

Q&A

BUILDING STRONG BONDS AND CREATING HOLISTIC ENRICHING EXPERIENCES FOR YOUR CHILD.

For Parents



Q

How can I strengthen my relationship and build a strong bond with my baby?

A baby's brain development is affected by the quality of your relationship with him. Positive facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice will help you build strong connections with your baby. Responsive caregivers are more likely to raise children who are compassionate, happy and are able to do well at school and work. Here are a few tips to strengthen your relationship with your baby:

- ▶ **Respond to your baby's cues in a predictable way.** Babies learn to trust the adults in their environment when you respond in the same way to similar situations. Building trust is an important part of healthy development.
- ▶ **Acknowledge your baby's feelings and name them.** You can say 'You're sad that...' or 'You're scared of...'. He will learn that his feelings matter and are important.
- ▶ **Observe what your baby is interested in.** Notice how he reacts to different objects, people, sounds or music. You can say 'Oh, you're looking at the...'. You are effectively saying that you are interested in him.
- ▶ **Make daily routines fun and predictable.** Routines are a pattern of activities, not a schedule. Be responsive to your baby's needs in daily activities such as diapering and mealtimes. Use these routines to engage and communicate with your child.

Q

How can educators support young children's holistic development?

The goal of educators is to develop the 'whole child' and to provide enriching experiences and environments to enhance their learning, development and wellbeing. Here are some ways:

- ▶ **Allow children time to explore.** Children are naturally curious and they will ask questions as they explore. Facilitate their explorations through discussions. Give children time to also fully engage their **different senses in hands-on experiences.**
- ▶ **Be aware that each child develops at a different pace.** Provide small group or individualised learning to cater to the needs of different children. **Observe** and provide them with **additional support** or **timely intervention** where required.
- ▶ **Build relationships with parents.** Young children's behaviour and development are shaped by their experiences both at home and at preschool. Educators should **work closely with parents** to exchange information to **develop a more**

authentic profile of the child. Build on these profiles to provide more meaningful experiences to support children's holistic development.

- ▶ **Apply skills and knowledge in real-life situations** for their holistic development. Plan projects and events with children to bring in the different developmental aspects. For instance, the children can **work in teams** (social and emotional aspects) to **plan** (problem-solving and decision-making) a class party, **design** (creative and aesthetic) and **write** invitation cards (language and literacy) and **estimate** the amount of food needed (numeracy skills) etc. Development does not happen in silos. A single activity such as children working together can integrate multiple aspects of development and skills.

For EC Educators



ASK THE EXPERTS



MS ALICIA LIM is a former senior occupational therapist at the Child Development Unit, National University Hospital. She has a professional interest in supporting caregivers to enrich interactions with their children. Alicia is also trained in infant-parent mental health and the Touchpoints™ approach which includes preventative intervention for vulnerable families.

MS ONG SIEW TENG is the Executive Principal at PCF Sparkletots Preschool. She has been a leader in the EC sector for over 10 years. Siew Teng firmly believes that children learn best through meaningful and authentic interactions with people and the environment. She was appointed as an ECDA Fellow in April 2018 to train and mentor other early childhood professionals, and develop sector-wide resources.