



★ Early Essentials ★

Quick Start Guide for Responsive Interactions

Know the Essentials

- No two children or families are alike
- Slowing down to observe and wonder about a child or family helps us understand them.
- Responsive interactions require you to take cues from a child and follow the child's lead.
- Everyday routines provide opportunities for engaging in responsive interactions.

Take a Deeper Look

- Consider your own childhood. Was there someone who let you know that you were important, that your input was valued? What did he or she do to send that message? How do you make the environment safe for the children you care for?
- What strategies do you use to slow yourself down and get to know a young child and the child's family?
- How do you gather and use information from the family to respond to the child?
- How does a baby let you know what he or she is feeling? What cues do you particularly tune in to? What cues are hard for you to tolerate (e.g., whining)? What cues might you miss?
- Think about the routines you practice each day. How can you use those routines to build relationships and be responsive?
- What do you do when your response doesn't work? What strategies help you to manage your emotions so you can try again?

Explore Resources

- View **Caring Connections Podcast 5: Let's Talk About Following the Baby** at: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/cde/curriculum/caringconnection.html>
- Read **TA Papers 16 & 17: Individualizing Care for Infants and Toddlers – Parts 1 and 2** at: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/ehs-ta-16.pdf> and <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/ehs-ta-17.pdf>
- Complete the learning extension on **Principle #1: Every Individual is Rooted in Culture** at: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/multicultural-principles-learning-extensions-principle-01.pdf>
- To assess your own practice and design an action plan, go to **Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning Resources: Infant/Toddler Training Module 1, Handout 1.6: Inventory of Practices Tool I** at: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/inftodd/mod1/1.6-1.pdf>



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Practice Moment, Responsive Interactions

Practice

Watch the Practice Moment and record your notes here. Then, reflect on responsive interactions with infants, young children, and families, using the questions below as a guide.

In this busy home visit, this toddler shows her interest in something special.

How might you...

- Slow down and read cues from young children and families?
- Help families to slow down and read their children's cues?

This mother notices her daughter's interest in a colorful ball, and builds on her interest to expand her learning.

How might you...

- Use a child's interests to support and expand learning?
- Support families in following their children's interests?

This toddler is delighted when the adults play the game she has shown interest in.

How might you...

- Encourage families to consider how their children feel during responsive interactions with adults? Can you think of other ways adults could support children and families in your spaces?
- Identify and share with families how responsive interactions support social-emotional development?