



parent-child 
relationship
programs at the
Barnard Center



Promoting First Relationships Home Visiting Program: “Nurturing Parents and Caregivers to Nurture Their Young Children” – Jean Kelly, PhD

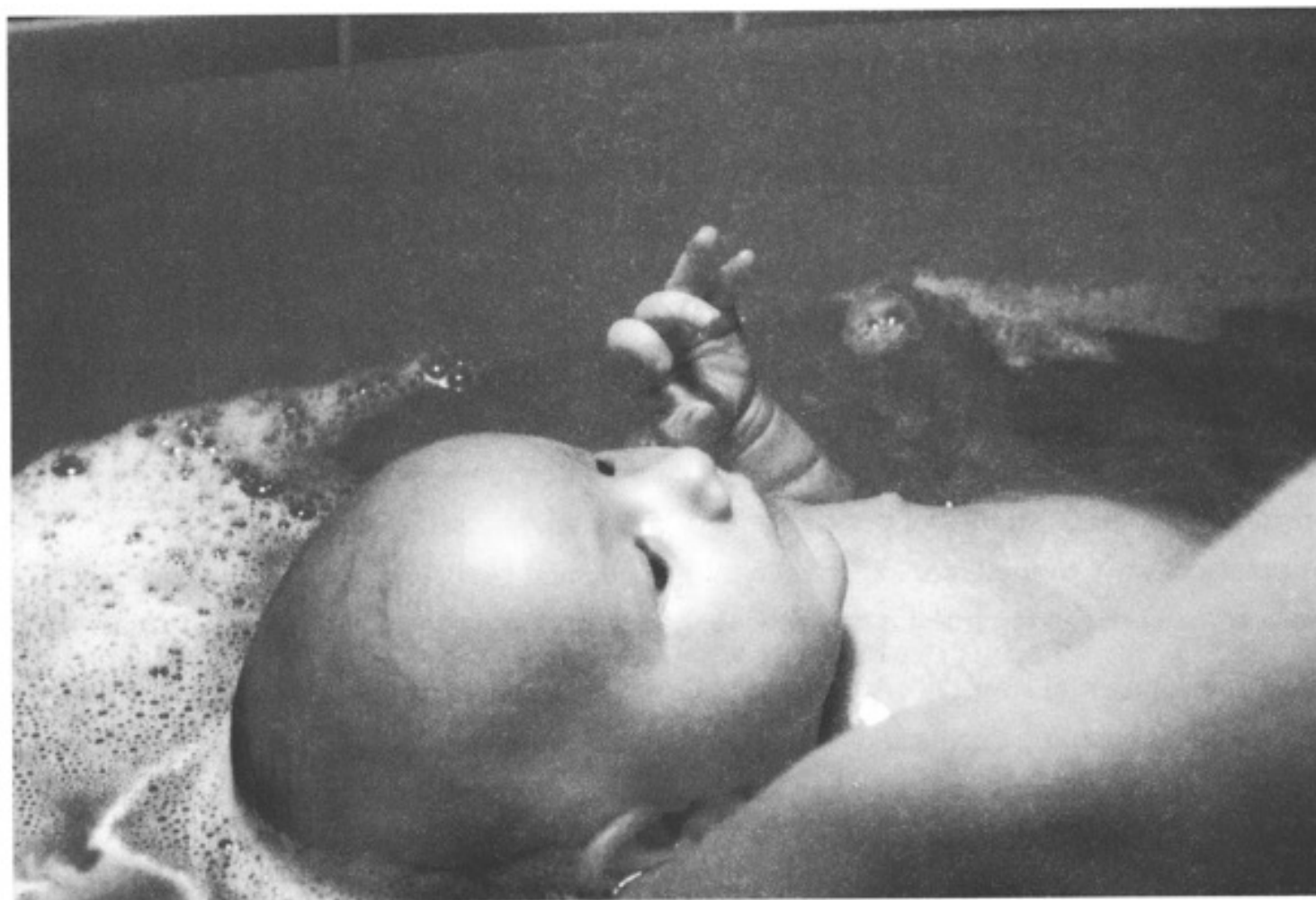


Social Connectedness as Driver of Human Evolution

We are hard-wired to physically and emotionally connect to our caregivers



Papousek, Schieche, and Wurmser (Eds). Disorders of Behavioral and Emotional Regulation in the First Years of Life



Sharing Mental States: Mind-Mindedness

Holding *our* own 'mind in mind'
while

Holding *another's* 'mind in mind'

The 'super-power' of humankind is our capacity to connect; it is regulating, rewarding and the major "route" by which we can teach, coach, parent, heal and learn.

Bruce Perry, MD, PhD



Hard Wired to Connect: Serve and Return



Attachment Theory: John Bowlby

DANGER

Child seeks proximity.

Caregiver responds with comfort and protection.

Child becomes regulated by contact with their safe person (AKA safe haven).

SAFETY

The caregiver supports exploration and development.

Child feels safe to explore their environment.

Child uses parents as a “home base” from which to explore (AKA secure base).



The Attachment Relationship

- Helps the baby survive, feel safe, and secure
- Helps the baby explore the world and develop confidence
- Buffers the baby from adversity biologically and emotionally
- Helps the baby understand the world and adapt to it, learn what is safe and what is not
- Helps the baby regulate their emotions during times of distress
- So that they can explore and learn
- So that they can become capable and confident

Baby Sarah (4.5 months old)

#38

4 1/2 Months

Safe, Stable and Nurturing Relationships

SARAH'S ATTACHMENT BEHAVIORS

Crying

Cling posture/tension

Seeking caregiver with eyes

Touching caregiver

FATHER'S CAREGIVING BEHAVIORS

Recognized Sarah's cues

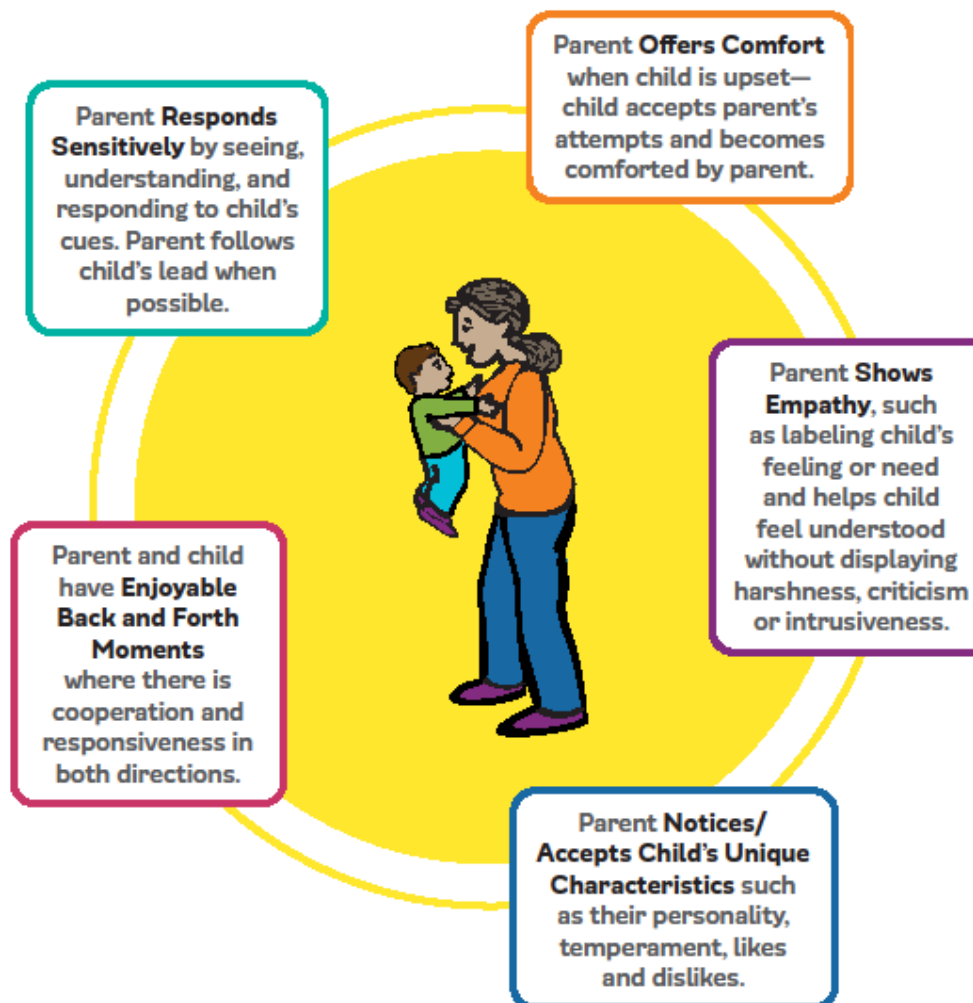
Provided safety and comfort

Provided opportunity to safely explore

Key Elements of Healthy Relationships



Elements of a Healthy Relationship: What to Observe



Alleviation of Distress



Safety, Shared Delight, Connection and Learning!



Benefits of Safe, Stable and Nurturing Relationships



- Expectation of trusting relationships
- Sense of self as worthy of love
- Empathy
- Emotion regulation; frustration tolerance
- Ability to use adults for help
- Ability to wait (delayed gratification)
- Language development



Universal Needs

- We **ALL** share these needs.
- To **seek proximity** to our “go-to people”
- To feel **comforted and protected** when we feel in danger
- For **co-regulation** of our emotions
- To be able to **explore safely** (to learn and be competent)



Newborn Brain Development and Baby Cues

Why Early Experiences Matter



Newborn Brain
Average Weight

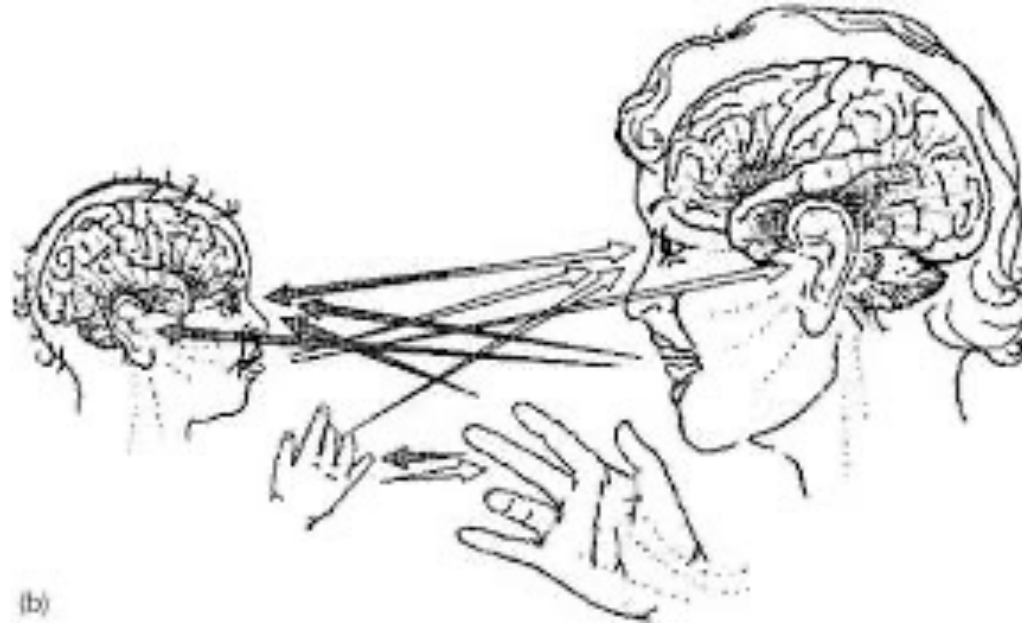
333 grams



2 Year Old's Brain
Average Weight

999 grams

Experiences with caregivers are critical drivers of early brain development



Infant's brains are CO-CONSTRUCTED!



The Perinatal Period is Emerging as a VERY
IMPORTANT SENSITIVE PERIOD in Development

How do I
stop the
crying?

I'm scared.
And alone.
Who will
help me?

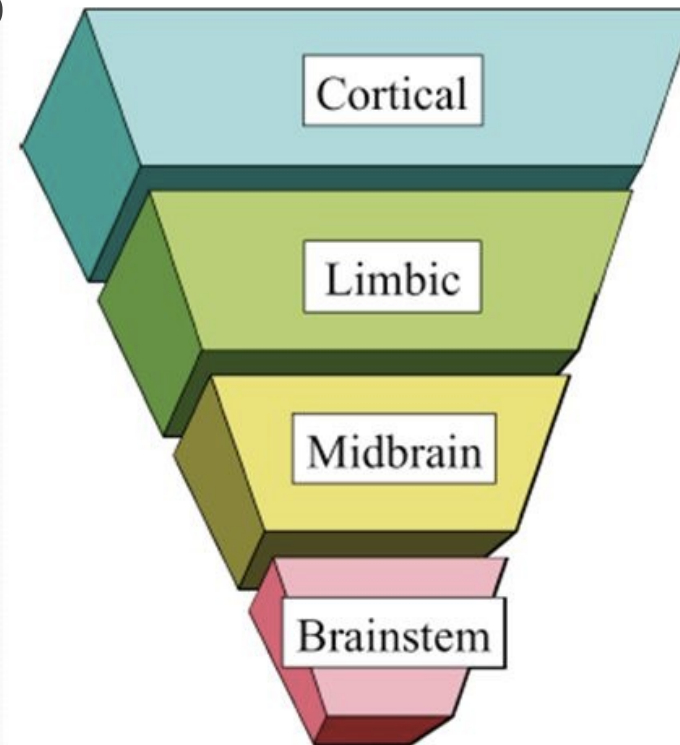


Will I be a
good enough
mother?

Where will we
live? How will I
feed him?

Stages of Development

- Wires first from the bottom to the top
- Frontal Cortex (inhibitory control) last to develop
- Develops from relational input (literally co-constructed)
- Babies give cues about their internal state and what they need.
- It is NOT spoiling to respond to their cues.



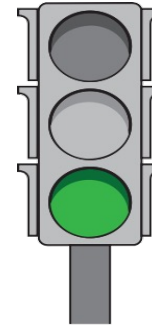
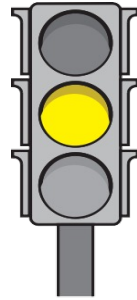
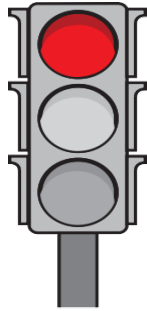
Abstract thought
Concrete Thought
Affiliation
"Attachment"
Sexual Behavior
Emotional Reactivity
Motor Regulation
"Arousal"
Appetite/Satiety
Sleep
Blood Pressure
Heart Rate
Body Temperature



Baby Cues

- Humans are hardwired to send cues
- We do not have to learn how to cry, smile, or turn away
- Cues tell us about a child's internal state and experience
- Cues are REGULATORY

Baby Cues

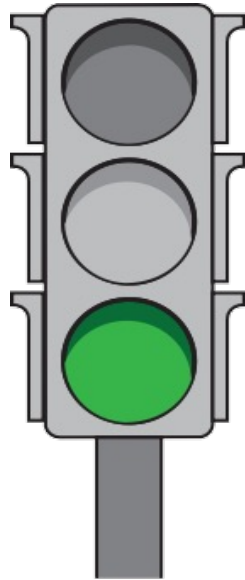


Baby's Behavior has Meaning

- Engagement cues
- Disengagement cues
- Parents and babies engage in **relational dance**.
- **Only 30%** of face-to face interactions are reciprocal and synchronous.
- **Repairing** mismatches or asynchrony in the relationship **strengthens** the relationship.
- In all relationships, it helps to **reflect and repair** in order to be “**good enough**,” not perfect.

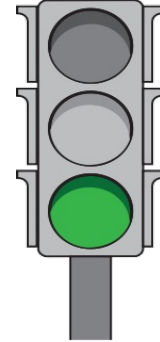
Engagement Cues:

I'm Ready to Interact or Learn





Brow raising



"I'm interested."

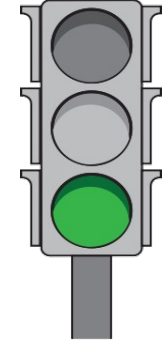
To respond to me you can...

- Notice my readiness to connect with you
- Talk to me
- Smile at me



Facing gaze

*"I'm ready to
interact" or
"I'm ready to learn."*



To respond to me you can...

- Notice my readiness to connect with you
- Share in this moment with me
- Talk to me
- Smile at me



Mutual smiling



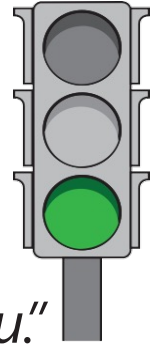
*"I'm enjoying my
time with
you."*

To respond to me you can...

- Delight in me
- Share this playful moment with me



Reaching to caregiver



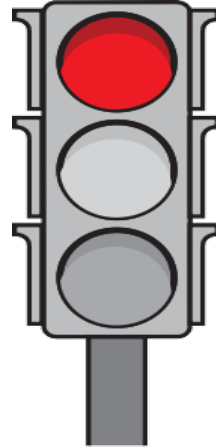
"I need to connect with you."

To respond to me you can...

- Pick me up if that seems to be what I need
- Let me touch you
- Smile and welcome me warmly

Potent Disengagement Cues:

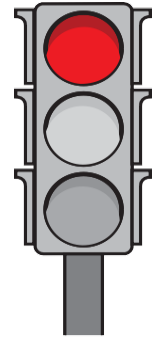
I'm done or I need a break





Big turn away

"This is too much for me; wait, and when I'm ready I'll look back" or "If I'm eating, it may mean I'm full or need more time to chew."

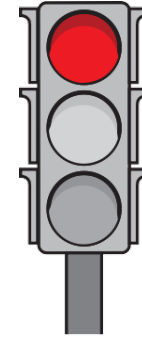


To help me you can...

- Stop, change, or slow the pace of what we are doing
- Give me a minute to see if I look back
- If possible, give me some options of other things to do
- If I'm eating, understand that I may need a break or might be feeling full



Back arching



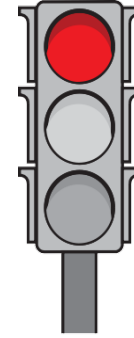
"This is too much for me" or "I really need a break."

To help me you can...

- Stop or change what we are doing
- Give me a minute to see if I calm down
- Soothe me if necessary
- If I'm eating, understand that I may be telling you I'm full



Pulling away



"You are too close right now" or "I am done with this."

To help me you can...

- Stop, change, or slow the pace of what we are doing
- Consider that I might want to try doing this on my own
- If I'm eating, understand that I may need a break or might be feeling full



Crawling away



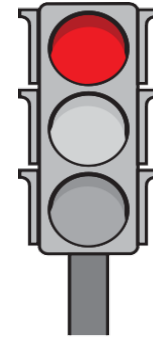
"I'm done" or "I really need a break or a change."

To help me you can...

- Stop, change, or slow the pace of what we are doing
- Allow me to explore something else
- Give me a minute to see if I return
- If possible, give me some options of other things to do



Halt hand



*"You are too close
to me right now" or
"I can do this on my
own."*

To help me you can...

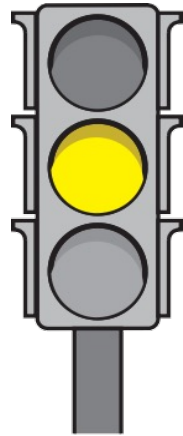
- Let me do this by myself, even if I'm not doing it "right"
- If I'm eating, understand that I may need a break or might be feeling full

Disengagement Cues with Seeing a Scary Worm



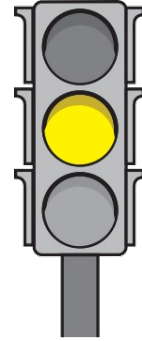
Subtle Disengagement Cues:

I need a break; I'm uncomfortable; I'm unsure; Give me a minute





Wrinkled forehead



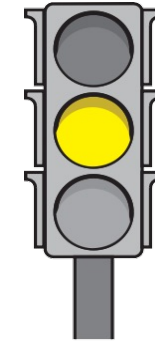
*"I'm unsure"
or "I'm thinking
about
something."*

To help me you can...

- Slow down, give me a minute to figure things out
- Wait, watch, and follow my lead



Facial grimace



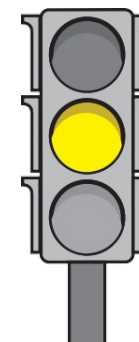
"I really don't like that."

To help me you can...

- Let me take a break
- Give me a minute to figure things out
- Consider that I might need to stop what we are doing



Head lowering



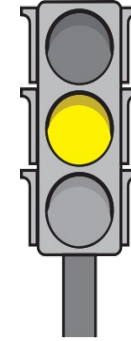
"I'm taking a bit of a break" or "I'm unsure."

To help me you can...

- Slow down, give me a minute to figure things out
- Wait, watch, and follow my lead



Eyes clinched



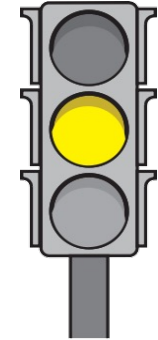
"I'm trying to slow things down" or "I'm trying to shut things out."

To help me you can...

- Allow me to take a break
- Consider that I might need to stop what we are doing
- Try making things less bright or noisy



Eye blinking or eyes shut



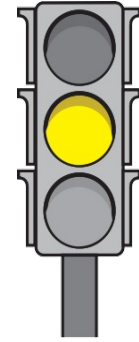
*"I'm trying to slow
things down" or "This
is too much for me."*

To help me you can...

- Let me take a break and adjust to the situation
- Wait, watch, and follow my lead



Little turn away



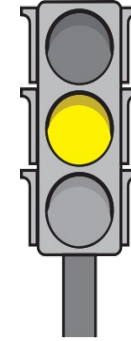
"I'm just taking a break."

To help me you can...

- Let me take a break
- Wait, watch, and follow my lead
- Consider that I might need to stop what we are doing



Eyes clinched



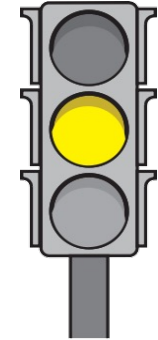
"I'm trying to slow things down" or "I'm trying to shut things out."

To help me you can...

- Allow me to take a break
- Consider that I might need to stop what we are doing
- Try making things less bright or noisy



Eye blinking or eyes shut



"I'm trying to slow things down" or "This is too much for me."

To help me you can...

- Let me take a break and adjust to the situation
- Wait, watch, and follow my lead

Disengagement Cues



Observations

Child backs up, turns away,

walks to mom,

somber face,

turns away again, backs up more,

later still looks somber, parents recognize and offer comfort,

goes to dad for comfort briefly,

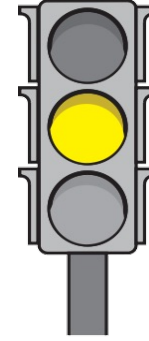
then backs up, looks away more, turns away and goes back to mother



Yellow Light Displacement Disengagement Cues When In an
“Approach-Avoidance Scenario”



Hand-to-eye



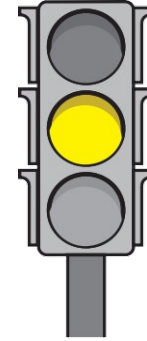
"I need a break" or "I'm unsure" or "I'm ready for a nap or bedtime."

To help me you can...

- Wait, watch, and follow my lead
- If I'm sleepy, put me down for a nap or start my bedtime routine



Hand-to-ear



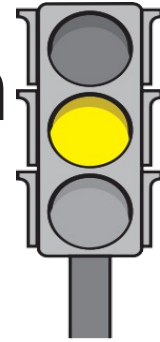
"I'm taking a bit of a break" or "I'm unsure."

To help me you can...

- Slow down, give me a minute to figure things out
- Wait, watch, and follow my lead



Hand-to-mouth



"I'm taking a bit of a break" or "I'm unsure."

To help me you can...

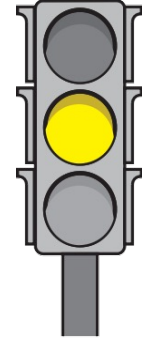
- Let me soothe myself or explore my hand
- Slow down, give me a minute to figure things out
- Wait, watch, and follow my lead



SUBTLE DISENGAGEMENT CUES THAT MAY INDICATE SLEEPINESS:
SHORTER ATTENTION SPAN, TURNING AWAY FROM STIMULATION,
PULLING ON EARS OR HAIR, RUBBING EYES



Hand-to-stomach



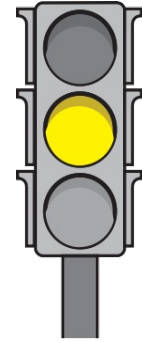
*"I'm unsure"
or
"I might be
taking a bit of
a break."*

To help me you can...

- Slow down, give me a minute to figure things out
- Wait, watch, and follow my lead



Self clasp



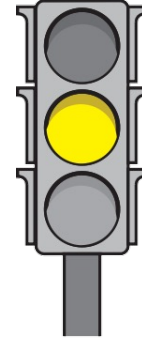
*"I'm unsure"
or
"I might be
taking a bit of a
break."*

To help me you can...

- Slow down, give me a minute, it's probably all I need
- Wait, watch, and follow my lead



Shoulder shrug



"I don't know what to do"

or

"I'm uncomfortable."

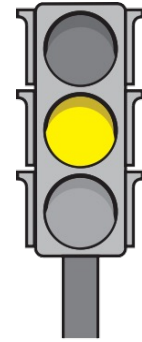
To help me you can...

- Give me a minute, I might need some reassurance
- Offer some support or a different activity
- Wait, watch, and follow my lead



Pressing lips together

"I'm taking a bit of a break" or "I'm unsure."

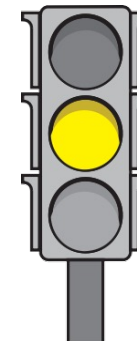


To help me you can...

- Slow down, give me a minute to figure things out
- Wait, watch, and follow my lead



Tongue show



*"I'm taking a bit of a
break"*

or

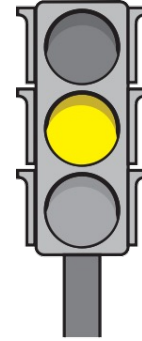
"I'm unsure."

To help me you can...

- Slow down, give me a minute to figure things out
- Wait, watch, and follow my lead



Yawning



"I need a break"
or
*"I may need a
nap."*

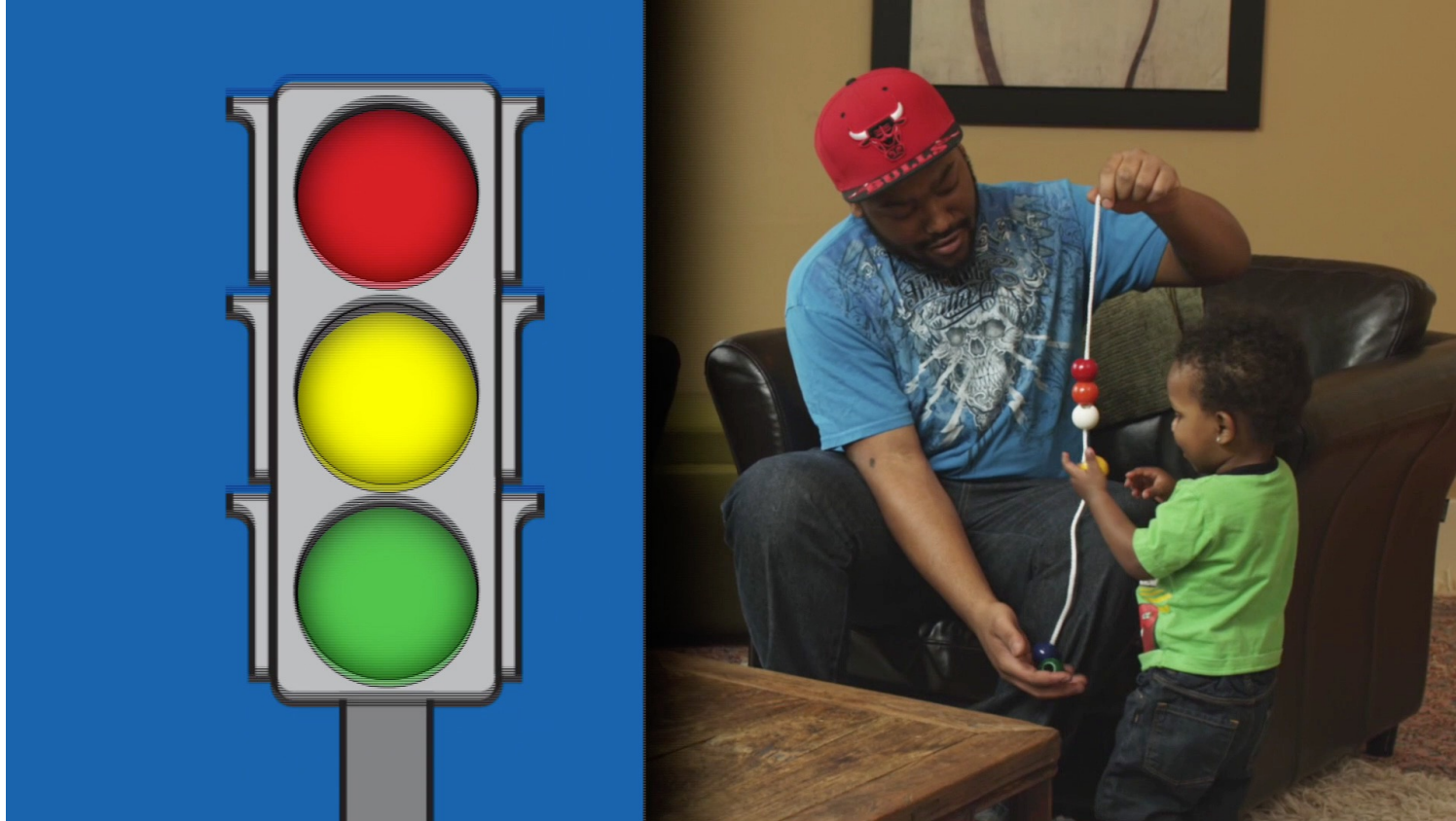
To help me you can...

- End or change what we are doing
- Consider if I need a nap
- If I'm sleepy, put me down for a nap or start my bedtime routine

Subtle Disengagement Cues



Boy Stringing Beads with Father





Supporting
Responsive
Caregiving

Relationships Beget Relationships



- Relationships **affect every other** relationship.
- It is through our relationship with families that we can harness the power of the **transition to parenthood**.
- There is a science to providing **Relationship-Focused Care**.

PFR in Pediatrics Approach



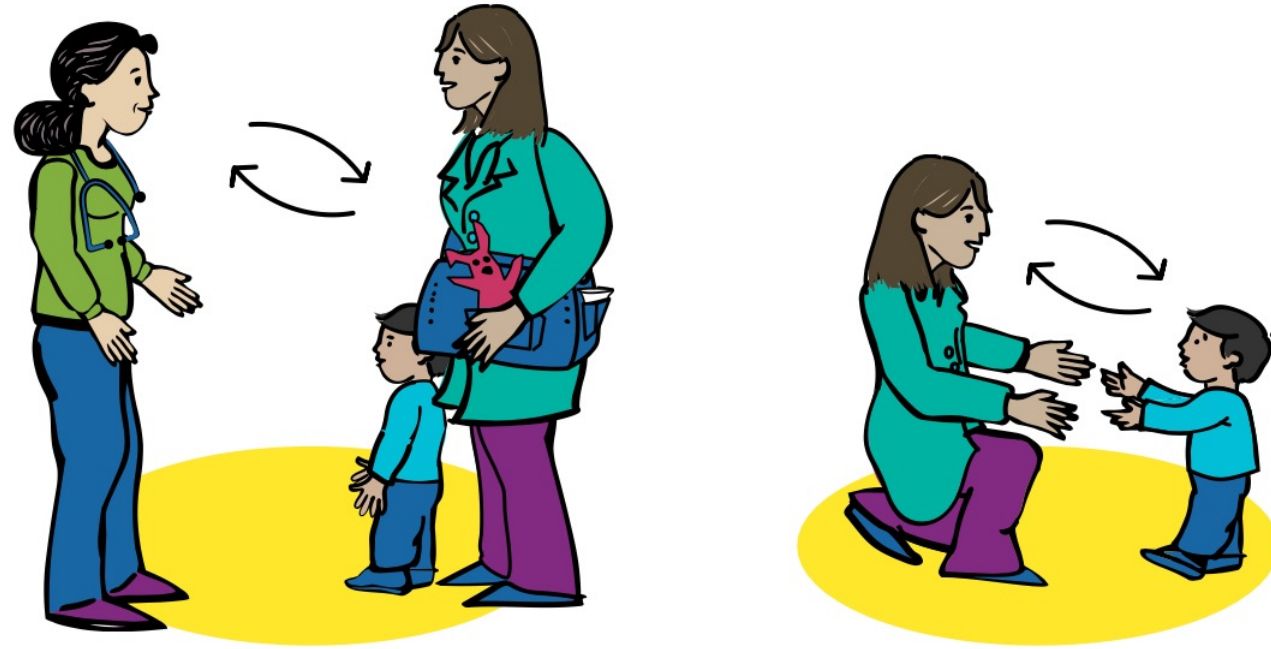
“The Platinum Rule”

“Do unto others as you would have others do unto others.”

- Jeree Pawl

Supporting Responsive Caregiving in Primary Care

“Do unto others as you would have others do unto others.”



Safe

Observant

Attuned

Responsive

Empathetic

The essence of relationship-focused care is to hold and contain the parent's concerns to support their holding and containing their child's needs.

THE 5C'S

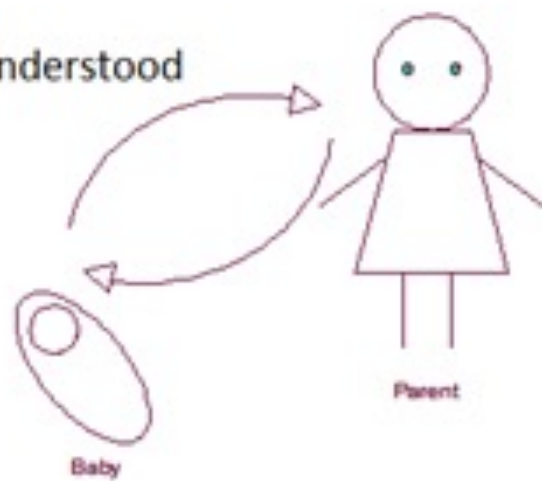


- 1 CONNECTING** Joining, establishing a safe emotional connection
- 2 CONTAINING** Listening, following cues and containing parent's concerns
- 3 COMMENTING** Observing the relationship, noticing cues, giving strengths-based feedback
- 4 CONTEMPLATING** Thinking and reflecting together
- 5 COUNSELING** Sharing handouts and offering well-timed, helpful, achievable anticipatory guidance



Containment and the brain

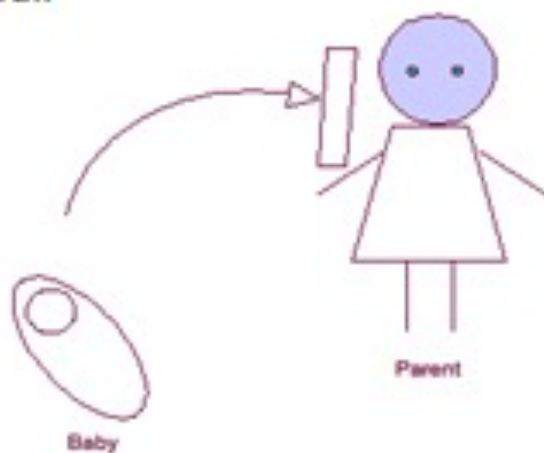
- Received/understood



Hazel Douglas
Solihull Approach
Containment and Reciprocity

Containment and the brain

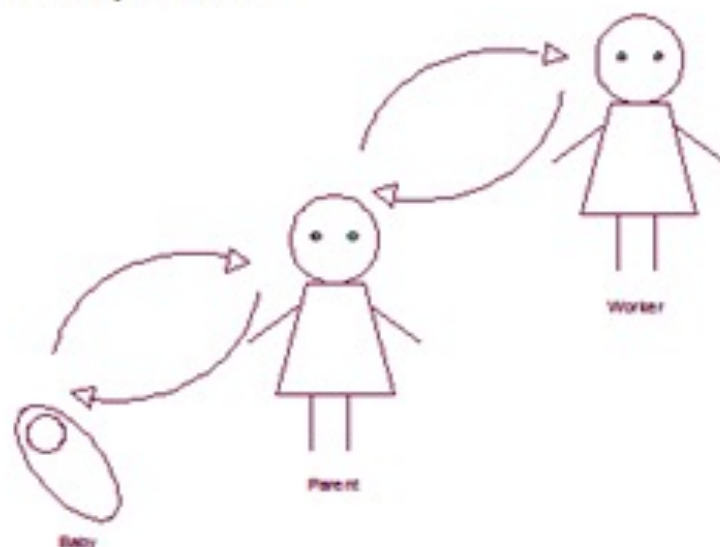
- Head full



Hazel Douglas
Solihull Approach
Containment and Reciprocity

Containment and the brain

- Parallel process



Hazel Douglas
Solihull Approach
Containment and Reciprocity

PFR-PPC Connecting Strategies...

- Helps us enter **the parent's world**
- Helps us enter **the baby's world**
- Deepen our **interactions**
- Helps us **get to the heart of the actual issues** while making a meaningful connection with families
- Can be **used in office and hospital settings** alike
- Are powerful for **healthcare professionals and families**



E-Learning Course: Promoting First Relationships in Pediatrics

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