



## 1. Hold, rock, and cuddle infants and toddlers.

### Why Is This Important?

Warm, consistent care and attention from caregivers helps infants and toddlers establish a sense of trust in the world **(A/R)**. Infants and toddlers who trust their caregivers and use them as a secure base from which to explore are more confident in their efforts to learn about their world **(IN)**. Calm and comforting physical affection has positive long-term effects on a child's stress-regulating system **(SR)**.

### Tips for Infants

- G H R 1.1** Promptly pick up infants after a nap. Gently hold and talk to them as they continue to wake. *"Lakisha, you slept a long time. You must feel very rested."* A/R, SR
- G H R 1.2** Gently hold an infant in your lap as you share short books with bright pictures. A/R, IN
- G H R 1.3** Hold and interact with infants for bottle feedings. *"Kyle, you are hungry today!"* AR
- G H R 1.4** Rock or gently pat infants' backs to calm and help them sleep. A/R, SR
- G H R 1.5** Hold an infant in your arms while walking around, looking at, and talking about things you see. *"I hear birds singing. Do you hear the bird? The blue bird is sitting in the tree."* A/R, IN

### Tips for Toddlers

- G H R 1.1** Respond to toddlers when they want hugs. *"Josh, your face is frowning, and I see a tear. Would you like a hug right now?"* A/R, SR
- H R 1.2** Spend time looking at a toddler's baby book or scrapbook. Talk about the pictures, and tell stories about fun, memorable events. A/R, IN
- G H R 1.3** Smile at each toddler every day and let them all know how special they are. *"Devin, when you giggle, it makes me giggle and smile too."* A/R, IN
- G H R 1.4** Sit close with toddlers while reading. Ask them to sit in your lap or close by to share the story. A/R, IN
- G H R 1.5** Rock in a rocking chair with toddlers while talking about their day or reading a book. *"Kathleen, your day was busy. You played with water, paint, and babies today."* A/R, IN
- G H R 1.6** Hold toddlers' hands while you walk around looking at and talking about things you see. *"Danielle, do you hear the puppy barking? Look! The puppy is running after the ball."* A/R, IN

### Tell Me More...

Secure attachment develops when a caregiver interacts with and responds to an infant promptly in warm and sensitive ways (e.g., holding, snuggling, rocking, talking softly, soothing). As a result, the infant feels safe and comforted and learns to trust others. Secure attachment is necessary for an infant or a toddler to grow in healthy ways, be able to explore and learn, and have healthy relationships with others. Attachment is also an important influence on later emotional, cognitive, and social outcomes. For example, Frosch, Cox, and Goldman found that children who formed attachments with their mothers during infancy were better able to pay attention and more enthusiastic during mother-child storybook reading time at 24 months of age (2001). These earliest relationships influence early brain development and help to shape emotions, thinking, learning, and behavior throughout life.

## 2. Respond to the cues (coos, smiles, cries, turning away, etc.) of infants and toddlers.

### Why Is This Important?

Infants and toddlers learn to interact with others in a positive way when their own needs are met **(A/R)**. Adults' sensitivity to the unique ways infants and toddlers each communicate feelings, needs, and interests helps increase their confidence **(IN)**. A caregiver's attention and responses to the expressions and actions of infants and toddlers helps children learn to handle stressful situations better **(SR)**.

### Tips for Infants

- G H R 2.1** Provide words to describe infants' gestures and movements. *"You really like bouncing! Bounce, bounce, bounce!"* A/R, IN

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- G H R 2.2** Respond when an infant uses a pointing gesture to draw your eye to what she is interested in or desires. *"I see what you are pointing at! You really like looking at the purple flowers!"* A/R, IN

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- G H R 2.3** Gently touch or pick up infants in the presence of unfamiliar adults to reassure them they are safe. A/R, SR

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- G R 2.4** Complete daily observations, writing down what you see and hear for each infant to help learn about all of their likes, dislikes, and the meanings behind their cues and behaviors. A/R, IN, SR

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- G H R 2.5** Model and give a voice to an older infant's shaking of head to communicate "yes" and "no." *"Julian, you are shaking your head 'no.' You do not want more milk."* A/R, IN

### Tips for Toddlers

- G H R 2.1** Hold out your hand for a toddler who wants to walk and show you something. Use words to describe her behavior. *"Thank you, Maggie, for coming to get me. Now I can see that you want to play with the paints."* A/R, IN, SR

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- G R 2.2** Play imitating games while toddlers are seated and waiting at a table. For example, point or wave and see if the toddlers can copy your gestures. Talk about what the gestures mean. IN, SR

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- G H R 2.3** Consistently respond to or pick up toddlers when they lift their arms. *"Jason, you're lifting your arms. You want me to pick you up."* A/R, IN, SR

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- G H R 2.4** Label toddlers' gestures, linking words to their actions. *"You're pulling on my pants. Do you want me to pick you up?"* IN, SR

### Tell Me More...

Young children have not learned to hide what is going on inside of them. Much of what they think and feel is expressed through their sounds, gestures, facial expressions, and actions (Lerner & Dombro 2005). Caregivers must be careful observers of children's behavior so they can understand what is going on inside. The foundations for an emotionally and socially competent child and adult are being laid in the early years through caregivers' efforts to show infants and toddlers that feelings are important to well-being and social interaction.

In studies where infants were exposed to a quiet and unresponsive face, they reacted negatively. This reaction indicates they somehow know they need to be with someone who responds and gives back clear messages, especially smiles and coos, on a regular basis. Since early learning occurs within an emotional and social context, this connectedness in thinking and feeling is reinforced as a firm part of an infant's foundation for life (Gianino & Tronick 1988; Weinberg & Tronick 1994).