

Positive Interactions: Helping Toddlers Build Confidence and Resilience



Responsive relationships emphasize the importance of consistent, respectful, and affectionate interactions. - Day to Day the Relationship Way

Responsive and nurturing caregivers are some of the most important people in a child's life. Responsive caregiving helps toddlers build confidence and resilience.

Being responsive means we:

- Say "hello" and "good-bye" using each child's name, every day.
- Value the uniqueness of EACH child.
- Are ALWAYS nurturing in our approach and interactions.
- Use a tone of voice that is calm, positive, inviting, and supportive.
- Position ourselves at the child's eye level as often as we can.
- Frequently make eye contact with each child in a loving and caring way.
- Smile when interacting with children.
- Show warm affection by giving hugs, high fives, and comforting children.
- Notice what toddlers do and comment on their efforts and accomplishments using "acknowledgement" that is meaningful and encouraging – rather than using "praise" which is a comment on what the toddler did to "please" the adult.
- Support toddlers by providing guidance related to "what to do" rather than "what not to do."
- Encourage toddlers to be involved in activities they can help with such as making snack, setting napkins on the table, and other simple tasks.

An effective way to build emotional skills is to combine the acknowledgement of efforts and accomplishments with a statement of how a child may be feeling, such as:

- "You used walking feet all the way to the table. I can see a BIG smile on your face. You seem really HAPPY."
- "You helped your friend find her coat. That was very kind. Look at the SMILE on her face."

Resource: "Day to Day the Relationship Way"

naeyc

DAY TO DAY
THE RELATIONSHIP WAY

Creating Responsive Programs
for Infants & Toddlers

Donna S. Wittmer & Alice Sterling Honig

Learning to understand emotions and to build emotional skills that support resilience begins with responsive and nurturing relationships.

By engaging in positive interactions, including acknowledging and encouraging toddlers, we support them in gaining confidence in their own developing skills and abilities.

VIRGINIA
INFANT & TODDLER SPECIALIST

NETWORK

"Achieving Excellence in Early Care"
www.va-itsnetwork.org

Child Development Resources
P.O. Box 280, Norge VA 23127
www.cdr.org | www.va-itsnetwork.org