. It's 10 o'clock and you think that Marisa should be ready to take her bottle – she should be hungry. We can't determine what other people should want but we can try to understand how a child's desires or demands relate to needs for safety, connection, or mastery. And we can recognize that everyone – caregivers, children, and parents – want things to be better. Marisa may not want her bottle at 10 o'clock but by 10:15, when you are in the middle of giving a bottle to another infant, she may start fussing and wanting her bottle. How we interpret and respond to situations such as these is important in building nurturing relationships.

**3. You are yourself and your role.** What you are able to do in your own life depends on your past experiences, how you have understood those experiences, the resources available to you, and the culture, community, and times in which you live. How you perform your role as a caregiver of infants and toddlers depends on your knowledge, skill, attitudes, values, expectations people have of you in that role, and the resources available to you. If you are the only person in the room at the moment that Marisa starts fussing for her bottle at 10:15, you will have fewer resources for addressing this situation than if there are two people in the room and the other person can give Marisa her bottle. If you expect that Marisa should wait (after all, she refused the bottle only moments ago), you are unlikely to think of ways that she can be given her bottle now at 10:15 when she wants it and it won't matter what resources are available. Each of us needs to think of the way in which we play our role

**Notes:**



as caregivers of infants and toddlers and we need to become skillful in that role – beyond our own personal selves. Many people do not differentiate “myself” from “my role as a caregiver.” Yet, this very important role requires knowledge and skills that are likely to be above and beyond our own personal experiences.

#### **4. Don't just do something – stand there and pay attention.**

Protecting, providing, or even rescuing are very strong impulses when caring for infants and toddlers – especially those that we view as highly vulnerable. Our tendency is to rush right over to Sara and take her from the swing and start checking her diaper or getting a bottle or holding her and walking around the room. We are more likely to make a positive difference in development if we take the time to observe, consider the possible meanings of the behavior, and ask questions that demonstrate our interest and respect for the infant's feelings.

**5. Remember relationships!!** The relationships that we build with infants provide the foundation for brain growth as well as for children's development and learning. When we interact with babies in stable and respectful ways, our relationships help develop foundations that will guide children for the rest of their lives. Building respectful, consistent, stable, and nurturing relationships with children and their families is not an easy task – but it is an essential one.

**6. Do unto others as you would have others do unto others.** You are a model for many other people. When you interact positively with an infant or toddler, you provide a model for other caregivers and for parents. When you interact positively with parents, even in difficult situation, you provide a model for them about how you expect them to relate to you and to other caregivers. Relationships with other people – children and adults – may be very frustrating at times. But each of us is a model for everyone around

**Notes:**

us. If we strive to be positive, consistent, non-blaming, etc., we establish positive expectations -- the “social culture” for everyone around us.

### **What is Responsive Caregiving? Watch, Ask, And Adapt!!**

A first step in providing quality, nurturing relationships with infants and toddlers is to watch the infant or toddler. Look, listen, and focus all your attention on the child. When you watch, you can understand what an infant’s body posture or eye movements or head and body movements may be “saying.” These subtle signs may be hard to see when attention is focused on a lot of different things going on at the same time. When Lila took Jose out of the swing, she watched what was happening. When she saw him look toward the swing, she interpreted Jose’s behavior as wanting to be in the swing again. When Jose laughed and giggled after the swing started rocking him back and forth, Lila’s observation that Jose wanted to swing was confirmed.

We aren’t always correct when we interpret behavior. Lila did not really know if Jose’s eye movement toward the swing meant anything until she put him back in the swing and he laughed. When we see behavior, it is always important to ask what the child may be communicating by actions -- or by lack of actions. In a sense, Lila “asked a question” about whether or not Jose wanted to swing by putting him in the swing and watching his response. Had he cried and fussed or become stiff, Lila’s question about Jose wanting to swing would have been “answered” differently than it was when he smiled and laughed. The same behavior may have different meanings at different times. A child who is crying, for example, may do so because she is hungry or wants to be carried or is tired of sitting or is frightened for some reason or – or – or. We can make sure that our interpretations of a child’s behavior are as accurate as possible by watching what a child does after we have responded in some way.

**Notes:**

Adapting means that caregivers begin to fit themselves to the child – to the child’s temperament, what she is learning and doing, and how she responds and relates to a caregiver’s feelings and emotional reactions. Adaptable caregivers learn when to pick a particular infant up and when to put him down; they learn how to make a child more comfortable and secure, how to soothe a child who is unhappy or ill or just not content at a moment in time. Trying various strategies and seeing what happens to the caregiver-infant relationship is what makes caregivers adaptable. What worked yesterday may not be successful today!!

“The caregiver who can follow the lead of children, pick up their rhythms, and let them know their messages are understood is in tune with those children. When this happens, children learn that someone else understands their emotions and feelings. This closeness between a caregiver and a child is the foundation of healthy emotional growth in infants and toddlers “ (California Department of Education, 1990). This healthy growth, in turn, not only influences a child’s emotional development but provides a secure foundation for future learning and success.

**Notes:**

### Summary

Three key ideas are presented during this session:

- T Nurturing, supportive relationships between caregivers and infants provide the foundation for brain growth and development and a child's future success
- T Relationship-building between caregivers and infants/toddlers is rooted in six guiding principles:
  1. Behavior is meaningful.
  2. Everyone wants things to be better.
  3. You are yourself and your role.
  4. Don't just do something-stand there and pay attention
  5. Remember relationships!!
  6. Do unto others as you would have others do unto others.
- T Responsive caregiving is like a dance between two partners – the caregiver and the child. Caregivers can use a strategy of watch-ask-adapt to understand children's emotions and feelings and to respond to those feelings in respectful, nurturing ways.

### Notes:

# Activity #1 Guiding Principles

**Purpose:** This activity is designed to allow participants to reflect on some common notions that underlie the importance of relationships, and the ways in which adults form relationships with infants and toddlers.

## Activity Sequence:

1. At the beginning of the session, write each question on the True or False test (Handout #1) on a piece of chart paper.
2. Tape the papers to the wall, spaced around the room.
3. Give each participant one filecard of each color (one color will signify T and one F)
4. Give the participants about 5 minutes to complete Handout #1, True or False?
5. Read each question to the group. Have participants give their answer by holding up a file card. Give the group information about the responses (e.g., about half voted T, half F).
6. Ask them to think about what makes the question “True” or “False.” [As with any True/False test, answers may “change” depending on a person’s perspective or the information they consider in answering the question.] Select a few participants to respond and use these responses to encourage dialogue, discussion, and consensus. **BE CAREFUL TO MAKE THIS LAST ONLY ABOUT 10 MINUTES.**
7. Have participants stand by a piece of chart paper, approximately two participants to each piece of paper. Use a timer to allow each pair to spend about 3 minutes at a chart paper to write down as many “ways in which---”. For example, for question #1, “If we watch and listen, infants and toddlers will tell us what they need (T),” participants would write down as many ways as they can think of that they can watch and listen while providing care for infants or toddlers.
8. At the end of the 3 minute time, ring a bell and ask the pair to move to the next piece of chart paper and repeat the process. Have each group write ideas for 3 “stations” (chart papers). As the groups move along, there may be fewer things to write on each chart paper.
9. Ask each pair to review all the ideas on their chartboard and pick the three best ideas that are written down. Mark these ideas (with stars, etc.)
10. Have each pair read the question from the chart paper and read out the three best ideas. OR, if time is running out, the instructor can pick several of the charts and either read the 3 best ideas or ask the participants to read them.

Summarize the activity by referring participants to Guiding Principles (Handout #2). Review each of the principles by using examples that have been generated from the activity.

Notes:

**Length:** 30 minutes

**What you will need:**

Handouts:

- ‘ True or False Participant pp. 4
- ‘ Guiding Principles Participant pp. 5
- ‘ Timer or Bell
- ‘ Chart Paper
- ‘ Markers
- ‘ Tape
- ‘ 2 colors of file cards

## True or False?

Mark each answer with “T” (for True) or “F” (for False).

1. If we watch and listen, infants and toddlers will tell us what they need. \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Child care providers usually care for infants and toddlers in the ways in which they were raised, sometimes imposing their own ways of thinking and their own expectations on the child. \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Infants and toddlers learn more when adults leave them alone to explore on their own. \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. There is always something to do in an infant or toddler room and never time to just sit back and watch. \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Stable relationships with caregivers protect children from stresses that may be harmful to them. \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Respecting, encouraging, and providing positive role models for infants and toddlers helps them develop a positive view of themselves. \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. It doesn't matter if babies are not talked to until they are about 9 months of age and can understand what adults say to them. \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. If babies are left to cry, they won't grow up spoiled. \_\_\_\_\_
  
9. Toddlers communicate by having temper tantrums, represented by terms such as the “Terrible Twos”. \_\_\_\_\_
  
10. Being a good “teacher” for an infant or toddler means standing back, watching, and making it possible for the child to do what s/he wants to do. \_\_\_\_\_

## Guiding Principles

- Behavior is Meaningful
- Everyone Wants Things to Be Better
- You are Yourself and Your Role
- Don't Just Do Something – Stand There and Pay Attention
- Remember Relationships!!

# Activity #2

## Relationships Are the Key

**Purpose:** The videotape (24 minutes in length) illustrates the types of relationships that caregivers develop with infants and toddlers. Four key ideas are presented:

- i Studying the child's development and temperament.
- i Learning about families and the cultural heritage of children.
- i Developing awareness of how your feelings and emotional reactions affect relationships with infants and toddlers.
- i Mastering the "dance" (watch, ask, adapt).

### Activity Sequence:

1. **Introduce the videotape by reminding participants of what they learned in the previous PIN session on Promoting Development and Learning.** Ask participants to describe one thing that they learned about development (i.e., infant/toddler development is unique to the child; infants are learning about themselves, others, and their feelings) and temperament (i.e., there are different types of temperament such as feisty, fearful, flexible). Suggest that these are two important areas that caregivers need to know about in order to develop relationship-based caregiving.
2. Show the videotape "Getting in Tune: Creating Nurturing Relationships with Infants and Toddlers" (24 minutes). Ask participants to watch the tape and provide examples of how the Guiding Principles (Handout #2) are reflected.

## Break

### Notes:

**Length:** 40 minutes

### What you will need:

#### Handouts:

- ' Guiding Principles Participant pp. 5
- ' TV/VCR
- ' Video: Getting in Tune: Creating Nurturing Relationships with Infants and Toddlers (24 minutes)

**Length:** 15 minutes



# Activity #3

## Responsive Caregiving is Relationship-Based

**Purpose:** Examples of non-responsive caregiving and positive strategies that caregivers may use to be responsive to infant-toddler development and temperament are provided through this activity in order to sensitize caregivers to what they may do and, more importantly, to what they **can do** to support infants' and toddlers' emotional needs.

### Activity Sequence:

1. Assign participants to groups (or tables) and give them Handout #3. Assign each group one or two "practices" and ask them to spend a few minutes talking about why this (these) practices may occur and to identify what alternatives a child care provider might use to "watch, ask, and adapt."
2. Have one person from each group read the practice and provide examples of alternatives. Ask other members in the larger group to contribute other examples.
3. Review Handout #4 with participants. Ask them to focus on the "Do Nots" and ask for suggestions about what to do instead, building on those listed on the handout (or verifying suggestions that are the same as those listed on the handout.)
4. Use the "Insteads" to focus on the positive strategies that caregivers can develop to provide responsive caregiving -- caregiving that is rooted in the relationships they build and nurture with infants and toddlers.

### Notes:

**Length:** 35 minutes

### What You Will Need:

#### Handouts:

- ' What Responsive Caregiving is NOT About— Participant pp. 6
- ' The Infant - Toddler Top 10!! Participant pp. 7

## What Responsive Caregiving is NOT About-

- ; Long waiting periods (sitting in highchairs to be fed; crying before being responded to, for a turn to do something)
- ; Conversation “around babies” – not talking to children
- ; “Parking lot caregiving” – parking babies in swings, walkers, baby seats or keeping everyone on the same schedule
- ; Propped bottles
- ; Adult-driven activities (all children do the same thing)
- ; Restrictiveness (such as time-out chairs)
- ; Lack of accessibility of toys and materials

# The Infant-Toddler Top 10!!

## Do Not!!

Focus attention on children who are doing things you do NOT want them to do

Interpret children's behaviors as if they are specifically trying to ruin your day

Tell children how you feel about their behavior

Shout, scold, nag, or use a negative tone of voice with children

Label children with negative-sounding nicknames, even just for fun or even if parents use the nicknames

Correct children unless their actions are dangerous or destructive

Be afraid to hug and touch children

Say negative things about children "over their heads"

Threaten children

Allow children's behavior to make you feel angry or frustrated

## INSTEAD

Get involved and excited with children who are doing things you like

Recognize that children behave in ways that meet their immediate needs

Encourage children to feel good about themselves

Sing, laugh, smile, play, and have fun with children

Build on children's strengths and talk to them about their positive characteristics

Brainstorm and use creative ways to redirect children toward positive activities

Show affection in a lot of little ways

Treat every child with respect

Give real choices when they exist

Get lots of sleep and enjoy relaxing and recreational activities in the evenings

## Summing Up

This discussion will assist participants to reflect on what they learned today and will also briefly preview the next session. Be sure that all materials are collected and replaced into proper containers.

**Review:**

Have participants think about three new things they learned in today's session. Ask for volunteers and write answers up on the blackboard or flipchart. Then, ask participants to think about one thing that they may do differently in their jobs during the next week. Write these ideas down. Summarize for everyone in the group, emphasizing the things participants are planning to do in their jobs in the next week.

**Repeat:**

Date and time of the next session.

**Reminders:**

**Highlights of next session:**

**Evaluation:**

Have participants complete the evaluation form "What Did You Learn Today?"

**Notes:**

**Length:** 10 minutes

**Announcement:**

T Date of next session

**What you will need:**

- ' Chart paper or blackboard
- ' Evaluation forms: What Did You Learn Today?

## References and Resources

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