

Social-Emotional Support: Lomi for Infants



A kahuna pale keiki (mid-wife) was a community helper in an ahupua'a (land division). They assisted hāpai (pregnant) mothers and also helped bring comfort to newborn infants. One way a kahuna pale keiki settled an uncomfortable infant was with lomi (massage). Next time your infant is fussy, use unscented oil and gently lomi your infant's belly and legs. Lomi is also a wonderful opportunity to have quality time with your infant and promotes trust, safety and connection.

Cognitive Development: Exploring Natural Resources



Give your infant an up close and personal experience to the natural resources in your community. Add small stones from the yard into an empty plastic water bottle. Place grass and dirt in another then seal the bottles tight so your infant can not open them. (This prevents any choking hazard.) Have fun rolling and shaking the bottles as your infants observes textures, colors and sounds. When you are all pau (finished), respectfully return your natural resources back to the 'āina (land).

Playful Parenting: Laulima with Infant at Playtime



Recycle an empty plastic wipe container and thin burp cloths to make a fine motor play activity for your infant. Tie several burp cloths together then bundle them in the wipe container. Show your infant how to use their fingers to open the container lid and pull out the burp cloths. Model how to laulima (work together) and bundle them all back in the container for your infant to pull out again. Using recycled items to create play activities reduces unnecessary waste in your community.

Social-Emotional Support: E Ola Nā Inoa Wahi Pana



Wahi pana are places in the community to acknowledge and celebrate. One way our kūpuna (elders) acknowledged wahi pana was through mele (song). Put a mele to the name of your wahi pana and sing it with your toddler when you visit. Mele promotes social connection as well as an emotional connection to the 'āina (land). You are also teaching the place names of your community in a playful and loving way. E ola nā inoa wahi pana! (Long live the name of our special place!)

Cognitive Development: Recycling Wai at Home



One of the most valuable parts of an ahupua'a (land division) was the wai (fresh water) that flowed from mauka (mountain) to makai (ocean). Wai allowed the people and plants to thrive! Enlist your toddler as a community helper in your hale (home) to help share the wai! While your toddler is in the bath, have them use a cup to fill and pour bathwater into recycled plastic bottles. Later when it's time to play, laulima (work together) and water your plants with the recycled wai you collected.

Playful Parenting: E Hele Mai! Let's Go for a Ride



Borrow the book, "On Our Island in Hawai'i" by Jamie Meckel Tablasan from your local library and enjoy reading what you see on an island. Turn the mo'olelo (story) into a playful activity by creating a bus out of a recycled cardboard box. Cut a puka (hole) on one side of the box and tie a long cord to it. Then encourage your toddler to hele mai (come) along for a ride. Gently pull the bus around your hale and notice big and small things. (Always supervise your toddler near long cords of any kind as it can present a choking hazard.)

Social-Emotional Support: Lā'au 'Ōiwi Makana



It's common in Hawai'i to show your aloha with a makana (gift). Enrich your preschooler's aloha to the people and places in your community by giving lā'au 'ōiwi (native plants) as a makana. Have your preschooler help you choose a lā'au 'ōiwi like a hāpu'u (Hawaiian tree fern) from your local garden store. Say, "Your lā'au 'ōiwi shows aloha for your kumu (teacher) and for your community! Lā'au 'ōiwi keeps our community beautiful!"

Cognitive Development: Kilo Your Surroundings



Next time you and your preschooler explore the beach together, slow down to kilo (observe) your surroundings. Bring markers and paper with you and laulima (work together) to create a palapala 'āina kahua (field guide). Have your preschooler draw what they kilo and then notice the details of what you see, i.e. "The pōhaku (rocks) by the water are smooth and cold and the pōhaku further away are sharp and hot!" Spending time to kilo your surroundings develops your preschooler's cognitive skills and their sense of place.

Playful Parenting: The Ali'i of the Ahupua'a



Preschoolers love to pretend play and act out roles of people in a community. Share with your preschooler that Hawaiian ali'i (people of royalty) had a role to care for the maka'ainana (commoners) in their ahupua'a (land division). Use a lightweight blanket or scarf as a cape on your preschooler's shoulders so they can be ali'i. Pretend to be maka'ainana and ask your ali'i to find special objects in your home that show aloha and care for you. Mahalo your ali'i with a pūliki (hug) and honi (kiss)!