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Tier 1 Forming and Sustaining Relationships with Young Children and Families

Context of Relationships

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Tier 1:
Forming and Sustaining Relationships with Young Children and Families

Presented by: Kindering Center, King County

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Getting to Know One Another

- Introduce yourself
- What is one relationship that is important to you in your life?

Community Agreements

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Learner Objectives

- **Define** relationships and how they are built through interactions
- **Understand** how caregivers can use relationships to positively impact social-emotional development
- **Reflect** on how culture (perceptions, beliefs, values) influences caregiving & the social-emotional development of infants and toddlers
- **Implement** a variety of strategies for increasing professional capacity to support the social-emotional development of infants, toddlers, and their families through relationships

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Afternoon Agenda

- Understanding Relationships: *Connecting with Children and Families*
- Understanding Attachment: *Building Secure Relationships with Young Children*
- Forming and Sustaining Relationships with Young Children and Families: *Using an Equity Lens*
- Wrap-up, Reflection, & Action Planning

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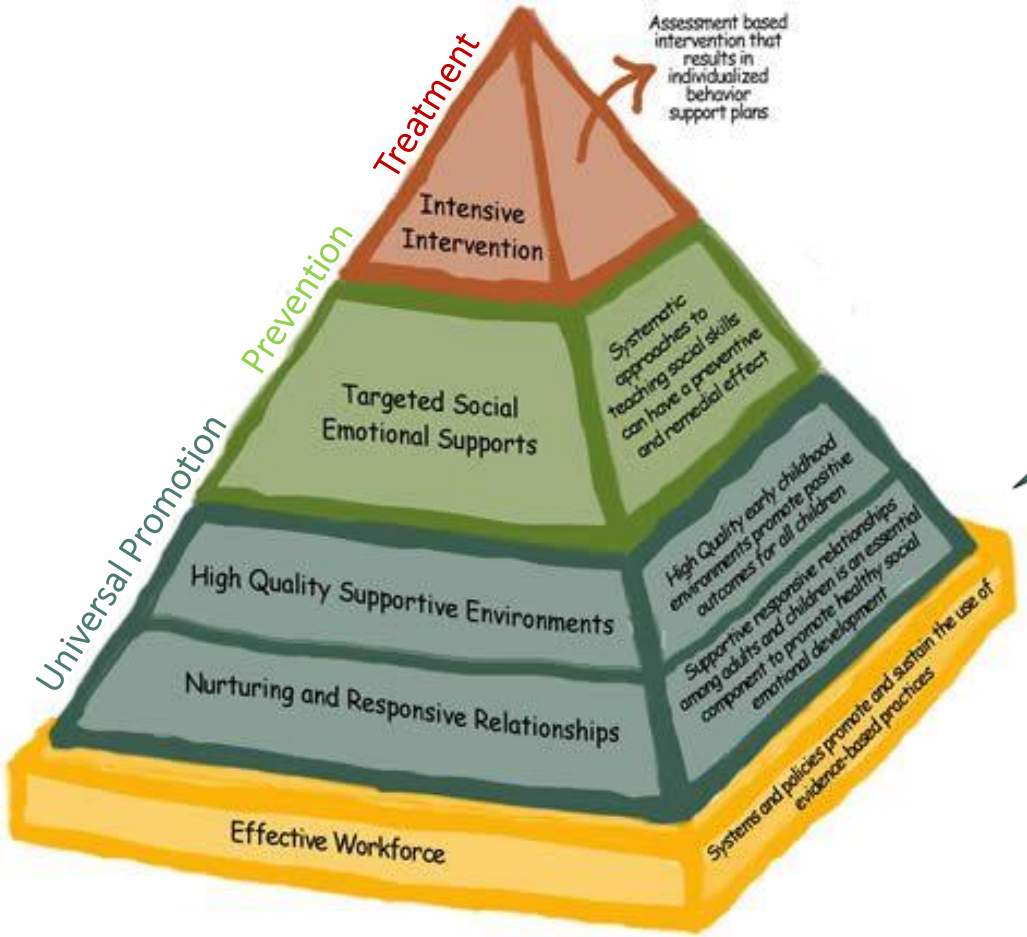
A Framework: The Pyramid Model

Module 1: Social Emotional Development within the Context of Relationships



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What are Relationships?

- Have emotional connections and unique meaning between the two (or more) people
- Endure over time
- Create memories and expectations in the minds of the people involved

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Video 1.7 Infant-Teacher Interaction

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Small Group Activity: What Do Your Relationships Look Like?

Imagine someone is taking pictures of your interactions with children throughout the day…	What kinds of interactions would be captured?
	What strengths would be identified?
	How many moments of these types of interactions make up the day for the infants and toddlers in your care?
	How might you increase joyful interactions like these in your care setting?

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Strategies to Build A Secure Relationship with a Very Young Child

- Use a warm, calming voice
- Follow the child's lead
- Be responsive, show reciprocity in interactions: listen, watch, wait, respond

- Use photos, songs, stories and objects that reflect the child and family's language and culture
- Use a child's name

- Use meaningful language
- Use routines such as diapering and feeding as one-on-one time to interact individually

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Strategies to Build A Secure Relationship with a Very Young Child

- Attempt to understand the child's behaviors, communication and needs
- Acknowledge and respond to a child's needs as soon as possible

- Use natural opportunities to be physically close and comforting (holding, rocking, sitting near)
- Mirror the child's emotions
- Engage in joint attention

- Spend time on the floor with infants and toddlers
- **Reflect** on your own feelings, values and beliefs
- **Observe**

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Attachment Relationships

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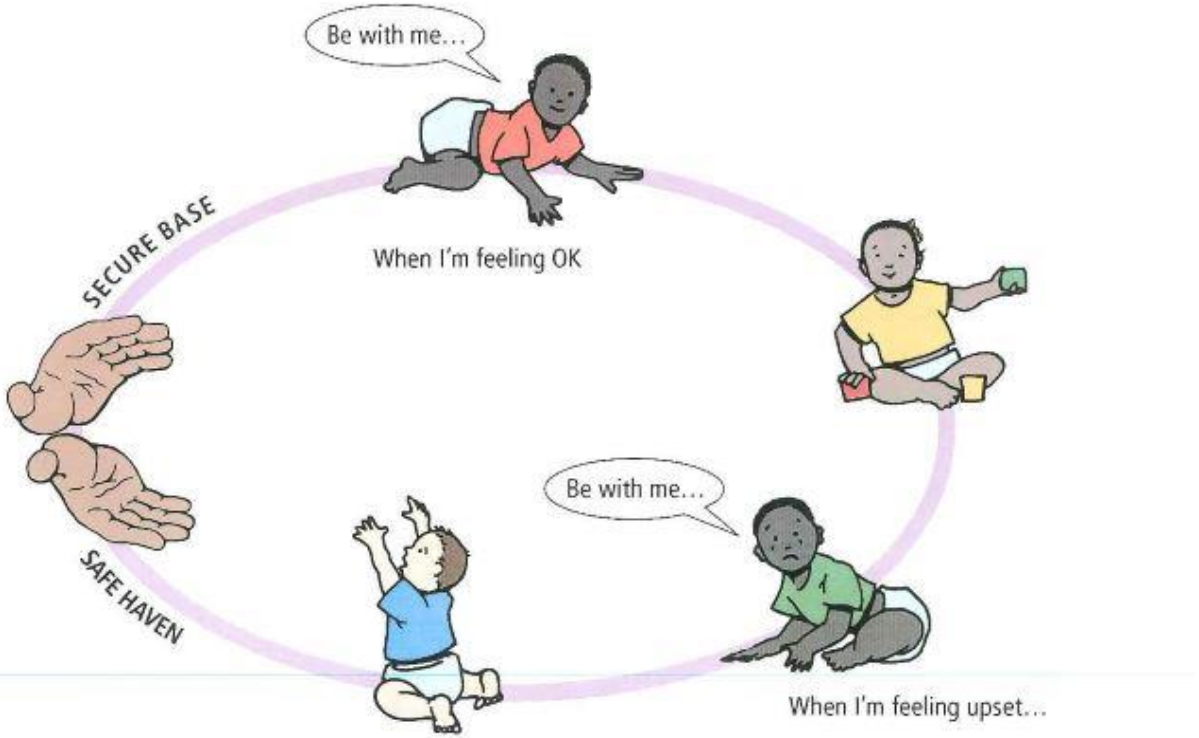
Attachment Relationships

- Attachment is a pattern of interaction that develops over time as the infant or toddler and caregiver engage.



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Video 1.8 Supporting Attachment

Activity: Attachment Relationships Handout 1.18

- How can we support the development of relationships?
- How can we build on attachment relationships?
- How can we use attachment to encourage learning and exploration?

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Building Relationships with Families

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Activity: Building a New Relationship

- Find a partner you don’t know
- Find a way to get to know your partner
- Write down how you started the conversation and highlight what you talked about

Building Relationships With Families and Supporting the Parent-Child Relationship

- A child's first and primary teacher is the family
- Supporting and enhancing the parent-child relationship is one of the most important roles caregivers have
- Caring for infants and toddlers is caring for the family

Strategies to Build Relationships with Families

- Communicate daily with families and offer multiple ways to share information (build a ritual at drop-off or pick-up)
- Invite conversation, listen and follow up
- Have regularly scheduled times for face-to-face meetings
- Respect families' views and child-rearing beliefs
- Seek family evaluations of the program and of your care

Strategies to Build Relationships with Families, cont.

- Seek families' knowledge of their child's strengths, needs and interests
- Ask families questions about their child
- Ask families to help
- Get to know family members as individuals
- Share something personal
- Share observations about their child

Forming and Sustaining Relationships with Young Children and Families

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Possible Risk Factors Affecting Families

- Poverty
- Nonflexible work situations
- No maternal or paternal leave
- Little support from other family members or neighbors
- Substance abuse
- Domestic violence

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Possible Risk Factors Affecting Families

- Challenging relationships with their own families
- Immigration
- Racial/ethnic background
- Cultural isolation
- Mental health of caregiver(s)

- Child factors:
  - Prematurity
  - Developmental delays
  - Special healthcare

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Caregiver Mental Health Can Impact…

- Birth outcomes
- A parent's ability to bond and attach to her child
- A young child's language, cognitive, and behavioral development
- A parent's ability to follow appropriate health and safety guidelines

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What You Can Do as a Caregiver

- Give all parents information about depression and provide positive information about help and recovery
- Inquire about all parents' feelings at a time and place where you both feel comfortable
- Listen without interrupting and avoid judgment

Activity: Working With Families Inventory Handout 1.20

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Essential Positive Messages

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Activity: Essential Positive Messages for Each Child and Family

1. Please take a moment to generate a list of essential messages for young children and families. The messages should be about…
   - How valuable they are to us
   - How committed we are to them
2. Think about, what are concrete behaviors that will convey the message(s)?

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Wrap-Up, Reflection and Action Planning

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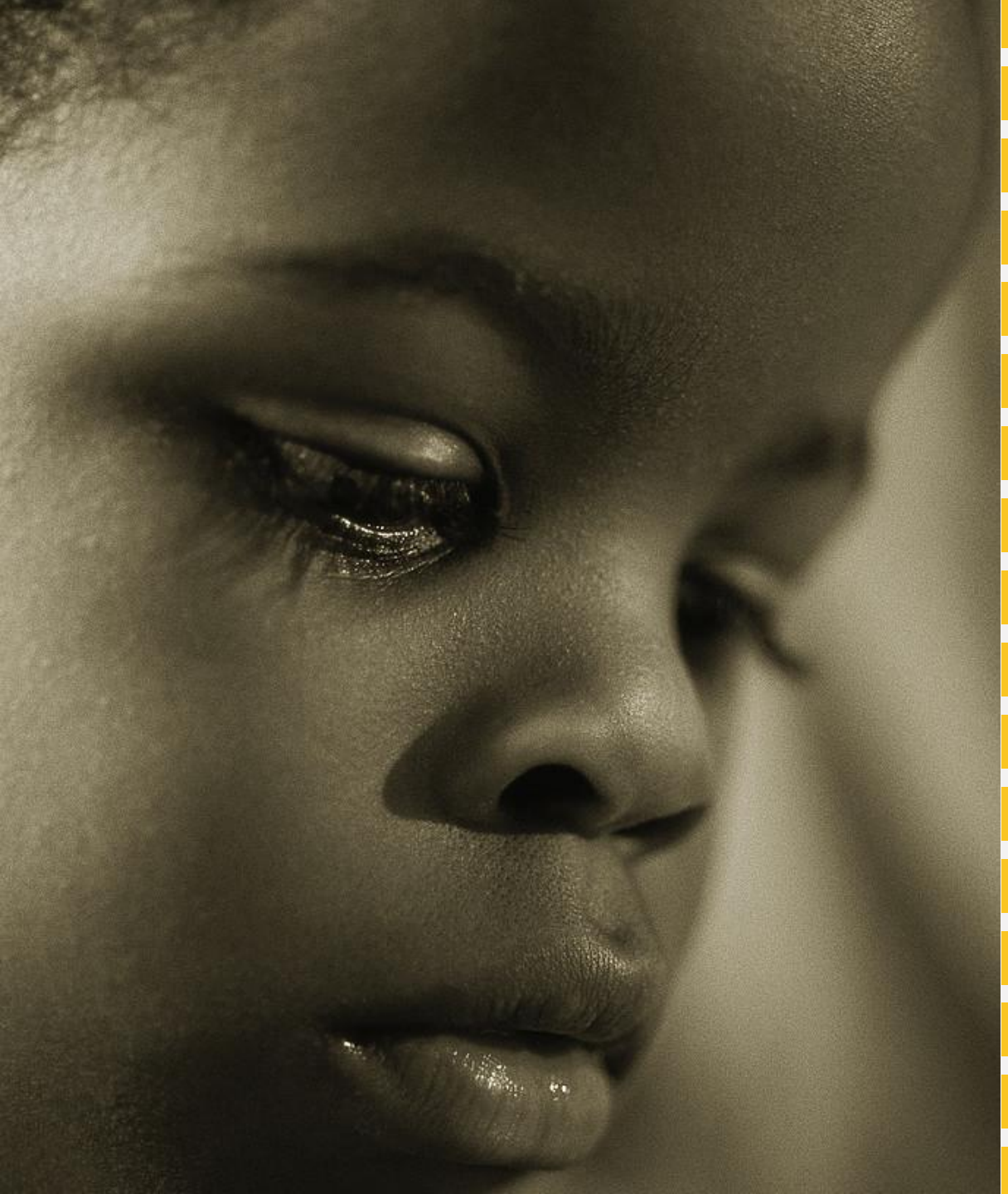
Reflections

See Behavior – Think:

- Relationships
- Secure attachment
- Protective factors
- Risk factors
- Social-emotional needs



Reflections

See Behavior – Think:

- Experience
- Culture (your own culture and that of the child/family)
- Implicit bias

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Reflection

- What questions do you have about the material we discussed?
- What additional strengths are you able to recognize in your work and practices? In the children you care for? Families you help support?
- What strategies did you see or hear that might be useful in your role and work?

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Major Messages to Take Home

- It is within families that children learn to experience and communicate emotion.
- Early social emotional wellness develops within the context of relationships.
- Caregivers are critically important to social emotional development of infants and toddlers.

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Major Messages to Take Home

- Caregivers who reflect on their own well-being, skills, and perspectives will be better equipped to contribute to the positive social emotional development of infants and toddlers and to supporting families rearing infants and toddlers.
- Caregivers who use a variety of strategies, including observation, will be better able to form close relationships with infants, toddlers and their families.

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Thank you

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Resources

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Videos courtesy of Center for the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning: http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/training_infant.html