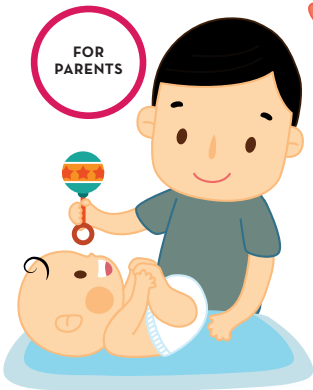


Q&A

HOW PARENTS AND EDUCATORS CAN SUPPORT CHILDREN TO BECOME ACTIVE, SELF-DIRECTED LEARNERS.



FOR PARENTS

Q How can I support my three-month-old baby beyond her physical needs like feeding, bathing and diapering?

It is important to meet your baby's emotional needs to form a warm, secure attachment with your little one. Infants need to feel that they are understood and their parents or caregivers are available for them. This trusting relationship creates a safe haven for infants to explore, learn and thrive.

To support your baby's learning and development:

- **Be respectful.** Keep babies informed and engage them during routines and activities. Address your baby by name as it gives her a sense of identity, e.g. "Charmaine, may I carry you?"
- **Be responsive.** Observe and know your baby. Be sensitive to both verbal and non-verbal cues. Spend time to understand her temperament traits so that you can respond appropriately. Depending on the tone of your baby's cries, she may either be hungry, need a diaper change or just want a hug.
- **Be reciprocal.** Allow for back-and-forth interactions. Repeat the sounds and words your child uses. Speak to your baby, maintain eye contact and give her time to respond with sounds and gestures. Be guided by your baby's non-verbal cues and follow her lead.
- **Be communicative.** Introduce new words through stories and songs when you spend time together. Children acquire language by listening, so use the right vocabulary. Be descriptive and verbalise your actions.
- **Be creative.** Create play opportunities for your baby. For instance, during tummy time, let her reach out for a rattle or other play materials, play peek-a-boo, or even respond to sounds or simply look at a mirror and describe what you see.

Last but not least, it is important to regulate our own behaviour and feelings before responding.

Q How can educators help build an image of the child as a self-directed learner?

Forming close bonds and connections with children from their infancy will help them feel secure and confident to explore, discover and learn.

1. **Observe.** Pick up on children's responses to things around them. If they crawl towards a toy that interests them, give them time and space to play spontaneously. Encourage them to take the lead in directing their own play, and guide them only when necessary (e.g. introducing new materials).
2. **Let go.** Trust that children can work their way through challenges, like figuring out how to retrieve an object such as a ball that has rolled under a chair. As long as these challenges are developmentally appropriate and safe, let them experiment and even struggle to learn perseverance and resilience.
3. **Communicate.** Children may not necessarily understand what we are saying. However, by thoughtfully choosing our words, we can introduce them to the power of language. Narrate their actions or describe the object or toy they are interested in. For a child who is beginning to crawl and pushing a ball around, you can say, "Wow, you've pushed the big, red ball and it's rolling! Do you want to crawl to the ball and push it again?" When you verbalise and use language purposefully, it not only affirms the children's actions but motivates them to ask their own questions and seek out the answers. This helps them develop a positive and confident image of themselves.



FOR EDUCATORS



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