Presenter’s Notes

The Attachment Teaching Kit Includes:
- “Attachment” Presentation
- “Needs versus Wants” Game - Includes facilitator instructions and laminated participant cards.
- “Understanding Your Child’s Feelings” Presentation
- “Baby Cues” Activity (13 laminated cards)
- “Building a Secure Attachment for Your Baby” – Circle of Security (handout)
- “10 Things your baby wants you to know” – Attachment Network of Manitoba (handout)

Optional Resources
- Additional Activities/Discussion (Trust vs Mistrust, Attachment Across Cultures: “Babies”)
- “Parenting Reflection”
- “Self-Care Reflection”
- Aulneau Centre Brochure

Facilitators: If you have questions regarding information contained in this kit please contact:

Aulneau Centre
Phone: 204 204-987-7090
Email: admin@aulneau.com

Important:
This kit includes general information about Attachment and primarily focuses on how parents can sensitively respond to their baby. If parents have concerns about their connection or developing relationship with their baby or coping with their baby’s/children’s feelings they should contact their health care provider for an assessment and support.
It’s a Matter of Survival.....
Ask participants: What would happen if your baby was left in the woods...what would her chances of getting out of the forest be (survival rate)?

- Infant? 0% (unless another human found them)
- Toddler? Maybe 5% (they might wander out but not likely)
- School age child? Better chance, maybe 10-20%
- Adolescent? A much greater chance, 50%

Babies cannot survive without us. Babies/children depend on adults to keep them safe and alive. We must know how and when to feed them, shelter them, comfort them and protect them.

Even when your baby is not in danger but is feeling stressed, your child needs you/caregiver to:
- Help them feel safe and secure
- Deal with their feelings
- Manage their environment

Attachment is a matter of life or death for babies!
What is Attachment?
What is Attachment?

• Attachment is a an emotional bond between your baby and you/primary caregiver that provides safety, support, comfort and pleasure.

• The parent/child relationship is the first and most important type of attachment which starts before birth and continues to develop throughout the lifespan.

• Attachment is not something that parents do to their children it is something that children and parents create together, as they learn to read and understand each other’s cues.

• Babies develop a strong attachment to one person but they can form attachments with several people.
Still Face Experiment
IMPORTANT: Prior to showing the video or having a discussion, understand that this video can be upsetting to some parents and ensure that you let parents know that the mother and baby have a healthy relationship and attachment. This “situation” was a one-time event and will not have a negative effect on the child. Remember it matters what parents do most of the time, no one is perfect!

Ask Participants: What did the mother do in these pictures?
1. At first, the mother was interacting with the baby; it was loving and playful and mother and baby were responding to each other and in sync.
2. Then the mother became still and did not express any emotion or respond to the baby.
3. The mother, after one minute, stopped the still face and interacted with and responded with her baby by touching and talking in a comforting and positive way.

Ask Participants: What did the baby do?
1. The baby interacted back and forth with the mother reading mother’s cues, showing laughter, smiles, and enjoyment.
2. When the mother used the still face, the baby tried to cue her to respond by smiling, pointing, reaching out etc. The baby became distressed and used negative emotions, turned away, felt stress, cried to get her mom’s attention and response.
3. After the mother stopped the still face, the baby quickly feels relief and reaches out to mom with hands and smiles. Mom and baby are interacting and in sync again.

Ask Participants: What do you think would happen if the mother:
• responds most (all) of the time to her baby?
• does not respond any of the time to her baby?
• responds only some of the time to her baby?

Share With Participants: How you as a parent respond to your baby’s (attachment) needs can influence how your child learns to feel, think and behave.
Attachment lasts a lifetime...

Babies/Children with a secure attachment:

- Enjoy more happiness with parents
- Feel less anger at their parents
- Trust the people they love
- Have higher self-esteem
- Get along better with siblings and others
- Know how to be kind to those around them
- Are able to solve problems
- Trust that good things will come their way
Secure Attachment

- A secure attachment ensures that your child will feel secure, understood, learn to trust and know they can count on you!
- Babies have an inborn instinct to attach: to reach out to a specific person who will comfort, protect and help organize their feelings.
- When there is a secure attachment your child will follow their inborn curiosity and explore their environment when they feel safe to do so.
- Having a secure attachment, allows your child’s growing brain to develop a feeling of safety that results in eagerness to learn, healthy self-awareness, trust, and empathy.
Sensitive Responding to Baby’s Cues
Cues

Babies use signals or cues to let parents know what they need. Crying is typically the first cue infants will use to keep their mothers/caregivers focused on them when they need care.

If we respond to their cues with sensitivity, promptly and effectively, they feel understood and develop secure attachment.

Calming Baby – video/slides (Watch video by double clicking right of arrow)

Ask Participants: How does the mother respond to the baby when the baby is cries? Does she understand what the baby is telling her?

Answer: Mom is aware that her baby is upset and picks him up to offer support and a feeling of comfort. She watches his reaction. Baby continues to cry and fuss. Mom changes her position, she rocks baby and soothes him with a calm, quiet voice. Baby starts to settle. This interaction between mom and baby continues until Baby is settled.

Ask Participants: What cues does your baby use to interact with you and get your attention?

Answer: Encourage participants to share before providing list.

• Crying, eye contact, arching back, smiling, cooing, fists curled, screeching, clingy, pointing, trying to be close, rooting, rubbing eyes, reaching. etc.

• Babies develop many cues to have their needs met. As your baby gets older, you will be able to figure out more easily what they want and how to comfort them.
Insecure Attachment

Babies/children with an insecure attachment:

• Feel not worthy of love of their parents and others
• Less able to give & receive love and affection
• Poorer peer interactions
• Lower self esteem
• Higher levels of aggression (bullies)
• Problems controlling anger

In severe cases an insecure attachment disorder can develop and these children are more at risk for increased mental health issues and suicidal risks.
Insecure Attachment

- Insecure attachment happens when a child cannot rely on a parent to meet his/her needs.
- If a parent/caregiver repeatedly responds to the child’s needs and distress by becoming upset, ignoring, ridiculing or by being unavailable and unpredictable, children will develop an insecure attachment.
- Children will learn to have their needs met in ways that are unhealthy and negative.
  - Some children will exaggerate their behavior to get their parents attention. i.e. uncontrollable crying over small issues like not playing with a toy, arching back/stiff when picked up for diaper change.
  - Some children will withdraw or hide emotions when they need their parent’s attention i.e. not crying or pulling away from parent when parent picks them up after a bad fall.
- Insecure attachment can be repaired. A first step for parents and children in these patterns of miscommunication, is for parents to develop awareness of what their child needs and learn strategies to meet those needs in a consistent, caring and responsive way.
Insensitive Responding to Baby’s Cues
Insensitive Responding to Baby’s Cues

Facilitator: Show participants the “Scaring Alex” video or handout and then discuss the questions below. Watch the video ahead if using slides to let participants know how the dad is behaving (content below also).

Ask Participants: How did the dad interact with the child? Do you think the dad understood what his child was telling him? Did he listen? What do you think would happen if this kind of interaction happened regularly?

Answer: The dad laughed at the child when he was scared and crying hard. The dad said he was sorry and comforted the baby by touching. The baby settled fairly quickly. The dad then repeated the action again scaring the child with more laughing and again saying he was sorry. The child cried immediately and louder and he was hard to settle even with the dad’s touch. The dad’s actions and words do not match. The second time the child seemed anxious and less trusting.

If this type of behaviour continued, the baby would learn not to trust the dad or other caregivers. The child may try to get the dad to meet his needs by acting out or withdrawing (appear unaffected). Neither response is healthy for baby feeling secure and safe and could lead to an insecure attachment.
Miscues: Misleading Signals

(Double click right of arrow to play video)
Miscues

Miscues are misleading signals that a child will use to communicate when they have an insecure attachment and have learned not to trust that adults will recognize or meet their needs.

Facilitator: (Doubleclick to the right of the arrow to play the “Simpsons” video). Show participants the video and then discuss the questions below.

Ask Participants: How does Lisa feel about her relationships at school? In the beginning, what does Marge teach her to do about her feelings? To share them honestly, or to cover them up and pretend to be happy? Do you think that Marge understood what Lisa was upset about? Did she listen? What do you think would happen if this kind of interaction happened regularly?

Answer: Marge ignored Lisa’s sadness at the beginning of the video and instructed her to miscue her classmates and teachers by being compliant and pleasing to others so that they would like her. To Marge’s credit, she did not like what she saw when she watched Lisa use miscues, which resulted in classmates taking advantage of her and teachers dismissing Lisa’s creative ability. Marge changed her mind and repaired the damage she had done in the relationship by apologizing and encouraging Lisa to be honest about her feelings.

If parents respond to children’s cues by dismissing their feelings, by becoming upset, ignoring or by being unpredictable, children will learn to miscue or give the wrong signal. Children miscue by turning the volume up (crying louder and longer than necessary) or turning the volume down (not crying when necessary). Miscues make understanding your child more difficult.
The Keys to Building Secure Attachment

- Comfort
- Reliability
- Attunement
- Self-care
The are four Keys to Building Secure Attachment

To build a healthy and secure attachment between you and your baby/child, you need to:

• Provide comfort
• Be reliable and consistent
• Be attuned – understanding and responding effectively to your child
• Practice self care
Comfort Your Child When

Comfort is:

• Holding your baby
• Soft soothing voices
• Gentle calming touch
• Rocking/looking in their eyes
• Reassuring that everything will be OK
• Showing understanding

Comfort is not:

• Hushing
• Laughing at
• Making fun of/mocking
• Overreacting and panicking
• Ignoring
• Asking our children to comfort us
Comfort

• Babies need to receive comfort, protection and nurturance from their parents. Babies do not have the ability to comfort themselves.

• **It is very important that you respond to your baby when they are:**
  - Hurt
  - Ill
  - Upset (afraid, sad, angry)

• Comforting your baby will not “spoil” them. Not reacting if they are hurt will not make them “tough”.
  - research shows that babies who are quickly and effectively comforted when upset cry less and are soothed quicker.

• **Comforting is:** soft soothing voices, gentle calming touch, holding, reassuring that everything will be OK.

• **Comfort is not:** hushing, laughing at, making fun of/mocking, overreacting and panicking, ignoring, asking our children to comfort us.
Reliability and Consistency

Be a pop machine, not a slot machine!
Reliability and Consistency

Reliability is “when you do what you say” and Consistency is “when you respond the same way you have in the past”.

- Reliability and consistency help your baby trust you and know what to expect.
- As parents you don’t need to be perfect. Reliability means about 80% of the time.

For example:
- If you always respond (by giving comfort) to your child’s cries, your child learns to have trust in you. This is like a pop machine because every time you put a dollar in you can expect to get a drink.
- If you sometimes respond to your child’s cries but other times do not, your baby does not know what to expect. Your baby learns not to trust you and will cry louder and longer or withdraw. This is like a slot machine because even when you put a dollar in, you don’t know when you will get a reward.

As a parent you need to be a pop machine and not a slot machine!
Attunement

Attunement is understanding your child’s cues/signals and knowing how to respond in an effective way.
Attunement

Attunement is understanding your baby’s cues and knowing how to respond in an effective way to meet their needs (soft soothing voice for upset baby, sing song voice while playing).

- It is a process of getting to know your baby, it does not happen overnight. It begins with trial and error i.e. at birth parents cannot tell the difference between the various cries a baby uses, but within a few months, many parents can usually tell the difference between a hungry cry and a tired cry.

- Children whose parents are attuned to them have a sense that they are safe, understood, loved, and they have power to affect their environment. Attunement creates trust, that you/caregiver will meet your baby’s/children's needs.

- Attuned parents know the difference between wants and needs of their child. They will respond to the needs of their child while negotiating the wants.

**For Facilitator:** Play the Needs vs. Wants game at this time or as a separate activity (during this or another session).
Practicing Self-Care

• Physical Health
  o Rest
  o Relaxation
  o Exercise

• Emotional Support
  o Know your limits
  o Getting support
  o Be kind to yourself

• Spiritual
  o Purpose
Practicing Self-Care

As a parent it is important to take care of your own **physical, emotional and spiritual health and well being**. If you do not take care of yourself it is unlikely that you can be there for your child and meet their needs.

**Ask Participants:** Why when you begin a flight does the flight attendant tell everyone what to do in case of an emergency? Why are parents told to put the air mask on themselves before their child/children?

**Answer:** To ensure the survival and safety of our children, we must take care of ourselves, so we are in the best position to protect and comfort our child/children. We are of no use to our children if we are not available to help them.

- Keeping yourself physically healthy
  - Going for a walk, eating well, sleeping enough, relaxing, bathing, reading, deep breathing
- Dealing with your own feelings, getting support
  - Talking with friends, journaling, asking for help, seeking a counsellor if needed, knowing your limits, taking a personal time out
- Spirituality
  - Feeling like what you do has a purpose and hope
How You Were Parented Affects How You Respond to Your Child

- Your own thoughts and feelings of parenting
- What you view as safe and dangerous
- Your faith in others and experiences in relationships
- How you respond to your children in times of distress
- Your values and expectations of your child
How You Were Parented Affects How You Respond to Your Child

• What you experienced with main caregivers as a child shapes how you relate to others, think about parenting and interact with your child.

• All of us carry with us memories of childhood, both good and bad. Sometimes it is hard for us to parent our children because we are carrying around “baggage” from our own growing up.

• If we feel upset, sad, or angry a lot of the time, we may be scary or even harmful to our children. This is the last thing any parent wants. Children who are frightened by things their parents say or do cannot feel safe or count on their parents for protection.

You Have Choices

• You can choose to parent like your parents or choose to parent differently.

• You may keep the best parts of your family history (such as a holiday tradition) and also do things differently (such as comfort your baby more).

• There are parenting supports/counselling that can help you to understand and strengthen how you parent (e.g. classes, books, groups, personal counselling).

• If you are unable to enjoy your baby, or find yourself becoming angry with or overwhelmed by your baby get support from family, friends, and/or community groups. Talk to your health care provider or other professionals for support.
Culture & Family Values

Culture plays a role in how we parent and what we value.
Culture and Family Values

- In many families, culture plays an important role in raising children and influences parenting practices.
- Families have different values and what one family may see as a common or right way to parent may be different based on the country they came from, faith or teachings of their culture.
- The idea of what is safe and what is dangerous for children also changes across cultures. 

For example:
- The idea of the nuclear family - that is only mother, father and children living together is not typical in most places throughout the world and many cultures believe it takes a village (many people) to raise a child.
- Some cultures keep their children very close (cannot sleep apart), while others give a wider space to explore (allow a 2 year old to play alone in the yard).
- In some cultures, a mother must stay home for 30 days to rest and recover after a baby is born. In others, a mother goes home and takes on the full responsibility of infant care and household duties with no support for her recovery.
- It is important to recognize that there are many ways to raise healthy happy secure children and that there is no one “right way”.
- By asking questions and being non-judgemental, we can appreciate the differences in families and the importance of values and culture.

Ask Participants to share a story from their family about culture or family values.

For Facilitator: You can highlight nuggets from the “Babies” video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3NXXai40OY which shows differences in parenting across cultures. Can be a separate activity (during this or another session).
Remember!

- Babies don’t come with instruction manuals but neither do parents.
- Babies never try to make you mad, they need you to survive!
- Watch, Follow and Enjoy your child!
Things to Remember

• Children don’t come with instruction manuals, but neither do parents.
• Your baby doesn’t cry to make you mad, or bother you, or frustrate you. Your baby is trying to get your attention to tell you that he/she needs something.
• Your baby/children depend on you for survival and to meet their needs. They need you to keep them safe, secure and feeling loved so they can learn, grow and explore.

As a parent, the most important things you can do for your child are:
• Pay attention
• Stay close
• Have empathy
• Be self aware - don’t take it personally
• Stay calm
• Be reassuring
• Watch, follow and enjoy (your baby/child!)
Where Can I Get Help?

“Attachment Kit”
has been developed and produced in partnership by
Aulneau Centre and Healthy Child Manitoba

If you have questions about Attachment or if you want to understand or need support in your relationship with your baby/child you can contact your Public Health Nurse or Health Care Provider in your area. Below is a list of community resources and websites that you can contact for information and support:

The Aulneau Renewal Centre 204-987-7090
The Parenting Centre 204-956-6560
Family Dynamics 204-947-1401

www.aulneau.com
www.patcrittenden.com
www.circleofsecurity.org
www.attachmentnetwork.ca
www.labyrinthjourneys.com
www.iasa-dmm.org

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References

References

• Mosby’s Medical & Nursing Dictionary, 1986. Mosby Co. St. Louis
• Pope-Edwards, C., Raikes, H. (2002). Extending the Dance: Relationship –Based Approaches to Infant/Toddler Care and Education. *Young Children: July 2002.*
• Vellet, S. PowerPoint Presentation: 2006
NEEDS VS WANTS GAME

Here are a variety of scenarios in which babies typically get upset. The goal is to decide if what the child is upset about is a want or a need.

Facilitator: Explain the difference between need and want in relation to attachment:

Need: A need is something you have to have, it is absolutely necessary. A good example is picking up an infant when they cry. If a baby is not picked up and comforted, she/he will learn she/he can’t rely on or trust her caregivers. If needs are not met on a regular basis this will interfere with normal healthy child development.

Want: A want is something you would like to have. It is something you can do without, but may feel like it would be a good thing to have. A good example is a toy. Your baby might want an item from your purse and starts to cry when you take the item and purse away. Your baby can survive without this item and it’s ok to not give into this want.

- If it is a need then the parent must respond and comfort the child. The response will be comforting, consistent and the parent will adjust their behavior to meet the child’s need.

- If it is a want, the parent can negotiate with the child. The response may not always be the response the child was seeking i.e. distraction, removal, acknowledge feelings.

Important: In some situations, a child’s want and how they are responded by the parent results in the child becoming very upset and overwhelmed. In this case the parent must respond to the upset child by comforting them and helping them to sort out their emotions. This does not mean giving into the original want in order to calm the child. It may take some time to figure out what is a want versus a need and parents may have different answers based on their upbringing, culture and comfort level.
**Facilitator:** Read the scenario out loud or hand out cards to participants to read.

1) Get participants to take turns reading the scenarios and ask the individual or the group if it is a **need or a want**, and **why** they believe this.

2) Have a discussion about how they could respond to their baby in these scenarios. i.e.
   - Is this a ‘drop’ everything moment?
   - What is the baby feeling?
   - How can you comfort your baby?
   - What do you need to figure this out?
Your baby playing with your friend’s child and the other child picks up your baby’s favorite toy. Your baby becomes upset and tries to take the toy. *(want)*

- Is this a ‘drop’ everything moment? (No)
- What is the baby feeling? (Frustrated, Possesive, Mad, Sad)
- How can you comfort your baby?
  - Wait to see if the babies work it out by themselves as this helps to develop social skills and confidence.
  - You do not allow them to take the toy from the other child.
  - You may try to distract the child with another toy, lift the child up and hold them and talk softly about sharing toys.
  - Talk about their frustration but let them know they cannot have the toy.

- What do you need to figure this out?
  - Consider child’s age and ability to cope with situation.
  - Recognize this is not a life threatening situation and stay calm while setting limits. It’s OK to say no.....
  - Think about how you can plan to handle these situations as they will occur frequently.
You and your baby have been out all day running errands; your baby has become ‘grumpy’ and is insisting on being held. *(need-tired)*

- Is this a ‘drop’ everything moment? (Yes)
- What is the baby feeling? (Tired, Ignored, Out of Sorts with Routine, Overstimulated)
- How can you comfort your baby?
  - You take time to hold and soothe your baby.
  - Remove/turn off all distractions and talk softly with your baby.
  - Read a book or quiet play time.
  - Let your baby let you know when they have had enough close time.
- What do you need to figure this out?
  - Think about why your baby may insist on being held. Did baby miss a nap; spend the day confined in car seats and strollers?
  - If you have changed the daily routine, then recognize that your baby may need extra support from you.
You are in the checkout line at the grocery store and your baby grabs a stuffed Easter Bunny, he will not let it go and begins to cry when you try to take it away. *(want)*

- Is this a ‘drop’ everything moment? (No)
- What is the baby feeling? (Possessive, Desire, Frustrated, Mad)
- How can you comfort your baby?
  - Explain in a calm voice to your child that you understand they want the toy and are frustrated but that the toy belongs to the store.
  - You may try to distract the child with another toy you brought from home.
  - Talk about their frustration but let them know they cannot have the toy. If they continue to be upset you may need to pick up your child and try to calm them down.
- What do you need to figure this out?
  - Consider child’s age and ability to cope with situation.
  - Recognize this is not a life threatening situation and stay calm while setting limits. It’s OK to say no.....
  - Think about how you can plan to handle these situations as they will occur frequently.
  - If your child becomes inconsolable and you feel your own emotions getting the best of you, leave the store and attend to your child’s emotions (which is now a need).
You are washing the dishes and your baby drops a toy from their high chair. The baby does this 5 times. *(want)*

- Is this a ‘drop’ everything moment? (No)
- What is the baby feeling? (Curious, Attention Seeking, Playful)
- How can you comfort your baby?
  - You continue to interact with your baby and play the game.
  - You talk with baby and let baby know you need to finish dishes and will not pick up the toy again.
  - Distract your baby: provide a new toy, move baby to the floor with toys, play another game such as singing or making noises.
- What do you need to figure this out?
  - Think of child’s reason to drop the toy - is it to engage you in fun/play or do you think to purposely make you annoyed/angry?
  - What are your priorities for tasks like housework and how do you balance that with providing attention to your baby. Remember, this will come up often as babies are born to interact. It’s ok to have a messy house!
Your baby is sick and will only sleep or stop crying when you hold them. *(need-ill)*

- Is this a ‘drop’ everything moment? (Yes)
- What is the baby feeling? (Sick, Uncomfortable and Seeking Comfort)
- How can you comfort your baby?
  - Stay close and hold your baby, respond to their needs.
  - Talk softly and reassure your baby you are here for them.
  - You may try a warm bath.
  - You may need to administer medication if they have a fever or are sick.
- What do you need to figure this out?
  - When your child is sick they may be very uncomfortable and unable to express how they are feeling. They may not want to be alone.
  - Recognize that your baby will get better and needs extra attention when they are ill, hurt or upset.
  - Be honest about your own feelings and if you are feeling frustrated get help from a partner, family member or friend.
  - If your child is not consolable see your health care provider.
You are a family birthday party and your baby has become quite ‘clingy’. Family members want to hold your baby, but your baby squirms and reaches for you. *(need-afraid/ overwhelmed)*

- Is this a ‘drop’ everything moment? *(Yes)*
- What is the baby feeling? *(Scared, Strange Situation, Unfamiliar with People, Over-stimulated, etc.)*
- How can you comfort your baby?
  - Talk to your baby and see if just your voice will comfort them.
  - Have the person hold the baby so that the baby is close to you and can see you easily and say “Don’t worry mom is here” reassuring the baby that you are going to remain close.
  - Go to the baby and hold them letting them take in the environment from the safety of your arms until they are ready to go explore.
- What do you need to figure this out?
  - At around 8 months old babies as a normal part of growth and development will play strange and so parents need to consider the age of baby and what should be expected.
  - Your baby may have a cautious temperament and need some extra time before feeling comfortable in a new environment or with other people. Allow your baby some time with you before letting others interact with the baby or limit the amount of people that can hold baby.
  - Consider where you are going ahead of time and plan accordingly. If you are prepared and know that baby will be wanting to be held it will not be a surprise.
While you are cooking dinner, your baby trips. She appears to be fine, but your baby begins to cry. *(need-hurt or maybe afraid)*

- Is this a ‘drop’ everything moment? (Yes)
- What is the baby feeling? (Scared, Surprised, Hurt)
- How can you comfort your baby?
  - Talk to your baby as you are going to them and ask if they are okay.
  - Go to them and get down to their level and offer to pick them up. They may just want to make sure you are there and can reassure them but they may also want to be picked up and consoled.
  - Make sure you do not make more of the fall than they do and calmly respond to their need.
- What do you need to figure this out?
  - Respond to the child and let them determine what they need.
  - Comfort them and when they are ready encourage them to go back out and explore knowing that they can come back to you at any time and that you are there.
When you are doing tummy time with your baby, he does a “head bob” and hits his face hard on the carpet. Your baby starts to cry. (need - startled or hurt)

• Is this a ‘drop’ everything moment (Yes)
• What is the baby feeling? (Scared, Surprised, Hurt)
• How can you comfort your baby?
  o Pick your baby up and hold them close to you.
  o Stay calm and talk to baby in a calm and soothing way.
  o Let your baby know that “it must have hurt to hit your head and I am here for you”. Let your baby know he/she will be ok.
• What do you need to figure this out?
  o You need to determine if your baby is startled or is really hurt. If you are concerned about your baby, you may want to call your health care provider.
  o Recognize that when you baby is hurt, they need you to respond immediately. You provide safety and security and teach them to trust.
  o Sometimes it can feel awkward when these incidents happen and sometimes we laugh when people/children or babies fall/slip or bang into something. It is important that your baby see your concern and receive sensitive care when they are hurt, ill or upset.
You NEED to take a shower and have placed baby in a safe spot (crib, swing, car seat, playpen) in the same room or close by. Your baby has been fed, has a clean diaper and you can hear your baby starting to whimper and cry. (want or need)

- Is this a ‘drop’ everything moment (Yes/No)
- What is the baby feeling? (Lonely, Scared, Bored, Attention Seeking)
- How can you comfort your baby?
  - You can talk to them while you are in the shower and tell them what you are doing and reassure them that you will be there in a few minutes.
  - Try and sing one of your baby’s favorite songs.
  - Peek your head out from the shower, smile and say hi if they can see you.
- What do you need to figure this out?
  - The age of your baby should be considered: a newborn should not be left to cry long and an older baby should not be left to cry for more than 5-10 minutes (an older baby, left in a safe space, can often entertain themselves with toys).
  - Shower when your baby is napping.
  - Your comfort level/experience as a parent. Usually we worry more with our 1st child and know with the 2nd child that leaving the baby alone in a safe spot for 5 or so minutes is not a life or death situation and will not cause damage to the child.
  - How comfortable are you letting your baby cry? If not, then you need to plan to take a shower when your partner, family or friends are around. Don’t be afraid to ask for support.
  - Recognize you deserve a little time to yourself and take a shower, knowing your child is safe.

Note: This scenario may be considered either a want or a need. It is important for parents to remember that it is what you do 80% of the time that matters and that parent need to consider self-care for themselves also.
Understanding Your Baby’s Feelings
Presenter’s Notes

“Understanding Your Child’s Feelings” includes:

• Main Presentation
• Baby Cues Activity – 13 cards

Note: Understanding Your Child’s Feelings is part of the Attachment Kit and can be used in conjunction with the kit during a session or used as a separate session.

Purpose:
• To reinforce the importance of Attachment between parent and child and supporting parents to recognize and sensitively respond to their baby’s/child’s needs and cues.
• Create parent’s awareness that babies/children experience a wide variety of emotions, some easy to understand and manage while others can be confusing and not see easy to handle.
• To empower parents regarding their ability to recognize and know what their baby/child is saying and needs. Parents know their baby better than anyone else!

Activity:
• Show participants the cards of the babies and ask what they think the baby is feeling - the baby is giving cues. There is no right answer, so explore with participants why they think the way they do.
• Provide an opportunity for parents to talk about and figure out baby’s feelings/cues and how best to cope.

Note: You can use some or all of the cards at any given time to have a discussion.
Common Feelings for Babies/Children.

- We often find it easy to be with our baby/child when she/he is happy, laughing or content/quiet however we know that our children can experience unpleasant feelings that sometimes leave us unsure of what to do.

- Babies are not born knowing how to control their feelings or how to calm down. Babies learn this from you.

- Sometimes it takes time to figure out what your baby is trying to tell you and it may take some practice to figure out what they need.

- A loving relationship with your baby is the best way you can teach your baby to deal with difficult feelings.
Common Feelings for Babies/Children
What are common unpleasant feelings?

ANGER
Temper tantrums are normal, it is a baby’s/child’s way of letting you know they are angry, upset or frustrated.

- Staying calm and being attentive is important.
- Help your child calm down. Provide words to help them understand their feelings and use “Time in or Quiet Time” as a strategy.
- Do not give into demands.

FEARS AND WORRIES
Your baby/child may be afraid of monsters, of the dark, or of new situations.

- It is important to accept your child’s fears.
- Do not tease or get angry.
- Keep calm and reassure your baby/child that you are there for them.
- Try to get your child to talk about what is bothering him or her. Suggest things to say or do when he or she is afraid.
Cell Phone Tantrum

tantrum over mommy's cell phone.mp4
More common unpleasant feelings!

SAD
Babies/children get sad about the same things that make you sad. i.e. like when a pet dies or a toy disappears.

• Talk with your baby/child about why they are sad.
• Give your baby/child a little more attention and cuddling to help him or her feel comforted. Usually the baby/child will become interested in things again.

JEALOUSY
Being jealous is normal. Sharing toys is hard and your baby/child may not like sharing your attention (on the phone or when there is a new partner or baby in the family).

• Calmly talk with your baby and let them know you understand that she would like your attention right now but you are busy.
• Have your child to do something close to you.
• Let your baby/child know you will give him or her attention soon.
Not having a Great Day?
When your child expresses strong feelings, sometimes you might:

- Get angry or upset
- Lose patience
- Feel helpless, unsure what to do
- Feel like you can’t take your child’s crying or whining anymore
- Feel it is hard being a parent

- Sometimes it is hard for us to parent our children because we are carrying around “baggage” from our own growing up. Everyone has baggage - sad or angry feelings from their past.

- If we feel upset, sad, angry a lot of the time, we can be scary or even harmful to our children. This is the last thing any parent wants. Children who are frightened by things their parents say or do cannot feel safe or count on their parents for protection.
How do YOU feel when your baby/child gets upset?
5 Behaviours to Avoid!

VOICES:
Loud and angry voices upset babies/children. It can turn a small problem into a big problem. Growling/whispering, even in fun, can make children feel like danger is coming.

NOT COMFORTING AN UPSET CHILD:
Ignoring your crying child, laughing, teasing, or hushing your baby/child in anger is not comforting and can make the world feel like a scary place.

GETTING IN YOUR CHILD’S WAY:
Interrupting, changing or pushing play to something you are more interested in or think is fun. (“I’m going to get you!”, throwing baby/child into the air, excessive tickling/roughhousing)

NOT BEING THERE FOR YOUR CHILD:
Have your own worries, exhausted and unable to be there for your baby/child. If you notice that your mind is wandering when you are with your baby/child, try to bring your attention back.

MAKING YOUR CHILD WORRY ABOUT YOU:
Turning to your baby/child for comfort or advice when something bad happens, will make your baby/child worry about you. It is not up to babies/children to worry about their parents.
5 Behaviours to Avoid!

- LOUD OR ANGRY VOICES
- NOT COMFORTING AN UPSET BABY/CHILD
- GETTING IN YOUR BABY’S/CHILD’S WAY
- NOT BEING THERE FOR YOUR BABY/CHILD
- MAKING YOUR BABY/CHILD WORRY ABOUT YOU
We all make mistakes.....

If you get angry or overreact to your baby/child, show your child how you deal with your own anger by calming yourself, by breathing deeply, counting slowly to 10. Your child will learn from your example.

Things to think about:

• Before you respond, put yourself in your child’s place.
• Try to understand your child’s behaviors and feelings.
• Praise your child.

How you respond to your child most of the time is what matters.

No one expects you to be perfect and be able to do things right by your child all the time.
We all make mistakes.....

How you respond to your child most of the time is what matters.

No one expects you to be perfect and be able to do things right by your child all the time.
What Can You do to Make Your Baby Feel Secure and Safe?

Responding in ways that show your baby that he or she can depend on you, will give your baby the simple gift of confidence.

That gift will make a huge difference to your baby for the rest of his or her life.

- Pay Attention
- Stay Close
- Show Empathy
- Be Self Aware - don’t take it personally
- Stay Calm
- Reassure your child
- Watch, Follow and Enjoy!
What Can You do to Make Your Baby Feel Secure and Safe?

- Pay Attention
- Stay Close
- Show Empathy
- Be Self Aware - don’t take it personally
- Stay Calm
- Reassure your child
- Watch, Follow and Enjoy!
Additional Activities/Options for Discussion

The following websites provide good examples of the importance of attachment, particularly focusing on the parent and baby relationship. You can watch the videos with participants at group (or individually if time permits) and discuss the questions. Using videos can be an effective way to discuss a topic without letting it become personal. We always believe that parents want the best for their babies/children!

**Important:** Facilitators should review the videos and be able to answer questions that may be asked within their comfort level. The Attachment kit provides information and answers to the content in the videos. If you are asked a question, you are not sure about, please refer the individual to the appropriate resource (resources listed at back of main presentation)

1. Trust Vs Mistrust

   - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTbbYLvhDSM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTbbYLvhDSM)
     - What is this puppy learning?
     - How is the mother teaching the puppy to trust?
     - What is the kitten learning? And what might this mean throughout it’s life?

   **Note:** A nice example of how a parent (adult dog) teaches their baby (puppy) to trust and explore the world by reading the baby’s (puppies) cues and staying close and being engaged.

2. Attachment Across Cultures

   - Babies [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3NXXai40OY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3NXXai40OY)
     - What are some differences between the babies live?
     - What are some similarities?

   **Note:** This is a long video, so reviewing the video and selecting “nuggets” to demonstrate the differences in parenting and attachment across cultures will be most effective.
BUILDING A SECURE ATTACHMENT FOR YOUR BABY

• **The Name of the Game is Delight**: Babies are “hard-wired” to experience joy with their caregivers in the early months of life. Researchers are finding that mutual joy is the basis for increased brain growth. A baby feels more secure knowing that “Life is good, because my parent enjoys life when s/he is with me.”

• **Every Baby Needs a Holding Environment**: Babies soak up affection and love through their skin. Gentle touch shares the tenderness that every infant requires. Playful touch encourages joy. Holding your baby not only provides pleasure and reassurance, it is essential in helping to soothe and organize difficult feelings.

• **“The Eyes Have It”**: Gaze into your baby’s eyes from the first day of life, and pay close attention to when your child wants to look back. At about six weeks, your child will regularly focus in on your eyes and read what they are “saying.” Lots of pleasurable eye contact will translate into a feeling of reassurance and connection for your baby.

• **Whenever Possible, Follow Your Child’s Lead**: Security of attachment requires a caregiver who is sensitive and responsive to her/his child’s needs. Your willingness to answer subtle requests for attention, comfort, holding, exploration, and discovery (with you nearby) will provide an increased sense of security for your child.

• **You Can’t Spoil a Baby**: Contrary to those who may be saying that you will harm your child if you are “too responsive” to her/his needs, it isn’t possible to spoil a baby in the first 9-10 months of life. Researchers are finding that the most responsive parents actually have children who are less demanding and more self-reliant as they grow older.
• **Stay With Your Child During Difficult Feelings**: Young children often have upset feelings (anger, hurt, sadness, fear) that are too difficult to manage on their own. When your child has an intense feeling, stay with her/him until the feeling has been worked through. Your child will be learning basic trust: “Someone is here with me when I am in difficulty and pain,” and “I can count on a good outcome to follow a difficult experience.”

• **Talk Out Loud about Feelings**: From your child’s earliest days, talking out loud about feelings (your child’s and your own) will begin to help your child to eventually label feelings and realize that they can be shared. As your child gets older, s/he will realize that intense feelings can be named (mad, sad, glad, and afraid) and discussed with another, thus ending a need to act them out.

• **“Mistakes Happen (You Only Need To Be “Good Enough”)”**: Perfection is impossible in parenting. In fact, it isn’t even recommended. A child who knows that everyone in the family makes mistakes, and that they will eventually be worked out, will feel more secure than a child who thinks everything has to be right the first time.

• **Be Bigger, Stronger, Wiser, and Kind**: At the heart of secure attachment is a child’s recognition that s/he has a parent who can be counted on to lovingly provide tenderness, comfort, firm guidance and protection during the inevitable difficulties of life. If the truth betold, all of us have this need some of the time, no matter what our age.

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SELF-CARE REFLECTION

Being a parent or caregiver is hard work so remember to take time to reward yourself. You have to take care of yourself to be able to take care of others.

Use this time to create a self-care plan for yourself for the week.

- How do you take care of yourself?
- What do you do to keep healthy?
- What things make you feel good?
- How do you manage your emotions?
- Who do you ask for support/help?

Things I Need to do to Look After Myself

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What supports do I need to do these things?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
PARENTING REFLECTION

How were things when you grew up?

– What was it like growing up in your home?
– How did your parents respond to you when you needed them (when you cried, when you complained, when you were stubborn, when you were very angry or upset and having a tantrum, when you were risk-taking)?
– How did that make you feel?
– Does that impact how you want to raise your children?
– Is your family part of your support system?
– If so, what sort of parenting advice or messages do they give you?
– Do you agree with this advice?
– How do you decide what to do as a parent?