



First 5 California and the Water Cooler Joint Conference May 9-10, 2010

The Importance of Family Engagement

Panelist: Peter L. Mangione, Ph.D.

Core Concept 5

Human relationships, and the effect of relationships on relationships, are the building blocks of healthy human development.

Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. National Academy of Sciences.

For Infants & Toddlers, Developing a Secure Base for Learning Comes First

- Children learn within relationships with family members and others
- Children's emotional security develops in enduring, predictable relationships
- Relationship experiences have a profound impact on the developing brain

Importance of Families for Infants and Toddlers

- Family relationships have more influence on a child's learning and development than any other relationship has.
- Teachers who understand the fundamental importance of the family-child relationship place a high priority on building a positive relationship with the family.

California Department of Education. (2006). *Infant/Toddler Learning & Development Program Guidelines*. Sacramento: CDE Press.

Responsiveness: At the Heart of Emotional Security Early in Life

Responsiveness and sensitivity of care in infancy [is] a major predictor of adaptation from the early infancy period on.

Source: Sroufe, L. A., Egeland, B., Carlson, E. A., & Collins, W. A. (2005). *The development of the person: The Minnesota study of risk and adaptation from birth to adulthood*. New York: The Guilford Press.

The Power of “Feeling Felt” in Relationships

“Feeling felt’ may be an essential ingredient in attachment relationships. Having the sense that someone else feels one’s feelings and is able to respond contingently to one’s communication may be vital to close relationships”

Siegel, D. J. (1999). *The developing mind: How relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Core Concept 3

The growth of self-regulation is a cornerstone of early childhood development that cuts across all domains of behavior.

Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. National Academy of Sciences.

Babies Depend on Relationships with Adults for Self-Regulation

“ . . . Effective regulation of the infant is only possible within a supportive caregiving system. . . . By providing appropriate and changing stimulation in response to perceptions of infant state, moods, and interests, caregivers not only help keep arousal within manageable bounds, but they also entrain the infant’s own capacities for regulation.”

Sroufe, L. A., Egeland, B., Carlson, E. A., & Collins, W. A. (2005). *The development of the person: The Minnesota study of risk and adaptation from birth to adulthood*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Toddlers Depend on Caregivers to Guide Their Self-Regulation

“ . . .the adaptation of the toddler period remains fundamentally a dyadic adaptation. . . . as [is] true for infants, toddlers require responsive and consistent involvement by caregivers to remain regulated. . . . [Toddlers] are not capable of self regulation, but within a supportive relationship, they are capable of ‘guided self-regulation’.”

Stroufe, L. A., Egeland, B., Carlson, E. A., & Collins, W. A. (2005). *The development of the person: The Minnesota study of risk and adaptation from birth to adulthood*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Parenting Behavior and Children's Developing Self-Regulation

- Parental Sensitivity
- Scaffolding
- Mind-Mindedness

Source: Bernier, A., Carlson, S. M., & Whipple, N. (January/February 2010). From external regulation to self-regulation: Early parenting precursors of young children's executive functioning. *Child Development*, 81 (1), 326-339.