

# Meeting the Social and Emotional Needs of Infants and Toddlers

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**SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEED**

**WAYS TO MEET CHILDREN'S NEEDS**

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**To feel safe and secure**

- Be with me, both physically and emotionally
  - Watch me as I play
  - Talk to me about what I am doing
  - Comfort me when I am upset
  - Help me make sense of my negative feelings
  - Structure my day and my environment
  - Give me limits or boundaries for my behavior
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**To feel worthy and loved**

- Tell me how special I am
  - Say my name often
  - Notice me, even when I am quiet
  - Accept and celebrate my unique feelings and characteristics
  - Share your love with hugs and gentle touches
  - Play with me
  - Listen to and respond to me
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**To feel acknowledged and understood**

- Pay attention to me and try to understand what I'm saying with my words and my cues
  - Respond sensitively to my needs
  - Reflect my feelings through your voice, touch, and facial expressions
  - Accept all of my feelings, even the negative ones
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**To feel noticed and receive attention**

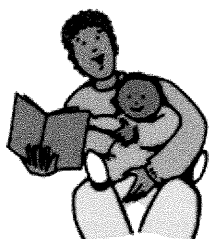
- Give me attention for positive behavior
  - Redirect my negative behavior—show me something else I can do
  - Appreciate my accomplishments and my efforts
  - Initiate interactions with me; invite me to play
  - Welcome me back when I need some attention
  - Let me be your helper
  - Touch me in loving, gentle ways
  - Smile and let me know you enjoy me
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**To feel a sense of predictability**

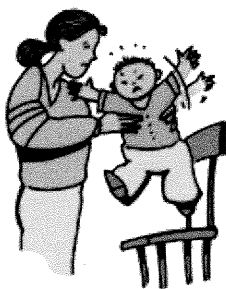
- Structure my days so that I know what to expect
  - Use loving rituals that give me a positive, familiar feeling about the activity we're doing
  - Help me to anticipate changes or transitions
  - Try to limit multiple changes at once or be sensitive if they happen
  - Try to keep me with caregivers that I know and trust
  - Give me choices
  - Be consistent in how you take care of me
  - Gently remind me about limits and expectations
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# Encouraging Cooperation in Everyday Moments

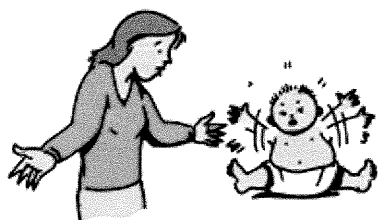
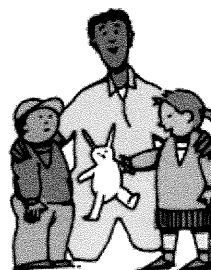
1 Spend loving  
time together



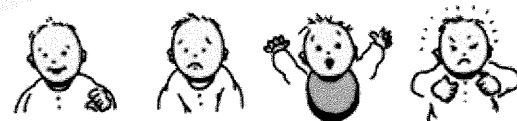
2 State clear  
expectations



3 Use limits with flexibility  
and consistency



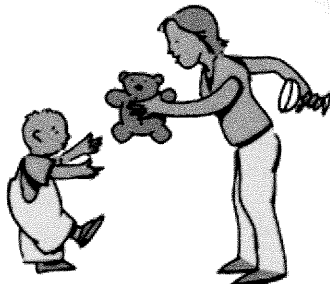
8 Expect protest



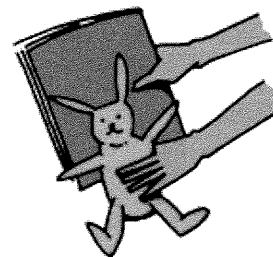
4 Reflect feelings—"I see you are  
happy; sad; excited; angry."



7 Establish routines  
and structure



6 Distract and re-direct



5 Give appropriate choices

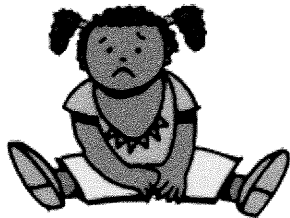
# Challenging Behaviors of Infants and Toddlers

## Needs, Feelings, Behaviors

Unmet  
Social or  
Emotional  
Need

Feelings  
of Distress

Behavioral and  
Emotional Problems



Social Withdrawal



Aggression or Acting Out