

# Social-Emotional Development in Infants and Toddlers

## A.K.A Toddlerhood: The Emotional Rollercoaster

Stephanie Adamkin Delambre, M.S  
[sadamkindelambre@gmail.com](mailto:sadamkindelambre@gmail.com)



# Objectives

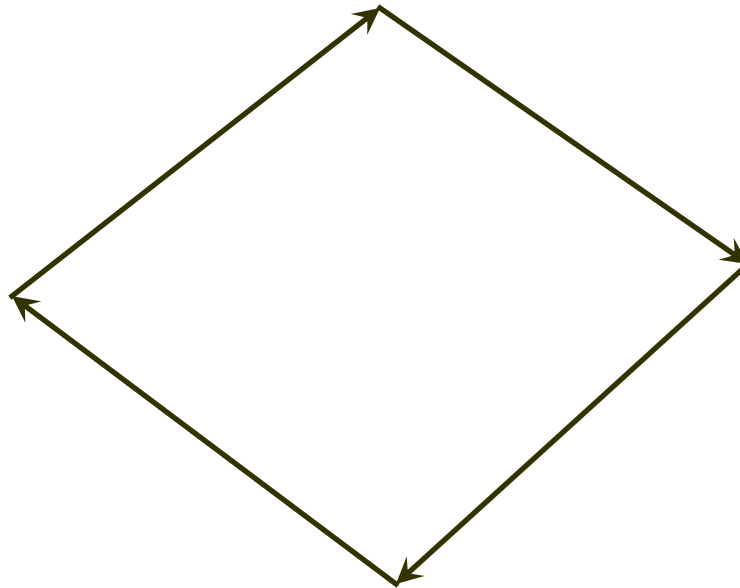
- \* Review social-emotional developmental milestones
- \* Understand the Circle of Security and ways to promote Secure Base behavior through healthy attachment
- \* Identify the 9 dimensions of Temperament
- \* Recognize specific skills and techniques to use in order to partner with your toddlers

# First Year of Life

(Behavior as communication)

**NEEDS**

RELIEF:  
Relaxation and  
**TRUST**  
(emotional  
response)



AROUSAL  
(behavior  
response)

GRATIFICATION  
(need fulfillment)

# First Year of Life

- \* Gratification of needs = + attachment cues
  - \* Eye contact, touch, smile, movement, feeding, heart connection, in arms.
- \* Sense of self
  - \* I am valued, cared for, and loved.
    - \* Positive core belief
  - \* I am damaged, worthless, and unlovable.
    - \* Negative core belief
- \* Behavior
  - \* Self-fulfilling prophecy

# Implications

- \* Self-esteem
- \* Ability to form relationships
  - \* Caregivers and peers
- \* Ability to control impulses and emotions
- \* Cooperation and compassion
- \* Empathy and morality
- \* Independence and autonomy
- \* Positive core beliefs
- \* Resilience

# Second Year of Life

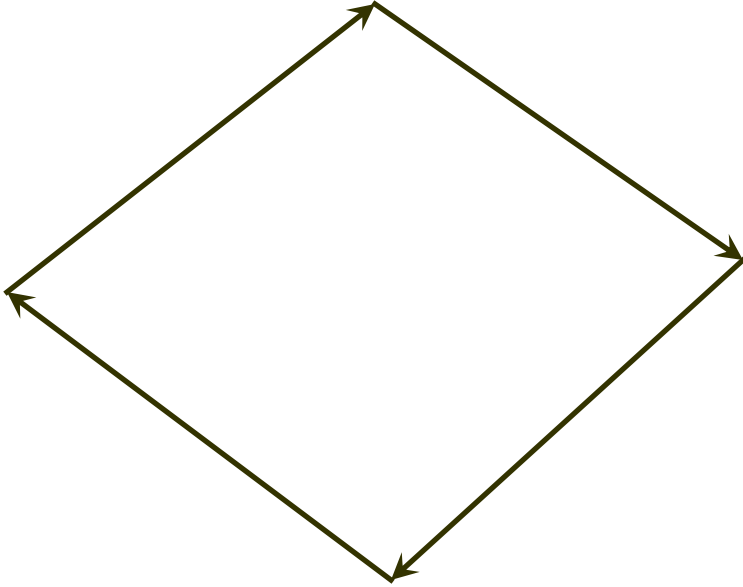
(Behavior as manipulation)

**WANTS**

**LEARNING:**  
Acceptance  
or  
Testing

**AROUSAL**  
(behavior  
response)

**Limit setting** or  
Overindulgence



```
graph TD; WANTS --> AROUSAL; AROUSAL --> Limit_setting; Limit_setting --> LEARNING; LEARNING --> WANTS;
```

# Implications

- \* Self-esteem
- \* Ability to form relationships
  - \* Caregivers and peers
- \* Ability to control impulses and emotions
- \* Cooperation and compassion
- \* Empathy and morality
- \* Independence and autonomy
- \* Positive core beliefs
- \* Resilience

What Does Healthy Social  
Emotional Development Look Like?



# Birth to 6 Months

## Emotional Development

- \* Communicate needs mostly through crying-may have rapid shifts in mood
- \* May show excitement by waving arms & legs
- \* May be frightened by loud, sudden noises
- \* May be comforted by soothing music
- \* Babies as young as 4 mos. Old can be depressed.
- \* By 6 mos. Old, babies respond to the emotions of others and may be harmed socially & emotionally by exposure to acts of violence.

# Birth to 6 Months

## Social Development

- \* Learn that smiling makes you smile back
- \* Beginnings of conversation
- \* Love to be held and touched
- \* Are not aware that others have feelings, so they can't think about how their behavior makes you feel
- \* Begin to realize that even though you are out of sight, you still exist
- \* Need to form strong emotional bonds with primary caregivers. This is vital for healthy social, emotional, physical, & mental development.

# 6 Months to 1 Year

## Emotional Development

- \* Are very attached to their primary caregiver
- \* Become anxious when the primary caregiver goes out of sight
- \* May become attached to a special blanket or toy
- \* Like being included in daily activities
- \* Shows feelings by smiling, crying, pointing
- \* Show they want to be picked up by raising their arms or pulling on your legs
- \* Begin to assert their independence by refusing to cooperate with you

# 6 Months to 1 Year

## Social Development

- \* Are uneasy around strangers
- \* Talk with babbling sounds
- \* Respond when called by name
- \* Begin to understand words such as “no”
- \* Begin to say “da-da” and “ma-ma”
- \* Wave “bye”
- \* Imitate other actions
- \* Think of other babies as objects without feelings, like toys

# 1 to 2 Years

## Emotional Development

- \* May become frustrated when they can't express themselves as well as they'd like
- \* Are more demanding
- \* Are more independent
- \* Say "No!"
- \* Give hugs to show affection
- \* May have temper tantrums
- \* Tantrums typically peak in the second year "terrible two's"
- \* Don't stick with an activity for more than a few minutes

# 1 to 2 Years

## Social Development

- \* Like to play “pretend”
- \* Are possessive of toys, too young to share
- \* Are more relaxed around strangers when a parent is present
- \* May be upset when a parent leaves
- \* Are very curious about others
- \* Copy the actions of nearby toddlers, but don't play with them
- \* Cannot yet understand or remember rules

# 2 to 3 Years

## Social and Emotional Development

### 24-30 months

- \* Uses words to communicate (starts 3 word sentences)
- \* May be shy in unfamiliar place
- \* Uses pretend play
- \* Smiles and laughs
- \* Enjoys lots of books and simple games
- \* Likes people
- \* Is playful with others

### 30-36 months

- \* Is able to play independently
- \* Separates easily from caregivers in familiar places
- \* Begins to share with others
- \* Shows feelings for others
- \* Expresses many feelings: sad, happy, frightened, angry
- \* Enjoys books and games

# 3 to 4 Years

## Emotional Development

- \* Have longer attention spans
- \* Have more complex emotions such as pride and guilt
- \* Can learn to use words to express feelings
- \* Have many fears
- \* Ask lots of questions
- \* Are curious about body parts
- \* Start to know right from wrong
- \* May tell lies because their sense of reality and fantasy is blurred



# 3 to 4 Years

## **Social Development**

- \* Copy adults, pretending to be different adults
- \* Want to please others
- \* Are more interested in playing with other children
- \* Still see themselves as the center of play
- \* Have more self-control
- \* Are more cooperative
- \* Can take turns
- \* Can learn & follow rules

# Zero to Three National Parent Survey

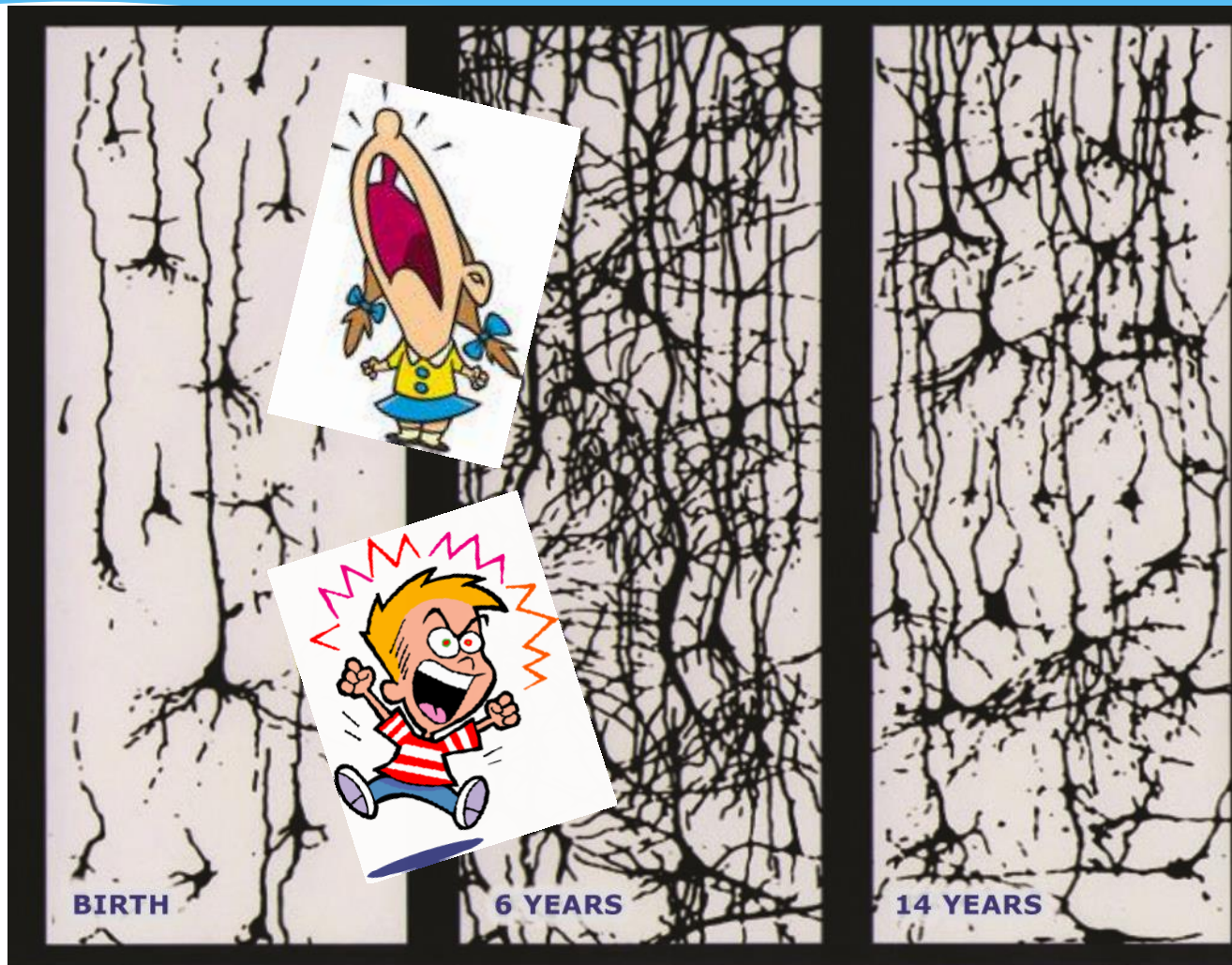
## The Problem

- \* 56% believe kids have the impulse control to resist the desire to do something forbidden before age 3
- \* 36% believe that kids under age 2 have this kind of self-control
- \* 43% think kids are able to share and take turns with other kids before age 2
- \* 24% believe kids have ability to control their emotions at 1 year or younger
- \* 42% believe kids have this ability by 2 years

## The Reality

- \* Self control actually develops between 3 1/2 and 4 years, and takes even more years to be used consistently
- \* Sharing skills develop between 3 to 4 years
- \* Emotional control also won't develop until between 3 1/2 and 4 years

# Brian Development




# More Research Findings

- \* Mild to Moderate conflicts take place once every 3 minutes
- \* Major conflicts occur at a rate of 3 per hour
- \* The younger the child, the more frequent the disturbance
- \* Conflicts between 2 and 3 year olds with their mother occur twice as often as for 4 and 5 year olds

# More Statistics

% of Kids with DAILY Tantrums:

- 1 year olds: 14%
- 2-3 years old: 20 %
- 4 year olds 11%
- 5-6 year olds: 5%



“The challenges of toddlerhood-negativism, defiance, temper-tantrums, no-win situations, and parental frustration, anger, and fatigue-are described as necessary, inevitable, and indeed valuable hurdles as toddlers learn to become individuals aware of their own needs and wishes but also mindful of the wishes and needs of others.” ---Alicia Lieberman

# Importance of Relationships

- \* Attachment Theory
- \* Importance of Attachment and Implications
- \* Establishment of a Secure Base

# Attachment

- \* **Definition: Attachment is a profound, reciprocal, physical and emotional relationship between a parent and a child that endures and sets the stage for all future intimate and trusting relationships.**
- \* **Names to know: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth**



# Moms of Securely Attached Infants

- \* Sensitive to the child's needs and emotional states
- \* Responsive to the child's needs and emotional states
- \* Accessible to the child
- \* Cooperative with the child

# Securely Attached Infants in the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

- \* **Cheerful**
- \* **Cooperative**
- \* **Popular**
- \* **Resilient**
- \* **Resourceful**
- \* **Confident**
- \* **Hopeful**

# Avoidant Attached Infants in 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

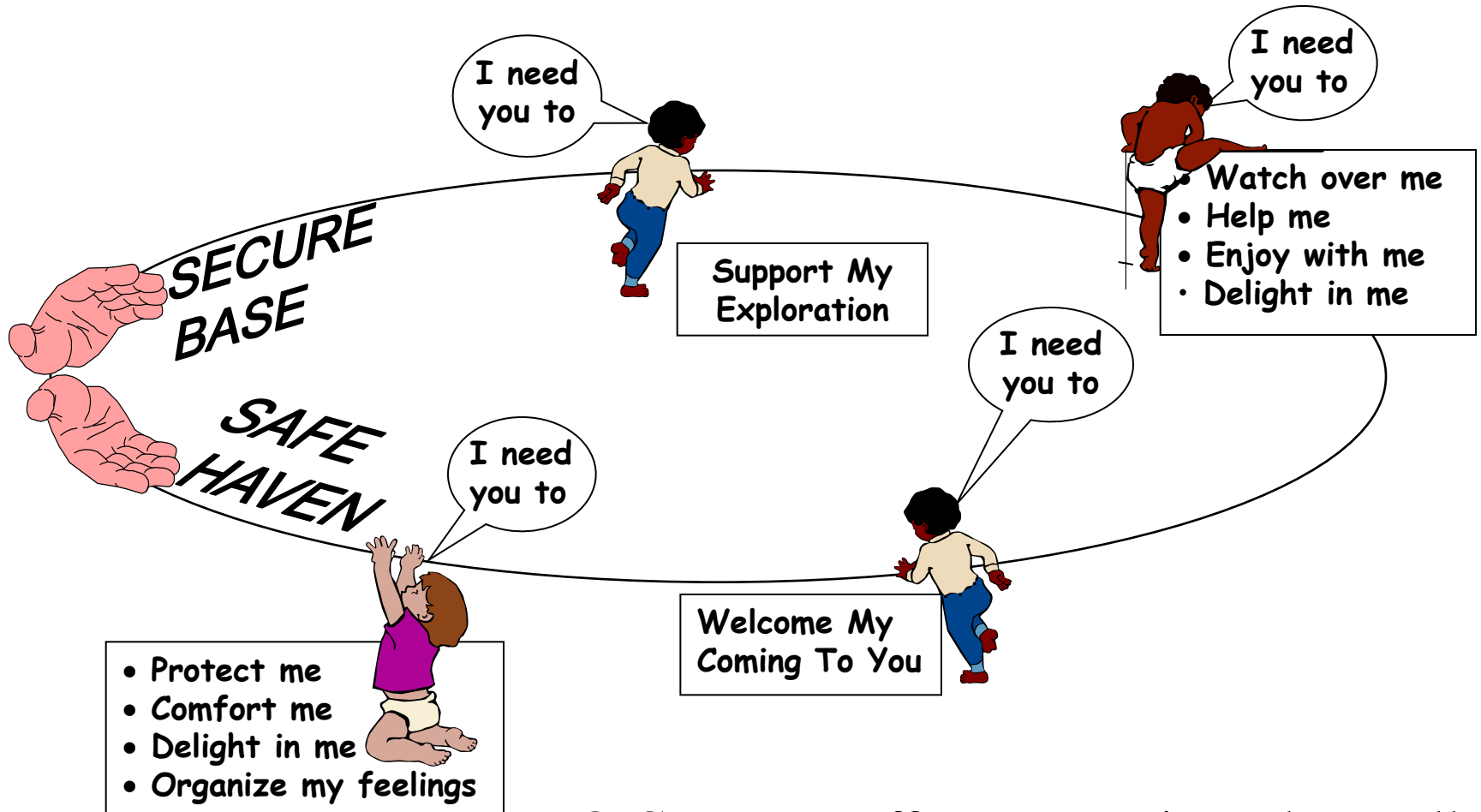
- \* **Emotionally insulated**
- \* **Hostile**
- \* **Antisocial**
- \* **Unduly seeking attention**

# Ambivalent Attached Infants in 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

- \* **Tense**
- \* **Impulsive**
- \* **Easily frustrated**
- \* **Passive**
- \* **Helpless**

# Circle of Security

## Caregiver Attending to the Child's Needs



# Temperament

- \* The way we approach the world
- \* 9 Dimensions
- \* “Goodness of Fit”
- \* Socialization of Temperament

# 9 Temperament Traits

1. Sensitivity
2. Activity level
3. Intensity of reaction
4. Rhythmicity
5. Adaptability
6. Mood
7. Approach/withdrawal
8. Persistence
9. Distractibility



# 3 Main Temperaments

1. **Easy or flexible** children tend to be happy, regular in sleeping and eating habits, adaptable, calm, and not easily upset.

2. **Difficult** children may be fussy, irregular in feeding and sleeping habits, fearful of new people and situations, easily upset by noise and stimulation, and intense in their reactions.

3. **Slow to warm or cautious** children may be less active or tend to be fussy, and may withdraw or react negatively to new situations; but over time they may become more positive with repeated exposure to a new person, object, or situation.

\*4. Active children have a very high activity level, they take off and move without looking back; not necessarily social as their physical pursuits are generally their focus rather than an interest in people



# “Goodness of Fit”

- \* Each caregiver and parent also has a unique temperament
- \* Importance of Compatibility
  - \* When the adult’s expectations and methods of caregiving match the child’s personal style and abilities
  - \* Your style doesn’t need to change, but caregivers need to adjust or alter their methods to be a positive support for the child
    - \* Plan for the child you are working with

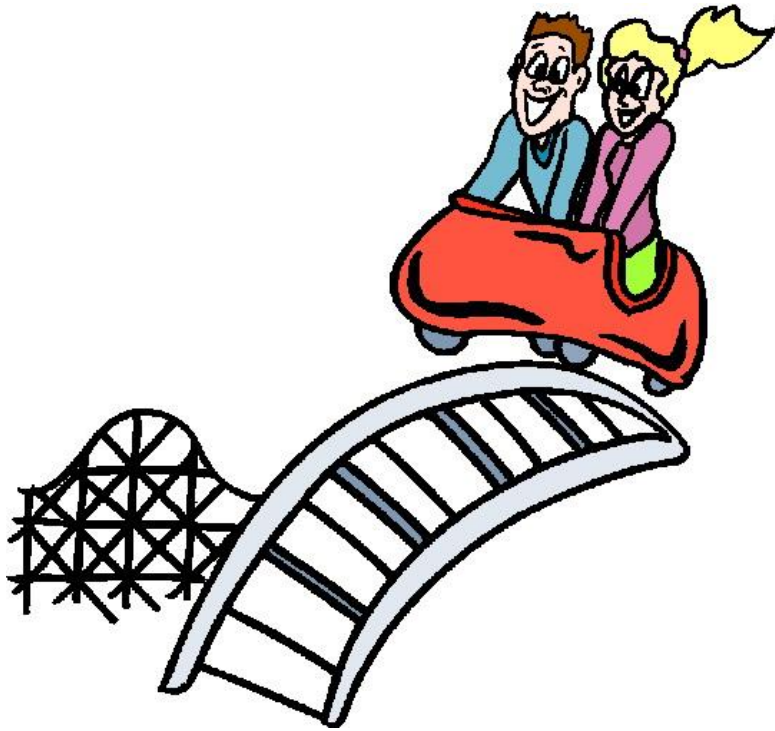
# Socialization

“The way that parents and caregivers respond to a toddler’s temperament will help to determine whether the vulnerabilities of the child become magnified and entrenched in his sense of himself, or whether, hopefully, these difficulties are framed by the more competent aspects of the child and do not become a dominant part of his personality.” –Alicia Lieberman

The Universal Toddler Quote

“I have NO idea what I want...  
but I insist upon it!”

# Joining the Ride



- \* “Cultivate an *attitude* of partnership: to be willing to listen, acknowledge that caregivers and children at times have different goals, try to reconcile the differences, and agree to disagree if this is not possible.”-Alicia Lieberman

# The “Good Enough” Caregiver

- \* Studies have found that the “good enough” parent/caregiver responds correctly to the child \_\_\_\_\_% of the time.
- \* The caregiver “attunes correctly”
  - \* Attuning to a two year old in the middle of a tantrum will include not only responding with appropriate limits, but understanding what the emotional meaning of the outburst might be (are they tired? Hurt? Angry? Seeking attention?)
- \* Children need caregivers they can trust to reflect on their actions and attempt to bridge misunderstandings when they occur

# Building the Relationship

## Birth to 18 months

- \* Caregivers play games and sing songs with individual babies.
- \* Babies play with familiar, home-like items.
- \* Caregivers help babies feel secure by doing some things in the same way everyday
- \* Caregivers hold and talk to babies while feeding them.
- \* Babies spend some time alone, learning about themselves.

## 18 months to 2+ years

- \* Caregivers read and discuss books about feelings
- \* Caregivers plan and lead small group activities for two or three toddlers at a time – modeling friendship skills.
- \* Caregivers comfort toddlers with words and touch.
- \* Caregivers allow toddlers to comfort themselves.
- \* Caregivers redirect toddlers from inappropriate behaviors and activities.
- \* Caregivers help toddlers learn appropriate ways to handle disagreements by describing what's happening

# Where the Power Lies

- \* The desire to please
- \* The positive approach
  - \* Catch Them Being Good

**Attention is the number 1 motivator for behavior**

# The Power of Narration

- \* Infancy

- \* Organize their world

- \* Junior Toddlers

- \* Organize their world
- \* Build verbal skills

- \* Toddlers

- \* Shows you are paying attention-builds relationship

- \* Preschoolers

- \* Improve relationship
- \* Builds prosocial skills



# Teaching Emotional Literacy

- \* Learning words for different feelings
- \* Learning how to recognize feelings in self and others
- \* Learning how to share feelings verbally or appropriately
- \* Feelings change
- \* You can have more than one feeling about something
- \* You can feel differently than someone else about the same thing
- \* All feelings are valid – it is what you do with them that counts!

# Setting Limits

## Why?

- \* To protect the child, others, and materials
- \* To provide consistency and predictability
- \* To help the child feel secure
- \* To promote an accepting attitude by teacher
- \* To facilitate the development of the child's decision-making (self-control and responsibility)

## When?

- \* Risk of harm
- \* Disruption of routine
- \* Transitions
- \* Socially unacceptable behavior

# How To Give an Effective Command

- \* Direct (telling, not asking)
- \* Positive (what to DO, not stop doing)
- \* Single (one at a time)
- \* Specific (not vague)
- \* Age-appropriate
- \* Given in a normal tone of voice
- \* Polite and respectful (Please... )
- \* Explained *before* given or *after* obeyed
- \* Used only when really necessary

# Responding to Limit Testing

- \* Acknowledge the child's feelings and wants
- \* Communicate the limit
- \* Target acceptable alternatives
  
- \* Choice versus threat
- \* Avoid power struggle

# CHOICES!!!

- \* Offer choices as much as possible! This gives the child a sense of control in an otherwise largely-out-of-their-control world
- \* Options provided must be accessible and appropriate
- \* Adults must be OK with the child selecting EITHER option provided

# More Skills to Teach

- \* Problem Solving Skills
  - \* Problem Solving Steps and Alternative Solutions
  - \* Solutions have consequences
- \* Social Skills
  - \* Play Organizers
  - \* Sharing
  - \* Turn Taking
  - \* Teamwork
  - \* Giving Compliments

# More Things to Think About

- \* Abnormal/Delayed Development-Red Flags
- \* Curriculum and Engaging Activities
- \* Classroom Set-up
- \* Schedules and Routines
- \* Specific Interventions for Difficult Behaviors

# Thank You!

- \* Stephanie Adamkin Delambre , M.S LPA
- \* [sadamkindelambre@gmail.com](mailto:sadamkindelambre@gmail.com)



# Resources

- \* Lieberman, A. (1993). *The Emotional Life of the Toddler.*
- \* Zero to Three
  - \* [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)
- \* Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
  - \* [www.ecmhc.org](http://www.ecmhc.org)
- \* Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
  - \* [www.csefel.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.csefel.vanderbilt.edu)
- \* Koralek, D. (1999) *Classroom Strategies to Promote Children's Social and Emotional Development.*