

Infant Activities

Birth-12 months

‘Aukake|August

Social-Emotional Support: Putting Words to Cries



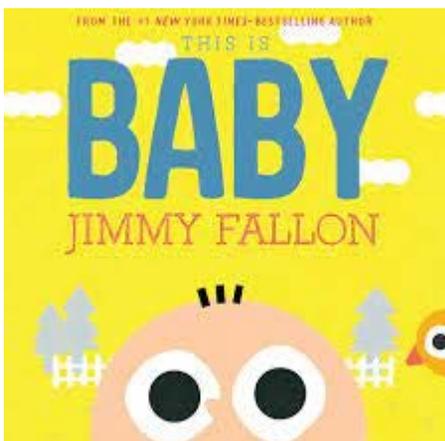
Responding to your infant's cries is a way to mālama i nā keiki (care for your child). Each time you respond and calm your infant, they gain trust in you. When you pick your infant up, share your mana'o (thoughts) with them out loud. Say, "I hear you, you're hungry" or "I know this cry, You're telling mama you're sleepy." Your infant won't understand your exact words, but you are reinforcing that you know what they need and you are there for them. Your infant will feel safe and comforted.

Cognitive Development: Skin-to-Skin Brain Boost



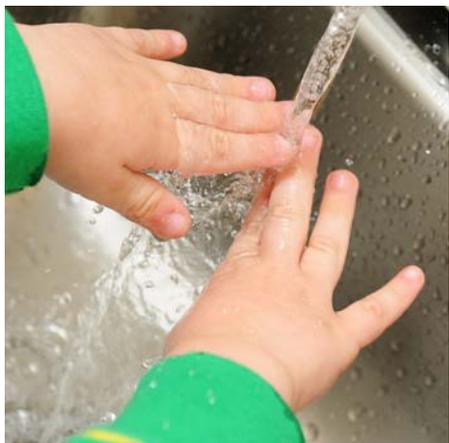
Infants develop their cognitive skills by using their senses. Skin-to-skin contact is a sensory experience that also boosts brain development! Lean back in a reclined position with your shirt loosely open. With your infant in a diaper, lay their bare chest against yours and prop their legs in a frog-like position. Your heartbeat, familiar scent, and warm skin will stimulate parts of your infant's brain. Your brain will also get a restorative boost as you enjoy a moment of lōkahi (harmony) together.

Playful Parenting: Ke Kino with Storytelling



"This is Baby" by Jimmy Fallon is a beginner board book that names different parts of the kino (body). Make this book a playful interaction with your infant. Point out the parts on your infant as you read, "These are baby's knees! Let's laugh and play and sing!" Make it extra fun and change the tone of your voice as you read. Your infant will likely vocalize their delight and respond with coos and babbles. Hana hou (repeat) and read the story in 'ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian language).

Social-Emotional Support: Teddy Bear Encouragement



Learning self-help skills can bring up emotions like pīhoihoi (excitement) and ho'ohoka (frustration) for your toddler. Take a playful approach by using a stuffed toy to encourage your toddler. Have the stuffed toy watch your toddler attempt a new skill and say, "Teddy noticed you were ho'ohoka when you couldn't reach the faucet to wash your hands. But you did it! Maika'i!" Using a stuffed toy makes learning more relaxing and is a way to mālama i nā keiki (care for your child).

Cognitive Development: Let's Measure Your Kino



Toddlers need concrete examples to help spark new brain connections. Instead of saying, "You are getting so big!" take some time and show them just how big they are. Have your toddler lay down on a large sheet of paper. Slowly trace around their kino (body). When you are done, use the pī'ā method to measure your tracing. The pī'ā measurement runs from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the pinky (make like a shaka.) How many shaka hands run from po'o (head) to wāwae (foot)? So big!

Playful Parenting: Silly Face Play



Toddlers are beginning to evolve in their sense of humor. Create silly faces together while also teaching the Hawaiian words to parts of the face. Draw different shaped maka (eyes), ihu (noses) and waha (mouths) on a sheet of paper. Color them with your toddler then cut out the parts. Use a paper plate as a face and show your toddler how to arrange the various maka, ihu, and waha in funny arrangements. Say, "I'm going to put this big brown maka with the small blue maka. That's silly!"

Social-Emotional Support: Mākaukau ‘Oe?



If your preschooler seems irritable in a new situation, they may be over-stimulated. Our kūpuna relied on the ‘āina (land) to reconnect to lōkahi (peace). Next time you notice your preschooler backing away from new people or unfamiliar noises, take an ‘āina break. Say, "You're covering your ears. It's loud in here. Let's step outside." Model taking deep breaths and when your preschooler appears calm and in lōkahi, ask, "Mākaukau ‘oe? (Are you ready?) Let's head back in."

Cognitive Development: Let's Compare My Growth



Noticing similarities and differences is a cognitive skill that your preschooler is working on. As your preschooler grows, there are things about their body that will stay the same and other things that will grow to be different. Find photos of your preschooler as an infant and toddler. Point out things that still look the same, e.g. brown maka (eyes) and things that look different e.g. long, curly hair instead of a bald infant po‘o (head). See if your preschooler can find other similarities and differences in their growth since being born.

Playful Parenting: Noho I Lalo Movement Game



It's normal for your preschooler to wiggle and squirm when asked to noho i lalo (sit down) for more than 5 minutes. Practice kino (body) awareness and make sitting playful with a "Noho I Lalo" movement game. Play upbeat mele (music) and dance around the room together. Pause the mele and noho i lalo! Count how long you both can sit then get up and dance again! Repeat the phrase later at mealtime or preschool circle time to cue your preschooler that it's time noho i lalo!