

Me and You

Narrator: If you're someone who has an opportunity to spend time around babies and young children, you'll quickly notice that each individual child develops at their own pace and rhythm.

Have you ever heard that the interactions that an infant has with the adults around them from the beginning are very important in a young child's life?

In fact, the relationships that a child has with those around them in their infancy can impact the way they'll develop relationships and approach the world for the rest of their lives. Active engagement between infants and adults and relationship-building from the earliest moments in a child's life can help to create a strong base for that child, from which all future learning will emerge. Some people think that babies don't start learning until they're older and able to walk or talk, but, truly, infants and toddlers are naturally capable, curious, and motivated to learn.

When you observe infants and young children with that understanding, you'll begin to see that learning is happening in everything they do. The experience of talking with an infant, making eye contact with them while you sing or read or play with them, helps the child to understand that they're loved and valued and helps them to build solid confidence in the world around them.

Interactions help a baby to feel cared for and confident and, later, when it's time to begin to try new things, like crawling or walking, they're more likely to feel able to explore and engage with the things around them with confidence.

It's said that the family is a child's first teacher. From their infancy, we're helping them to get ready to be successful in school when we encourage them to communicate and to talk with us. Even the littlest infants know how to communicate what they need through their babbles and cries and gestures.

And what's our role? When we respond to them with attention and caring and respect, they'll recognize our true interest and joy in making a connection with them. Healthy growth is fostered when families and others who surround a child share positive experiences in the day-to-day which promote healthy brain development and provide a strong base for future learning.

Brain development happens most rapidly in the first three years of life. This is a time when we, as adults, can make a huge impact on who they'll become in the future.

The work of the adult at this stage in a child's life is to provide the baby with rich, supported experiences in a caring environment and the child's work is to explore and play, accumulating new experiences which help them to learn and grow and develop in healthy ways, trusting the world around them, each in their own unique way.