

Chapter 6a: Secure Relationships Experience It

Narrator: In New York City, Berkis Rodriguez and Miriam Prieto team for home visits to Nathalie and her parents, Patricia and Elvis.

[Music]

This morning, the team is on the way to visit 11-month-old Nathalie and her mother, Patricia. Home visits are conducted in either English or Spanish, depending on the preference of the family.

Berkis: The community's basically a Latino-speaking community. They come from different part of the country, but most of them speak Spanish. They have a large population of Dominican, but also Mexican. You can find some Salvadorian and Ecuadorian; so it's mix.

Miriam: Berkis and I are a team, because we work together, as a team. We basically do everything together.

Berkis: This is a big city and a lot of things happen. And it's more beneficial for the child, because, I might see something that she doesn't see and vice versa. So, I think it's done for safety reason but, also to have four eye instead of two.

Miriam: Hi, Nathalie.

Narrator: Berkis and Miriam have worked together to support Patricia through many challenges, since Nathalie's premature birth.

Patricia: She starts out; she starts turning. And that's how she'll get here.

Berkis: I remember the other day she was going around like that.

Patricia: Now she's turning side and side, and she pushes herself that way. Come on. Come on.

Berkis: I think it's very beneficial for Nathalie to get home visit, because it's a chance to do work in an environment that both of them feel comfortable in.

Patricia: You can make it. Come on. There you go. You almost got it. One more. Yay! Yay!

Berkis: Like you remember, last week in class, when she was going around in circles?

Patricia: Yeah.

Berkis: And that's kind of the way that she moved last week.

Patricia: Now, she's learning how to move sideways. She rocks sideways to reach something out of her grasp.

Berkis: I remember when we came one day and you said that she was rolling and she's keeping more focus. Like, she would give up more easily before.

Patricia: I was 27 weeks pregnant when I had her. She was one pound, 13 ounces when she was born. She stayed in the hospital for three months. She was born February. She was let go in May. Dada dada.

[Baby babbling] Dadada.

Miriam: Have you been practicing floor time at home? With premature children, it's very, very rough road. It's like, you got to take -- learn how to take it one day at a time.

Berkis: This is the first premature child that I have ever worked with. I've been doing some reading sort of to get knowledge about what is expected what is the next stage -- step that Nathalie's going to be doing, and basically, I just meet Nathalie at the level where she's at and try to take it from there.

Patricia: She's doing this.

Berkis: She is?

Patricia: She's counting fingers to make sure all of them are there. It's like one, two, three. That's one thing with Berkis, she's always planning new things for Nathalie. I'm like, "Berkis, I'm not sure she can do it." She's like, "Yeah, yeah. She could do it. Let's do it." That's the way she helps me, because, I'm really afraid of trying new things for her. She gives me confidence to go, okay, let's go ahead, let's do it. She'll be okay. And she's -- I trust her. If Berkis says we could try it, I'm like, let's try it.

Narrator: The relationship Patricia has built with Berkis and Miriam inspires her to consider new possibilities for her daughter. Together, they set goals to build on Nathalie's emerging skills. The weekly socialization reinforces the work they do on home visits.

Berkis: Who's that? Who's that over there? Who's that girl? We try to put the rattle a little farther, and when she mastered that, we will do something else. But right now, we're focusing on having Nathalie reach the rattle and sort of work her way towards the rattle. So, it's intentionally that we do it at home, and we do it here.

Patricia: Little by little, yeah, they've been helping me recognize, and helping me, like, understand everything she's doing. And whatever she's doing, they, like, help me to better it. Like, if she's starting to rock, I'm like, okay, put a toy out of her reach, so she can learn how to rock and reach for it and learn how to reach for something.

[Elvis and Nathalie Speaking Spanish]

Narrator: Nathalie's father, Elvis, participates in weekly socializations that support her development, as well as, provide social time with other children and parents.

[Singing]

Patricia: It's a great thing. It's the best that could happen, even starting them off so small. Some people say, "Oh, what they going to do? They're just babies. They don't even sit." I'm like, they do a lot and they learn a lot.

Berkis: I feel fortunate that I have the opportunity to have such an input in the family's life. I feel a great responsibility doing it. That's why, every day, I want to do it the best I can.