


Foundations of Early Childhood Development: It's All About Relationships

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"A small child sits in rapt attention on the lap of a beloved adult, listening to words that move like water, words that tell of fairies, dragons, and giants in faraway places never before imagined. The young child's brain prepares to read far earlier than one might ever suspect, and makes use of almost all the raw material of early childhood, every perception, concept and word. It does so by learning to use all the important structures that will make up the brain's universal reading system...under the crook of an arm in the comfort of a loved one's lap."

Maryanne Wolf, 2007, p. 81-82.

Goals of Touchpoints



- Optimal child development
- Healthy, functional families
- Competent and healthy professionals
- Strong communities

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Key Points



- Child development:
 - takes place within relationships
 - is characterized by predictable periods of disorganization
 - emotions are central to the process
- Child-rearing requires social and cultural influences



13th century, Indonesian, Art Institute of Chicago



Development
takes place
within
relationships

What are Touchpoints?



“Touchpoints” are *predictable* periods of disorganization in a child’s development that can *disrupt* family relations, but can also provide an *opportunity* for providers to connect with parents.


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Parent of a 7 Month Old:



"Ever since he was six weeks old he would sleep all night. Now this last week he's standing up in the crib. Before, if he fussed a little bit you could go in and give him a pacifier and he'd go back to sleep. Occasionally he would do that. Now he's wide awake standing up. 3 o'clock in the morning and he's ready to play. If I lay him down, he pops back up again. You let him play a few minutes and he goes back to bed. For the last six months he's been sleepy and now he's not. We were really spoiled. I don't know what to do."

Regressions in a child's behavior cause disorganization for parents



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Social/Emotional goals of the first year



- State regulation
- Attachment to caregiver/development of trust
- Sense of self
- Causality and object permanence



From birth, the world of children is organized by scripts that reflect familial and cultural childrearing patterns.

3 weeks - a mother



“I was expecting to have this six months infant that was going to look and play and interact and I get this little lump that sucks the life right out of me every hour on the hour.”

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9-Months:

Travel broadens the mind




Joint Attention



Mobility:

“It is exciting seeing him do all of these new things, but I will have to adjust to the changes. Before, where he couldn't really move, I had an advantage because I could get a lot of things done, but now that he can move I am constantly running after him trying to do what I got to do too.”




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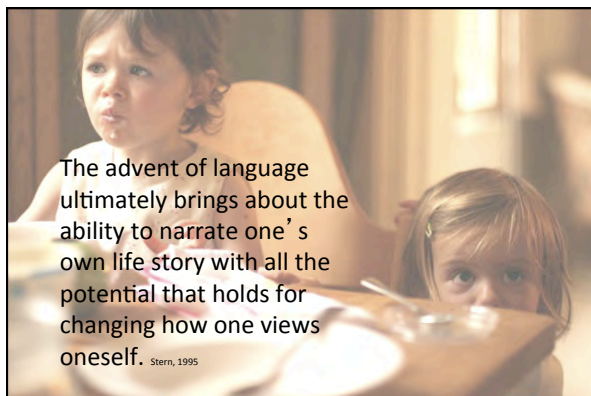
Toddler Goals



- Sense of self, autonomy
- Representational thought
- Mastery, self control
- Separation and exploration
- Social rules
- Beginning peer relationships







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A toddler

Damian is sitting at a table in his day-care center slowly moving his jaw and mouth while staring into space. "What are you chewing Damian?" asks his caregiver. "I'm chewing mommy," replies Damian. (Lieberman, 1995)

Parent of a toddler:

Grace (21 months old) had her first temper tantrum the other night. In the past, she's been very nurturant with her babies, her dolls, her stuffed animals, kissing and holding them. Well, the other night, she couldn't move one of her dolls the way she wanted to, and she began screaming and crying. She threw the doll on the floor and began jumping on it! Robert (husband) got concerned and he asked "What should we do now?"

Parent of a toddler:

One perfect spring day as I sat on my deck, I looked up from the book I was reading to see my daughter, then 2 1/2, nose-to-nose with the daffodils in our garden. Bending from one flower to another, she gave each of them a gentle kiss. Swamped with love and pride that I had produced such a sweet and tender child, I rushed to sit beside her. That's when she calmly turned, looked me straight in the eye, and said, "Go away, I don't want you here. I want Daddy." I was devastated. [Margery D. Rosen, "Pushing Your Buttons", p. 54.]

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Preschool Competence



- Able to feel a full range of emotions
- Able to recognize emotions in self
- Able to label emotions to self
- Able to express and communicate feelings
- Engages in dramatic play



“We were taught to say that play is the work of children. But watching and listening to them, I saw that play was nothing less than Truth and Life.”

Vivian Paley

Play and Disorganization: Children



- Play allows young children to act out things they don't fully understand. They try things out in play that they can't in the real world.
- Play may serve an organizing function in the brain helping with skills such as planning and self-regulation.

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Brazelton Touchpoints Center

Focus on the parent child relationship

Shibus, North Carolina, 1988

Support Parental Mastery



Brazelton Touchpoints Center

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Thank you

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