



Infant Mental Health

Did you know that babies are born ready to connect with the trusted people around them especially their parents and caregivers?

The first 1,000 days of life is the time from conception to age 2 where brains grow faster than at any other time. During this time their brain is highly adaptable and responsive to environmental influences including nutrition.

This early stage is a critical period for building strong relationships, supporting brain development

and laying the foundation for their future mental health and wellbeing.

This is why healthy, nurturing relationships with parents and caregivers are essential for a baby's social and emotional development, which is often referred to as, infant and early childhood mental health.

These relationships provide the security and support needed for a child to build emotional resilience, form connections, and confidently explore their world.

Tips for Educators

Create a warm and supportive environment

Educators can help babies develop strong mental health by creating a warm and supportive environment.

This is supported when educators build trusting relationships with babies, provide consistent care, interact positively, respond to their needs with care, and encourage play that suits their development. These practices help babies feel secure and grow emotionally in a healthy way.

01

Age-appropriate play materials and experiences

Babies grow and learn best in places that stimulate their senses and let them explore.

This is supported when educators offer play materials and experiences designed for their development and stimulate their senses by helping them to touch, see, hear, taste and smell the world around them. Educators can also support their brain development by encouraging curiosity and problem solving, building important thinking skills for the future.

02

Spot Early Developmental Concerns

Educators play a vital role in monitoring infants for signs of developmental or emotional concerns.

Ensuring early detection of potential issues allows for appropriate intervention and support in a timely manner, fostering healthy growth. Effective collaboration with parents and healthcare professionals is key to providing the best care and outcomes for the child.

03

Support the parent-child relationship

It is important that Educators recognise the importance of supporting parents in their parenting role and provide resources, guidance and honest communication with them.

This recognition contributes to a holistic approach to infant mental health, supporting the parent-child relationship benefits the child's overall wellbeing.

04

Reflective Prompts in Practice

How do I connect emotionally with the babies in my care?

What does calm feel like in our infant space?

How do we support infants through transitions?

How do we build relationships with individual families?

