

Q & A

SUPPORTING YOUR INFANTS' AND TODDLERS' SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.



For Educators

How can I foster emotional literacy in pre-school children?

It is important to help young children become aware of their feelings and emotions. The key to helping them become successful and well-adapted adults is how we support them in managing and expressing emotions. Before children can learn to regulate their emotions, they must first learn how to identify them. The richer a child's emotional vocabulary bank, the better he will be able to identify, understand and respond appropriately to the feelings and emotions in himself as well as those around him. Here are some strategies to help children achieve this:

- ▶ Model and coach children to recognise, identify and communicate how they are feeling or how somebody else might be feeling (e.g. You look **disappointed** that you cannot play with the blocks today).
- ▶ Explicitly teach the vocabulary necessary for children to express their feelings and help expand their emotional vocabulary bank (e.g. **frustrated, thrilled**).
- ▶ Introduce new words (e.g. I am **pleased** that you are able to wait your turn) to express feelings through activities which involve stories, songs and games.



Q

Why is it important to form a secure attachment with my baby, and how can I go about doing this?

The quality of love and care parents give during their infant's first years of life has tremendous and long-term impact on the child's learning, development and well-being. Forming an early secure relationship or attachment with your child is crucial. Here's how you can foster a tightly knit parent-child connection from the get-go:

Tip #1 Regularly hold or cuddle the infant in ways that are comforting to him. Observe him closely to understand the meaning of his sounds, cries and even gestures. This will help you respond promptly and appropriately, and make the infant feel loved and valued.

Tip #2 Engage in playful interactive games that hold the infant's attention such as finger rhymes. Provide a wide variety of materials during play and explain what you are doing or what is happening, and what to expect.

Tip #3 Your infant is sensitive to your emotions and your feelings, and can absorb these easily. Keep your anxieties to yourself and reassure your infant that he is safe and secure.



For Parents



ASK THE EXPERTS



MS AVA WONG is a curriculum specialist at MY World Preschool. She believes in developing teachers who are key in promoting quality early childhood care and education for young children. As an ECDA Fellow, Ava works closely with ECDA to develop sector-wide early childhood resources for professional development, curriculum leadership and sector partnership.

MS N. KANNIGADEVI is a Senior Capability Manager and Special Needs Mentor at Presbyterian Community Services. She has over 25 years of experience working with children, including those with special needs, and their families. Kanniga holds a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education and Child Development from Wheelock College, Boston, USA.