



Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Vol. IV, No. 1

10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

- ★ Build trusting relationships
- ★ Provide consistent care
- ★ Support children's health
- ★ Provide a safe environment
- ★ Provide positive guidance
- ★ Provide a language-rich environment
- ★ Foster curiosity and development through play
- ★ Individualize care and learning activities
- ★ Partner with parents
- ★ Pursue personal and professional growth

This Month's Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

Build Trusting Relationships, Provide Consistent Care

Building Support for Children's Mental Health

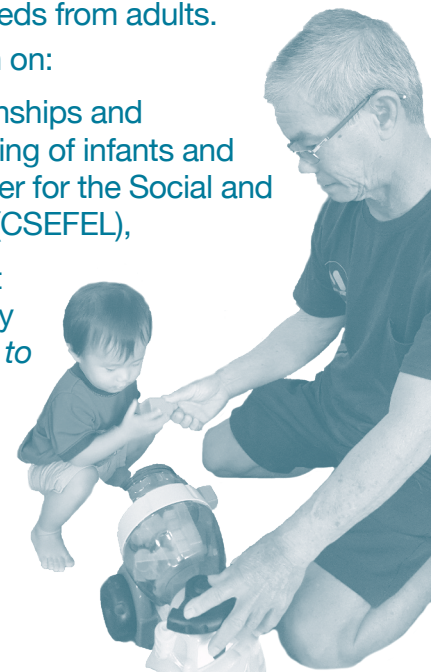
Recently, much focus in the early childhood field has been placed on infant mental health. This is a shift in emphasis as past efforts to support children's mental health have focused on teens. Infant and early childhood mental health, as defined by the Hawai'i Association for Infant Mental Health (HAIMH), *"is shown in a child's sense of trust and security in the world, curiosity to explore the environment, a lively and dynamic emotional life and a feeling of safety to engage in relationships that support the child's growth."*

The term, "Infant Mental Health," may sound new but the concept of building relationships of trust with infants and toddlers has been with us for decades. Our field has promoted the need for consistent and responsive care to support an infant's sense of trust and security. This sense of security enables infants and young toddlers to freely explore and learn. Science has also shown negative impacts that occur when a child is repeatedly denied the nurturance and positive interactions he needs from adults.

In this newsletter, we will share information on:

- The powerful effect that caregivers' relationships and interactions have on the emotional well-being of infants and young toddlers (from HAIMH and the Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL),
- Three overarching child care practices that build strong relationships recommended by the Institute of Medicine in *"From Neurons to Neighborhoods,"* and
- Nine indicators of responsive caregiving identified by Zero to Three as relationship-building practices.

A poster is included in the packet for you and your families as a reminder of the importance of nurturing infant mental health.



The powerful effect of caregivers' relationships and interactions

"It is essential to ensure that first relationships are trusting and caring, since early relationships provide an important foundation for later development in all areas (HAIMH)."

Relationships are the key to all human development. The trust relationship parents and other primary caregivers form with young children by "reading" their needs and responding appropriately supports healthy brain development and prepares children for a lifetime of healthy social relationships.

"The capacity to regulate emotions, form secure primary relationships and explore the environment with curiosity are the basis of sound mental health in children from birth to age five (HAIMH)."



When parents and other caregivers build relationships of trust, children:

- gain a sense of security
- learn to regulate their behavior and emotions
- gain the freedom to explore and learn
- use the adult as a secure base to return to for reassurance.

Once reassured, the child is able to set out again, fearlessly, to learn more about his world. This emotional bond formed between children and their primary caregivers is called attachment. Children benefit from having attachment relationships with their caregivers as well as with their parents.

Attachment is a basic human need and may look different depending on the child's culture of origin. A child's psychological development depends on his or her ability to use the caregiver for relief of distress and as a secure base for exploration. This early attachment has a powerful impact on children's behavior, self-regulation, learning and relationships throughout life.

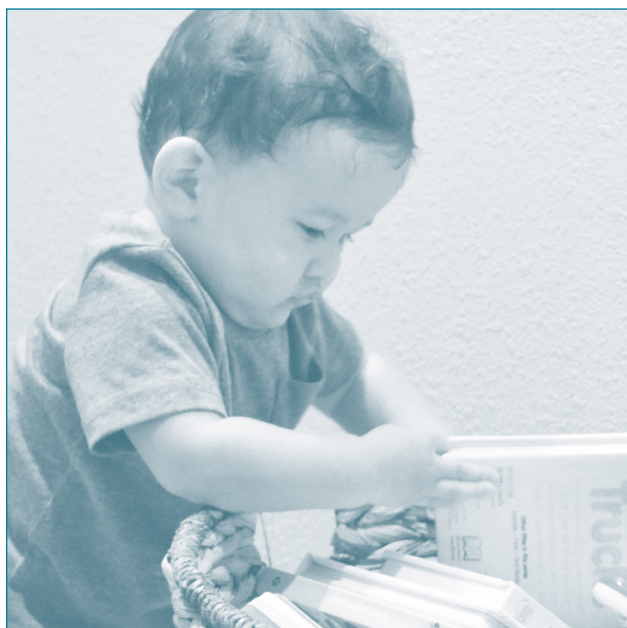
The following are strategies that you can use to form attachment relationships with the children in your care.



Three overarching child care practices that build attachment relationships

The National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, states that:

- Using everyday experiences and routines to guide the curriculum sets the stage for caregivers to form close and secure relationships with children and their families.
- Individualizing care by uniquely responding to each child's *temperament, interests, strengths, needs, and individual sleeping, feeding, and playing rhythms* helps caregivers get to know each child and be responsive to his individual needs.
 - (e.g., allowing a child who is slow to warm up more time to watch an activity before he joins in, carrying an infant who is used to being held frequently in a baby carrier or sling)
- Making an effort to communicate and develop relationships with each child's family, demonstrates understanding and respect for the key role the family plays in shaping how their children learn about themselves and their emotions and develop their own way of interacting and relating to others.



Nine indicators of responsive caregiving

In a 2009 Zero to Three Journal article, Amy Hunter and Mary Louise Hemmeter stated that “Caregivers who have nurturing and responsive relationships with children in their care often engage in practices such as:

- Maintaining frequent and close eye contact with children;
- Acknowledging children's efforts;
- Providing praise and encouragement to children and their parents;
- Smiling and warmly interacting with children, using positive language at all times;
- Responding to children's vocalizations and communication attempts;
- Frequently using language to talk about emotions, experiences, and the environment;
- Using significant amounts of physical closeness (e.g., holding children, sitting next to children at their level, rocking children);
- Holding infants while feeding them a bottle; and
- Spending time on the floor with children.”

For more information on early relationships, consistent care, attachment, and trust, download the articles cited on Page 4 of this newsletter. Also see the related poster: *3 Reasons Good Infant Mental Health Matters*.



Citations:

Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (2009). *Addressing Challenging Behavior in Infants and Toddlers*. In *Zero to Three*, January 2009 Volume 29 No. 3

Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning. (2010). *Building Positive Relationships with Young Children*. <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/modules/module1/handout5.pdf>

Davies, D. (2005, July–September) *Introduction to Attachment*. The Infant Crier, #109, Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, 4–7. <http://mi-aimh.org/for-parents/resources/additional/>

Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health. <http://www.haimh-firstrelationships.org/>

Institute of Medicine. (2000). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press. <https://www.nap.edu/read/9824/chapter/1#ii>

Lally, J.R. and Mangione, P. (2017). *Caring Relationships: The Heart of Early Brain Development*. In *Young Children*, Vol. 72, No. 2, May 2017. <http://www.naeyc.org/yc/article/caring-relationships-heart-early-brain-development>.

Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health. (n.d.) *3 Reasons Good Infant Mental Health Matters* (poster) http://mi-aimh.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/2016-MI-AIMH_IMH-Matters-Infographic.pdf

Training Certificates, Book Awards, Technical Support

- **Certificates.** Providers who return reflection sheets will receive a certificate for one hour of professional development completed. These certificates will be aligned with the Attitudes, Skills, & Knowledge (ASK) Core Areas, which are recognized by the Hawaii State Department of Human Services to support improvement of quality in early childhood programs. There is no specific due date required to earn this certificate but please note: the reflection sheet must be completed in full and you must thoughtfully answer question # 5 on the reflection sheet in order to earn the certificate.
- **Free books.** Free children's books will continue to be given for reflection sheets returned by the posted due date. However, if there are any additional books left over, they will be given to the providers who submit the reflection sheets past the due date. These books will be awarded on a first come, first served basis until the supply runs out.
- **Free technical assistance and support** related to child care issues can be requested by answering question #8 on the reflection sheet.



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