



# **Cuddling, Consciousness, and Cognition: The Significance of Emotional Engagement on Development and Learning**

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# Guiding Principles

- Development begins in the prenatal period and extends throughout life.
- Nurturing and responsive relationships provide the foundation for healthy growth and development.
- Development occurs through a complex interaction between genetic factors and environmental experiences.
- Optimal growth is achieved when good health and nutrition are combined with nurturing and responsive caregiving.
- Genetic factors and environmental deficiencies can cause developmental delays.
- Development occurs across multiple domains:
- Development in one domain influences development in other domains.
- Development proceeds through a predictable sequence of milestones.
- Cultural context influences every aspect of development.
- Children's individual differences and temperament influence development and learning.
- Children's learning occurs throughout the day through everyday experiences and routines.
- Children's learning can be enhanced by families and early childhood teachers.
- All children can benefit and learn from sharing experiences with other children.
- There is a strong, direct connection between the early years and later success in school and life.

# Infant and Toddler Nurturing

(as found in Jeff Johnson's *Babies In the Rain: Promoting Play, Exploration, and Discovery with Infants and Toddlers*)

- ❖ Feed brains and bodies
- ❖ Care for you to care for them
- ❖ Take clues from their cues
- ❖ Get attached
- ❖ Play every day
- ❖ Tune in to temperaments
- ❖ Focus on routines
- ❖ Seek continuity
- ❖ Drive learning with interests
- ❖ Allow self-direction
- ❖ Let them do it
- ❖ Build brains with repetition
- ❖ Devote time to learning
- ❖ Stimulate, but don't overstimulate
- ❖ Choose small groups
- ❖ Love language

# **Attachment**

**Secure**

**Avoidant**

**Anxious**

**Disorganized**

# S E A L

***Stimulus*** (any sensory provocation)



***Emotion*** (positive or negative)



***Attention*** (positive emotions drive executive functions—negative emotions drive survival)



***Learning*** (the response to the attentional variant)

(adapted from Robert Sylwester's *A Biological Brain in a Cultural Classroom*)