

## SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL NEEDS DURING COVID-19

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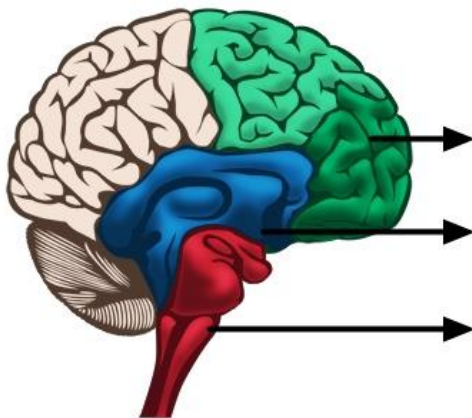
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### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

#### **I need to:**

- **feel safe and secure**
- **feel worthy and loved**
- **feel acknowledged and understood**
- **feel noticed and receive attention**
- **feel a sense of predictability**
- **understand and be able to manage my feelings of distress**
- **feel a sense of control**
- **feel safe and stimulated in my exploration**
- **feel competent**
- **have mutually enjoyable relationships and feel a sense of belonging**

## BASIC SYSTEMS IN THE BRAIN

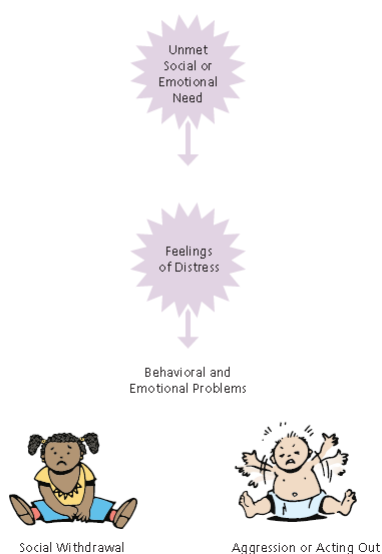


Calm: Able to Reason and Reflect

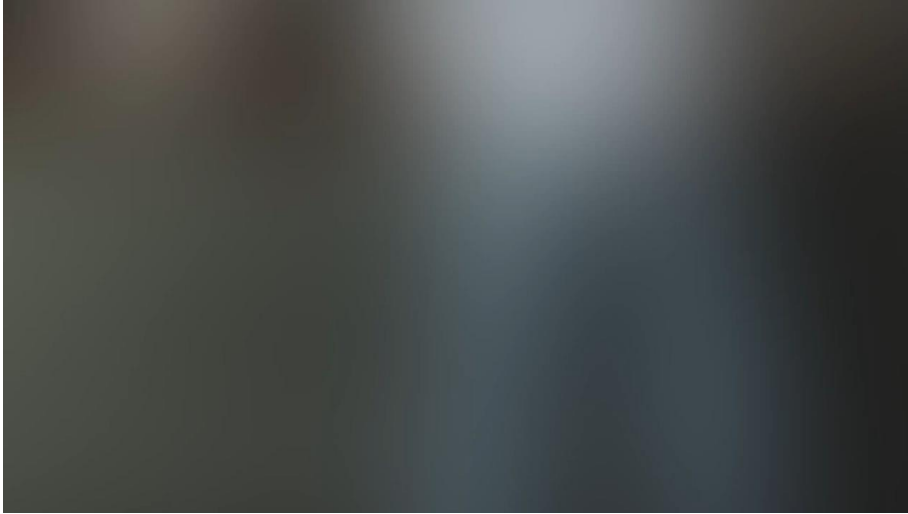
Upset/Emotional: Need to be Accepted, Supported, and Regulated

Fear/Distress: Need for Safety, Comfort and Protection

## Challenging Behaviors of Young Children Needs, Feelings, Behaviors



## WHAT IF ADULTS HAD TANTRUMS...



**To feel safe and secure**

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016

### **To feel safe and secure**

- Comfort me when I am upset
- Help me make sense of my negative feelings
- Be with me, both physically and emotionally
  - Notice me as I play
- Talk to me about what I am doing
- Structure my day and my environment
- Give me limits or boundaries for my behavior
- Let me have a special blanket or other object if it soothes me

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016



## To feel worthy and loved

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016

- 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

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016



## To feel acknowledged and understood

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016

- To feel acknowledged and understood**
- Pay attention to me and try to understand what I'm saying with my words and my cues (behaviors)
  - Respond to let me know that you understand me
    - Reflect my feelings through your voice, touch, and facial expressions
  - Accept all of my feelings, even the negative ones

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016



### To feel noticed and receive attention

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016

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

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016



### To feel a sense of predictability

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016

- 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
    - Tell me about 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 care for me
  - Gently remind me about the rules and expectations

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016



### To understand and be able to manage my upset feelings

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016

#### To understand and be able to manage my upset feelings

- Welcome me back when I need your help
- Be loving and take charge to help me get through sadness, anger, frustration, and other negative feelings
  - Stay with me and comfort me
- Speak to me so I know you are close
  - Hold me if it helps to soothe me
- Label my feelings with your words
- Help me learn to express my upset feelings in okay ways
  - Help me move on to a different activity
- Stay with me or close by when we have conflicts — this tells me you still love me
- Tell me about your feelings and others' feelings so that I learn to understand others

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016



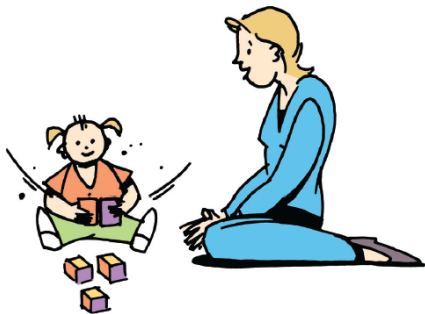
### To feel a sense of control

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016

#### To feel a sense of control

- Give me appropriate choices
- Let me do as much as possible for myself
- Let me feel like my actions have an impact
  - Let me be your helper
- Help me explore by providing just enough support
  - Decide what is important for you to control and what I can control

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016



### To feel safe and stimulated in my exploration

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016

#### To feel safe and stimulated in my exploration

- Help me explore new objects, people, and surroundings
- Give me new things or places to explore
- Watch and comment as I play or play with me
- Be clear about expectations and limits that help me to be safe
- Welcome me back when I need to touch base with you before I explore some more
- Set up my play to be safe and somewhat structured

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016



### To feel competent

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016

#### To feel competent

- Give me lots of opportunities to learn something new or to try to do something by myself
- Let me make discoveries on my own
- Encourage my efforts, even when I'm not successful
- Give me just enough support so I can succeed at something new and not feel too frustrated while trying
- Recognize any progress I'm making in learning something new
- Let me know I'm working hard

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016



## To have mutually enjoyable relationships and feel a sense of belonging

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016

### To have mutually enjoyable relationships and feel a sense of belonging

- Interact with me, enjoy me, and accept my feelings
- Recognize, accept, and admire me as a unique person
  - Notice me when I try to interact with you
  - Let me know that I'm important to you
  - Let me know I belong
- Respond sensitively to my feelings, needs, and attempts to interact with you
- Empathize with me and help me understand my feelings
- Be willing to adjust how you interact with me to keep our relationship running smoothly
  - Help me get to know other children and guide us as we learn to share, be kind, and cooperate with each other

PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS, 2016

## The Power of Repair ... Because no one gets it right all of the time

### Parents can have a difficult time in their relationship with their child when they ...

- Find their baby is hard to soothe or calm
- Can't understand why their child is upset
- Are too worn out to respond to their child's needs
- Have strong feelings of anger, sadness or worry



### When the difficult time occurs, parents can help manage their hard feelings by ...

- Pausing and taking a few breaths
- Using positive self-talk (e.g., "I can handle this.")
- Repeating a key word that cues their body to calm down
- Asking someone for help with their child and/or the hard feelings

### Once recharged, parents can return to 'repair' the relationship by ...

- Holding, rocking or singing to their baby
- Offering comfort and talking to their child about what happened
- Following pleasant routines or playing games with their child



# Calming Myself, Calming My Child

## Calming Myself



## Calming Myself

<b>Notice</b>	First, I notice my bodily reactions and how I'm feeling. Are my muscles tight, neck or shoulders hunched? Stomach aching? Shallow breathing? Is my voice louder, am I yelling? Am I feeling stressed, nervous, anxious, frustrated, angry or overwhelmed?
<b>Accept</b>	Next, I acknowledge where I am at and accept the situation. "This is hard", "I am feeling rushed", "I feel too much pressure", "I am angry", "I am embarrassed".
<b>Calm</b>	Then, I use a strategy to help me calm down. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>....Breathe deeply and slowly (deep chest or belly breathing)</li> <li>....Use positive self talk ("I can handle this", "this will pass", "I am a good mom", "nobody's perfect")</li> <li>....Repeat a keyword (mantra) that cues body to calm down</li> <li>....Put on soothing music</li> <li>....Sing</li> <li>....Count to ten</li> <li>....Tense and relax muscles</li> </ul>

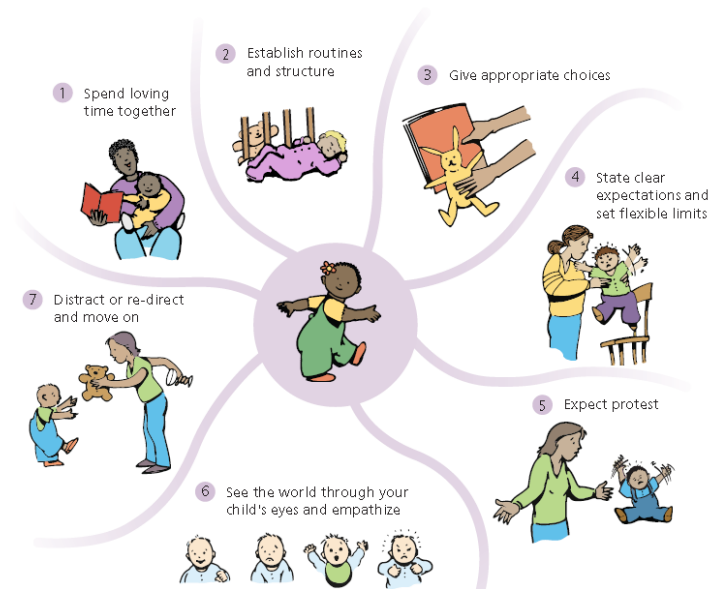
## Calming My Child



### Calming My Child

<b>Notice</b>	First, I look closely at my child's face to see if he is sad, angry, or scared. What other cues do I notice about my child? Is he whining, complaining, becoming overactive? Is he throwing things or biting?
<b>Accept</b>	Next, I actively accept my child's feelings, and let him know that I understand him by saying: "I know you are angry that you can't have that toy", "I know you are afraid of elevators", "I know you are sad that grandma has to go now."
<b>Calm</b>	Then, I help my child calm by saying "I know this is hard and that you are having a big feeling, how about we do something together to help you get through this big feeling...." ...how about we count to 20 together ...how about we sing your favorite song together ...how about we name all the animals we can think of together ...how about we breath deep together (let's pretend we are a balloon filling up - our arms go up over our head when we are filling up, and then down as we let the air out)

## Encouraging Cooperation in Everyday Moments



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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Zerotothree.org](https://zerotothree.org)
- [Sesamestreet.org/caring](https://sesamestreet.org/caring)
- [toosmall.org](https://toosmall.org)

QUESTIONS?