

### **Knowing Infant and Toddlers**

Working with your small group, think through and discuss what you know about Infants and Toddlers. Use the following questions to guide your team through the process. Be prepared to share your responses with the large group.

- What are they like?
- What do they do?
- How do they behave?
- What kinds of things do they like and dislike?
- How do they express themselves?
- How do they interact with others?

Notes:



### The Foundations for All Learning

ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families identifies seven social/emotional characteristics that are essential for school-readiness. Young children develop these characteristics when they are with adults who genuinely care about them, talk with them in calm and respectful ways, take joy in their discoveries, have appropriate expectations about what they can do, and guide their behavior in positive ways. Every interaction you have with a child is an opportunity to nurture these seven characteristics that are essential to children's success as learners.

School readiness is an important issue today. Children who enter school ready to learn have strong social/emotional skills and positive attitudes towards learning. How children feel about themselves and how they relate to others influence what and how they learn. School Readiness actually begins in infancy.

For very young children, learning depends on the trusting relationships they build with the important adults in their lives. The research on relationships, especially the importance of secure attachments, explains how young children develop strong social and emotional skills when their needs are consistently met by trusted adults and when they have positive interactions with those adults. When they know that they are safe, loved, and cared for, children are ready to venture out to explore everything around them. When adults encourage those explorations and share children's excitement about new discoveries, children gain confidence in themselves as learners.

These traits are more fundamental to children's success than knowing letters and numbers. They are listed below with examples of how children show these characteristics.

1. Capacity to communicate: the desired and ability to exchange ideas, feelings, and thoughts with others. Children communicate, first through crying, coos, gestures and facial expressions and eventually with words or signs. They are able to express ideas and feelings verbally or by signing, asking questions and converse.
2. Curiosity: a desire to find things out, knowing the process will be enjoyable. Children demonstrate curiosity when they actively explore and investigate objects and materials using all of their senses; notice new things in the environment; ask questions about what, why and how things happen, and try to figure out how things work.
3. Confidence: a person's sense of control over his own behavior and environment; children's expectations that they will be able to succeed and adults will help them if necessary. Children with confidence are eager to try new things; show pleasure when they make a discovery or complete a task by clapping their hands, smiling, and looking at you; know their own names and use words like "my" and "me."

4. Intentionality: the drive to make things happen and determination to persist and not give up. Children show intentionality when they choose what they want to play with, take an interest in sounds and sights around them, stay with an activity for a period of time and complete it, try different ways to solve a problem.
5. Self-control: children’s ability to control their actions in age-appropriate ways. Children demonstrate self-control when they are receptive to redirection, increasingly behave in ways that are expected by adults, and learn to express and manage their feelings.
6. Relatedness: children’s ability to engage with others, knowing they will be understood. Children who have acquired this characteristic trust familiar adults and have secure attachments, enjoy playing games such as peek-a-boo, take an interest in what other children are doing, are increasingly aware of the emotions of others, and enjoy playing with other children.
7. Cooperativeness: the ability to engage with others in an activity or task, balancing their own needs with those of others to accomplish something. Children who are cooperative may imitate others and then join in, participate in small-group activities, begin to follow simple classroom rules, help put away toys or wipe a table and offer help to another child.

**Reflection - The Foundations for Learning**

Working with others in your group, select and discuss up to three of the Foundations for Learning. Share what you currently do to cultivate the characteristic. Use the space below to record some new ideas to try.

Characteristic	New Ideas I Can Implement to Cultivate Characteristic

**The Foundations of Developmentally Appropriate Practice**

An effective teacher/caregiver chooses a strategy to fit a particular situation. It’s important to consider what the children already know and can do and the learning goals for the specific situation. By remaining flexible and observant, we can determine which strategy may be most effective. Often, if one strategy doesn’t work, another will.



Review the strategies below and on the following page. Place a ✓ next to the ones you regularly implement. Discuss with a partner.

Theory and Research	Key Findings	What You Can Do
T. Berry Brazelton and Stanley Greenspan: Meeting Children’s Basic Needs	Seven needs must be met in order for children to develop and learn. They underlie the principles of developmentally appropriate practice, particularly the important role that families, teachers, and communities play in children’s lives. 1) Ongoing nurturing relationships 2) Physical protection, safety and regulation 3) Experiences tailored to their individual differences 4) Developmentally appropriate experiences 5) Limit setting, structure and expectations 6) Stable supportive communities and cultural continuity 7) Adults to protect their future	-Establish and maintain nurturing relationships with children and their families  -Provide safe, developmentally appropriate learning experiences  -Individualize schedules, routines and experiences for each child’s needs  -Create partnerships with families to support children’s developmental and learning.
Erik Erikson	Social and emotional learning is a lifelong process that begins at birth. When adults are responsive to children’s needs, children resolve the tension between trust and mistrust, and between autonomy and shame.	-Develop and maintain a trusting relationship with each child  -Implementing nurturing, trust building routines  -Provide learning experiences that help children feel competent  -Offer children appropriate choices and challenges.
Jean Piaget	Children’s logical thinking develops in stages. They need many opportunities to explore the world around them in order to refine their understandings about how things work. Infants learn by reacting to what they experience through their senses and physical activity. Toddlers and twos are egocentric (see things from their point of view) and generalize from their limited experiences in ways that may not be accurate.	-Provide safe opportunities for infants to explore their environment through play  -Provide opportunities for toddlers and twos to make choices  -Schedule uninterrupted periods of time for children to play and explore their environment  -Ask open-ended questions to encourage children’s thinking.
Resilience	When young children develop close, trusting relationships with the important adults in their lives, the most basic foundation for the further development of resiliency is laid.	-Develop and maintain a trusting relationship with each child  -Teach language for the expression of feelings.  -Offer appropriate levels of support to help children develop self-control  -Provide opportunities for children to practice their new skills

Abraham Maslow	All people have basic needs. People’s needs must be met before higher learning can take place. Needs that involve physiology, safety, belonging, and esteem must be met in order for children to be able to build relationships and learn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Create an environment in which children are safe, feel emotionally secure, and have a sense of belonging</li> <li>-Provide responsive caregiving to meet the individual needs of children and their families</li> </ul>
Attachment	When children’s needs are met consistently in a nurturing way by a trusted adult and when they have many positive interactions with that adult, children learn that they are important and that they can count on others. When they develop a secure attachment with one or more caregivers, children feel more confident about exploring the world around them and developing relationships with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Provide responsive, loving care that meets the individual needs of children</li> <li>-Use nurturing routines to develop and maintain a trusting relationship with each child</li> <li>-Respond appropriately to children’s communication attempts</li> </ul>
Lev Vygotsky	Interactions with teachers and peers are an important part of children’s cognitive development. Teachers scaffold children’s learning by offering assistance and giving supporting information. Teachers must observe children closely to understand how to support their learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Observe children carefully</li> <li>-Use information from your observations to plan routines and experiences that encourage children’s development and learning</li> <li>-Encourage social interaction between children with varying skill levels so that they can learn from one another</li> <li>-Offer assistance to children as needed</li> </ul>

## Responding to Children’s Needs

Children learn best when they have positive and caring relationships with adults and other children; when they receive carefully planned, intentional guidance and assistance; and when they can safely encounter and explore many interesting things in their environment.

Effective teachers/caregivers maintain appropriate expectations, providing each child with the right mix of challenge, support, sensitivity, and stimulation.

With their knowledge, skill, and training, teachers—in collaboration with families—can ensure that programs promote and enhance every child’s learning.

Working with a partner or in your small group, read the following scenarios, use the information discuss and complete the following. Be prepared to share with the large group.

*Julio (4 months) has been lying on a blanket, smiling at Linda, waving his arms, and kicking his legs. He begins to grimace, whimper, and squirm. Linda smells an odor. "You have a poopy diaper, Julio," she explains. "Let's get you changed right away!" Linda picks him up, takes him to the diaper table, and lays him down. Julio looks at Linda as she chats with him. "Look, you're all clean," she says as she puts on a fresh diaper. She continues talking to him as she gets him dressed and washes his hands.*

### **Linda's Thoughts and Questions**

Julio's way of letting me know that he has a dirty diaper is to make faces, whimper, and squirm.

I think he needed to be changed around this time yesterday. I wonder if he's beginning to need a diaper change at the same time every day.

### **How Can Linda Respond?**

### **What Julio Might Be Learning**

*Barbara is sitting with Leo (18 months) and two other children at a low table as they eat lunch. She says, "M-m-m. These crackers are nice and crunchy." Suddenly, Leo reaches over and grabs two crackers from Wanda's plate. He starts to eat one of the crackers but stops when Wanda starts to scream. Leo quickly puts the crackers back on Wanda's plate.*

### **Barbara's Thoughts and Questions**

Wow! Leo actually put the crackers back on Wanda's plate when she protested. I've been trying to help him use other children's reactions to guide his behavior. Maybe it's beginning to work!

### **How Can Barbara Respond?**

### **What Leo Might Be Learning**