

BABY BYTES

For families with infants and young children

Self-Regulation

It is very important for babies to learn how to cope with the world around them. A self-comforting behaviour, such as putting a hand to mouth to suck, serves a very important purpose. Self-comforting skills help regulate a baby's body systems.



"Early experiences lay the foundation for Life" ~ Fraser Mustard

DID YOU KNOW???

- By sucking, a baby can control their breathing and heart rate, which can change their state from crying to quiet alert and help them be ready to interact with the world.
- Babies develop self-regulation skills to help themselves gain some control over their own bodies and the world around them.
- A child's early relationships and experiences have a tremendous impact on how these skills develop; all of these are needed to support healthy growth and development.
- During the first five years, children are learning to manage their feelings and actions in acceptable ways, while also learning to wait, share and work out problems with other children.
- The experiences parents and caregivers provide in these early years set the stage for learning and caring in the later years.
- How we care for children in their earliest years has a lasting impact on the kind of adults they will become.

DID YOU KNOW???

Birth - 6 months



At a young age, a baby cries when they are hungry. As the baby waits to be fed, they learn to wait briefly by sucking on their fingers. They are also learning that their needs are important and will be met. Your baby will look at you, smiling and cooing, wanting you to respond to them. Crying is your baby's way of telling you that they need something. When they are hurt, sick or afraid, they need you to hold them. If your baby turns away, they have had enough. You cannot spoil your baby!

6-12 months

Talk to your baby face to face, watch them play and follow their lead. Your baby prefers to be with people who are familiar to them. Your baby will get upset when you leave. Hugs and cuddles when you leave and when you return will help your baby learn that they are safe and secure.



12-24 months

Your toddler is learning about their world, developing self-confidence. If they are frightened, they will come back to you for comfort. When they feel safe and secure, they will explore again. Your child may dislike changes in routine. Toddlers express their feelings through the word "no" and frequent tantrums. They need ongoing love and positive attention. Teach your child what they **CAN** do as instead of what they can't.

24-36 months

Your toddler likes to do things on their own. Let them try, while keeping them safe. Encourage and praise them for trying new activities and for succeeding, this will teach them confidence. Your toddler is using their words to communicate and is starting to play imagination games, but may still have difficulty sharing. Help them to feel comfortable by using simple language to explain what is happening. Show them ways to share a toy and take turns.



Source: *First connections, Infant attachment - What babies have to say*, Health Canada, 2002
www.zerotothree.org; *My child and I Attachment for Life, Best Start Resource*.