



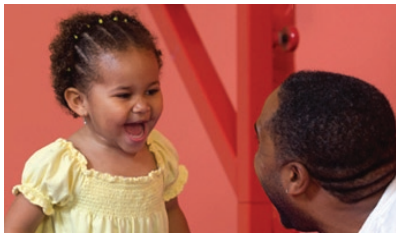
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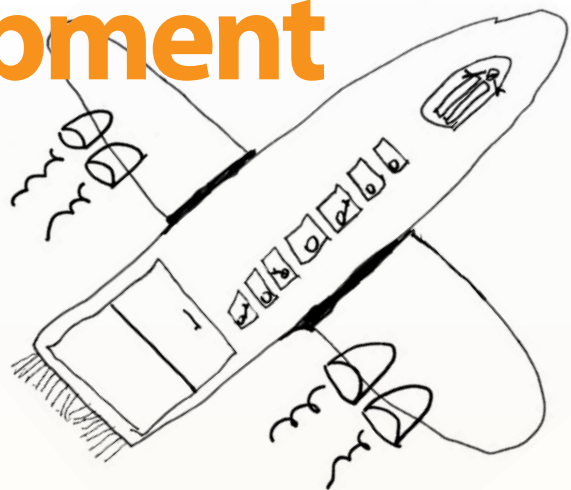
**FAMILY
DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT**

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT • ISSUE 1



Welcome to the very first issue of the Family Development Project Series. This inaugural issue discusses Parenting and Child Development and lays the foundation for a monthly publication which deals with varying issues pertaining to Family Development. We invite you to read, enjoy and share the ideas and knowledge presented by highly trained Early Childhood educators from the University of the West Indies - Family Development Project.

Parenting AND Child Development



Child development theorists acknowledge that the quality of the parent and child relationship in the early years is an important predictor of a child's ability to cope in later life. Therefore, providing nurturing experiences for young children especially in the first three years of life, helps to promote healthy development and enables them to become warm, loving and caring persons.

John Bowlby, well-known for his theory of attachment, describes the loving bond between the infant and mother as being very important for the development of the young child's brain.

He assumes that the child comes into the world with an inborn need for parental love and that both mother and child are programmed for this loving relationship with each other.

According to Bowlby the child forms a secure attachment with the mother and this leads to the child having healthy interactions in the preschool years.

Infants who experience care that is inconsistent, neglectful or abusive, however tend to become anxious and fearful and may fail to thrive. Research shows that these children may have difficulties getting along with their peers in preschool.

World-renowned paediatrician, Berry Brazelton, talks about the need for ongoing nurturing relationships in children's lives. He notes that these experiences help young brains develop healthy connections and store positive memories for later years.

Babies and toddlers who live in secure, loving environments thrive and are willing to explore their world.

Secure relationships with caregivers promote thinking and communication skills. Infants engage in behaviours such as cooing, gurgling and gesturing response to the loving bond.

Now, picture your baby as you walk into the room: his smile broadens as you smile back. He wants you to pick him up. He stretches his arms out, making gurgling sounds of joy and contentment. When you pick him up, he places his little palms on your face and smothers it with wet kisses.

That is love! Your child is showing you affection because you have become so special to him.

Your child will learn to be compassionate and caring as you continue to provide consistent nurturing experiences.

In summary, parents:
If you spend time talking, playing, reading and interacting with your child

1. You will help him/her store memories and build patterns for give and take in future relationships.
2. You will be helping your child grow and learn.

