

Safe Babies Foster Parent Training Program

Module 6: Neurodevelopmental Support for the Substance Exposed Infant

Learning outcomes:

- Review basic development of the brain. Discuss effects of prenatal alcohol use on the developing brain.
- Appreciate the many variables that contribute to brain growth.
- Review typical developmental milestones.
- Describe the importance of early relationships
- Describe strategies to strengthen early attachment.

Learning outcomes (Continued)

- Define sensory integration and identify supportive strategies
- Identify local supports for infant development.
- Identify local supports and describe the role of the infant development consultant

Infant mental health

- Brain experiences its greatest growth and development during the first three years of life
- Infant's relationship with the primary care giver is key to emotional regulation
- Caregiver's ability to accurately interpret baby's cues and respond to cues effect the modulation of stress related neurotransmitters on the infant's limbic system

Infant mental health

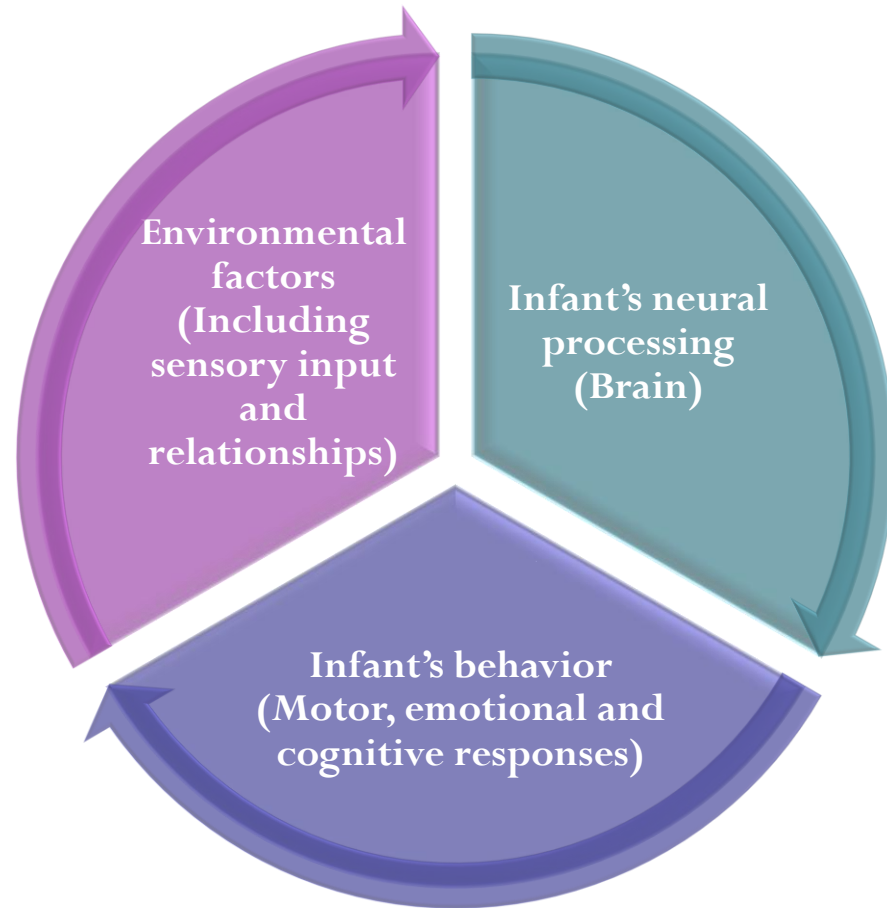
- Healthy social and emotional development
- Within the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children
- **Developmental capacity of a child (Birth to 3) to:**
 - Experience, regulate and express emotions
 - Form close and secure relationships
 - Explore the environment and learn

3 S's of infant mental health:

- Stability
- Security
- Safety



Three integrated components of sensory integration



Essential concepts

- Infant mental health
- Early intervention
- Family-centered services
- Sensory integration
- Self-regulation
- Resiliency
- Attachment
- Sensory integration



Brain quiz: True or false?

- At birth the brain is fully developed, just like one's heart or stomach
- The brain's development depends entirely on the genes you are born with
- A toddler's brain is less active than the brain of a college student
- Talking to a baby is not important because they can't understand what you are saying

Resilience

- Maintaining positive adjustment under challenging life conditions
- Seen as a balance between protective forces (strengths) and vulnerability processes (risks)

Ways a baby can be affected by violence in the home...

- Abuse can harm the mother-child bond
- Families can be isolated from helpful social support
- At greater risk of Shaken Baby Syndrome or neglect

Potential Impact Of Domestic Violence

Key aspects of development in infants	Potential impact of domestic violence
Take in information from the world around them through five senses	Loud noises, vivid visual images associated with violence can be distressing
Form secure attachments	Parents may not consistently respond to infant's needs, negatively affecting the parent-child bond
Become more active explorers of their world through play	Fear and instability may inhibit exploration and play; imitation in play may be related to aggression they saw or heard
Learn about social interaction and relationships from what they hear and observe in their families	Learn about aggression in observed interactions

Resilience and substance exposure

Protective Factors	Vulnerability Processes
Competent caregiving	Prenatal and immediate postnatal environment
Stable, consistent and responsive environment	Disruptive and/or unstable caregiving environments
Trusting and loving relationship with caregiver	Challenging behaviors

Infant attachment:

- The emotional bond formed between the baby and the caregivers who provide their daily care
- Important that babies in their first year of life develop a secure attachment
- Securely attached infants feed well, settle well and grow well!
- Lack of secure attachment can result in social, emotional and learning disabilities



Helping to form secure attachment

- Be emotionally available and accepting of infant
- Freely give comfort when needed
- Be aware of the baby's history and experiences of the world and respond accordingly
- Use eye contact and gentle touch when possible and when baby able to manage
- Limit number of caregivers for baby



Infant cues

- The body language of infancy
- Infants can tell you a lot!
- Most important skill for the parent or caregiver is to be able to interpret cues accurately so that they can meet the needs of the infant



Infant cues

Interaction (Engagement) Cues	Stress (Disengagement Cues)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Grasping•Hand to mouth activity•Suck/suck searching•Hand holding•Clear sleep states•Rhythmic, robust crying•Active self-quieting•Attentional smiling•Cooing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Tremors, startles, twitches•Yawning•Gagging, spitting up•Hiccoughing•Straining, sneezing, coughing, sighing•Facial grimace•Fussing or irritability•Staring or gaze averting•Panic or worried alertness•Glassy-eyed alertness

Supporting change and transition

- May be a change in caregiver, environment, routine or expectations
- Are necessary for developmental progression
- 2 strategies:
 1. Support infant during transition
 2. Control transitions so that they do not exceed the capacity of the infant

How FASD affects sensory integration

- Developmental process
- Takes place in the CNS
- Involves ability to take in information through the senses, organize it in our brains and use it to respond appropriately

Sensory integration

- Begins at conception and continues through childhood (maturing at 8-10 years)
- Continues to be refined through our lifetime
- Brain must properly process information from the senses to develop
 - Concentration and organization
 - Academic learning ability
 - Capacity for abstract reasoning
 - Specialization of each side of the body and brain
 - Self-esteem
 - Self control

Sensory integration is:

- “The neurological process that organizes sensation from one’s own body and from the environment and makes it possible to use the body effectively within the environment” (Ayres, 1979)
- Process in the brain that organizes sensations from the body and from the environment
- Provides an important foundation for later, more complex learning and behavior

Sensory systems:

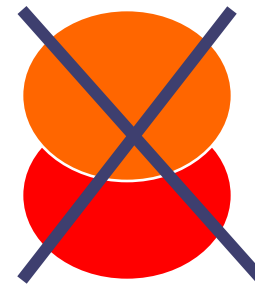
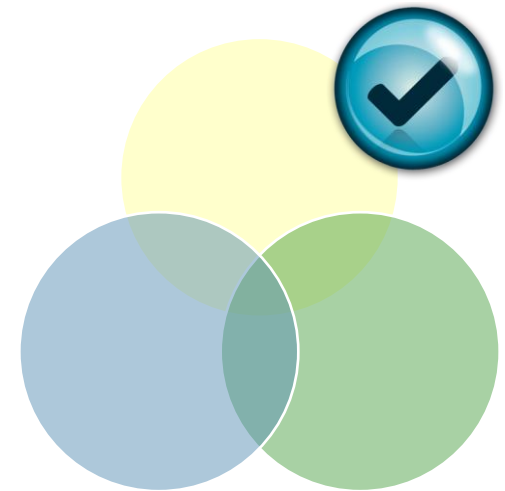
- Tactile (touching)
- Proprioceptive (from movement and position of body in space)
- Vestibular (inner ear – balance, equilibrium)
- Visual
- Auditory
- Gustatory (taste)
- Olfactory (smell)

Sensory disorders

- Can result in self-regulation and behavior problems that include:
 - Difficulty in self control and self calming
 - Arousal and mood regulation problems
 - Attention dysfunctions
 - Maladaptive motor patterns

Environmental strategies - sight

- Keep environment calm and quiet
- Limit number and type of objects hanging from ceiling or walls
- Use calm colors such pastel blue, light green or pale yellow
- Avoid orange or bright red
- Protect baby from too much bright light, noise, talking, music

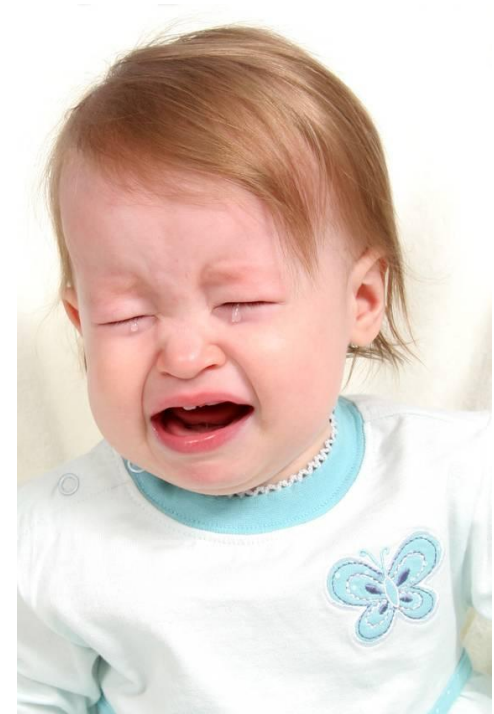


Introducing new stimulation

- Watch for signs that baby is over stimulated
- Protect baby from being overwhelmed
- Introduce to new things when calm and alert
- Slowly increase intensity and duration of activity
- Help baby gradually tolerate stimulus

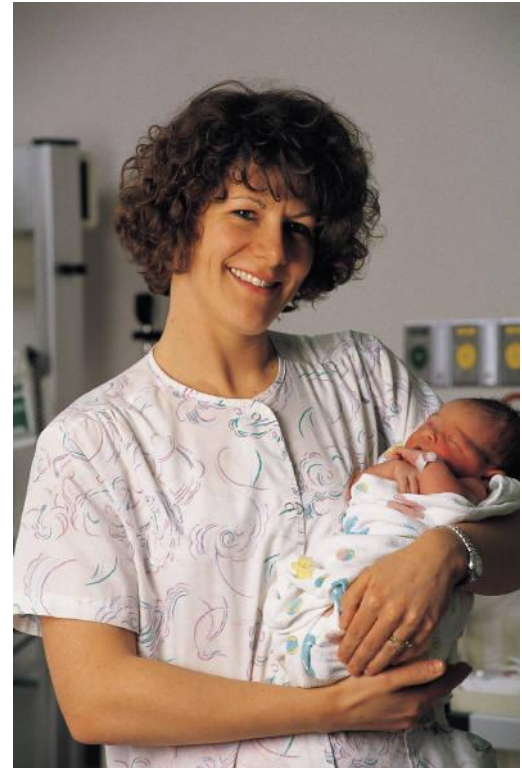
Key points

- Need to balance protecting baby with helping them adjust to the external world
- If baby is stressed, the sooner you intervene the better



Infant development supports

- What is available in our community?
- What is the role of the infant development consultant?



Reflection

Do you have any questions or comments that you would like to share with the group?



*Thank you for
participating.*



*Please remember to complete
your evaluation form.*