



What matters in infant and toddler pedagogy?

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Close and caring ongoing relationships support all aspects of infants' and toddlers' development and learning. These early relationships are primarily with other people but also with places and things. Experiences of responsive, attuned caregiving in the first years of life facilitate emotional and cognitive wellbeing, so a curriculum for infants and toddlers must have strong relational connections at its centre. Infants and toddlers need adults who are willing and able to engage with them in attuned interactions and relationships that are characterised by intimacy, sensitive responsiveness and focused presence.

Infants and toddlers need constant and affectionate company provided by an intimate relationship with their caregivers, and experiences of positive relationships in infancy have far-reaching consequences. The sense of safety provided by a warm and secure relationship promotes children's investigation of the world and enables them to gradually establish multiple relationships with others. First relationships with a caregiver provide a model for relationships with subsequent teachers and also set the foundations for adjustment, development and learning across a child's education. Strong, attuned relationships support children's resilience and security. Through relationships, young children learn how to be empathetic to others' feelings, to grow and manage their will, to stand up for their own needs and rights and ask for them to be met, to negotiate, manage and express their feelings, and to develop conflict