

Responsive Teaching Strategies

Responsive teaching strategies are parent responses that support your infant's current development and skills or help him/her learn and use new skills. Responsive teaching strategies are used when infants are in a calm, awake state and the parent has recognized the infant's interests, and has the infant's attention. Review these strategies with your practitioner and choose a daily activity to identify what you are currently using or identify new ideas you wish to try with your infant.

- ☐ Beginning interactions and/or play by doing what your infant is doing.
- ☐ Taking turns making noises or faces or touching a toy with your infant.
- ☐ Moving objects your infant is looking at or reaching for closer to his/her hands.
- ☐ Making new noises or faces when you talk to your infant.
- ☐ Helping your infant try new things with objects.
- ☐ Using your voice to help your infant follow you and/or find you.
- ☐ Waiting for your infant to smile or talk back to you after you smile or talk to him/her.
- ☐ Finding ways to make play activities your infant likes to last longer.
- ☐ Using your infant's interests to help him/her be a part of family activities.
- ☐ Introducing new play objects when your infant is in an alert, calm state.
- ☐ Increasing how often your infant plays and/or interacts with others.
- ☐ Consistently following your infant's eating, sleeping, and care routines.
- ☐ Other _____



Practitioner and Parent Guide to Responsive Strategies for Infants

Identifying Information

Child's Name:

Date of Birth:

Parent/Caregiver:

Practitioner:

During the first four months of your infant's life, you will be learning all about how he/she likes to interact with people and objects, what times of day he/she likes to play, eat, and sleep, and what calms and comforts him/her. Parents also know the daily activities and routines of their infant's life and when are the best times to introduce new people, go new places, and practice new skills.

Successful responsive communications and interactions between you and your infant help him/her participate in daily routines and learning. Successful communication between you and your infant includes four steps:

1. You identify what your infant wants or does not want to do in any given activity.
2. You let your infant know that you understood his/her intentions or needs.
3. You respond to your infant regarding his/her interests or needs in an activity.
4. Your infant lets you know if your response was successful or helpful for him/her.

Using responsive strategies, parents help their child learn successful ways to learn new things, interact and play with others, participate in family activities, and become independent at taking care of him/herself. This guide lists three different kinds of responsive strategies that parents use to invite, engage, and teach children during everyday activities.

Practitioners should use this guide with the *Newborn Interest and Activity Plan* to help parents identify the responsive strategies they currently use and/or want to use to invite, engage, and teach their infant during everyday activities. Practitioners and parents should plan how parents will practice and evaluate what strategies work best during everyday activities for their infant and family.

Emotional Direction

Emotional direction strategies can be used during all interactions between parents and infants. When you take the role as Emotional Director for your infant you recognize his/her cues for different awake and sleep states and recognize what responses can be used to invite and support his/her ability to participate in play, eat, calm down, and sleep. Review these infant emotional responses and communication actions across a daily activity to identify how your infant is communicating his/her states and emotions.

"I Want to Play" calm, alert, and/or focused states

- Facial Movements:
- ☐ Eyes open or widen and/or eyebrows raised looking towards people and objects
- ☐ Maintaining eye contact, mouth opening and closing, smiling and/or grinning
- Physical Movements:
- ☐ Arms waving, hands opening and closing, legs kicking, lifting and/or turning my head towards people or objects
- ☐ Relaxed posture and steady breathing rates
- Vocalizations:
- ☐ Pleasant coos, laughter, and /or grunting not indicating distress
- ☐ Humming or pleasant sighing

What keeps me awake and playful?

- ☐ Talking in a calm or playful voice
- ☐ Gentle touching
- ☐ Helping me to sit up
- ☐ Holding my parent's finger or a toy
- ☐ Sucking on my hand or pacifier
- ☐ Gentle bouncing

"I want to Eat or Rest or Sleep" fussy, agitated, dazed, or tuned out

- Facial Movements:
- ☐ Eyes shut and eyebrows together
- ☐ Frowns, grimaces, and/or mouth closed tightly
- Physical Movements:
- ☐ Agitated or restless movement of hands, legs, and turning head or body away from people or objects
- ☐ Startles, sneezes, or yawns, or rapid breathing
- Vocalizations:
- ☐ Crying or whining
- ☐ Unpleasant cooing, sighing, or grunting indicating distress

What helps me to calm down or sleep?

- ☐ Talking in a calm or quiet voice
- ☐ Swaddling
- ☐ Holding or cuddling on parent's chest
- ☐ Quiet humming
- ☐ Sucking on my hand or pacifier
- ☐ Rocking

Responsive Parenting Strategies

Responsive parenting strategies are all the positive ways parents engage and respond immediately to their infant. These strategies let your infant know that you are close by, paying attention to him/her and /or available to play with him/her. Responsive parenting strategies also include learning about your infant's interests and developing skills and supporting his/her ability to interact with and successfully learn about people and objects. Review these strategies with your practitioner and identify what you are currently using or ideas you wish to try in your daily activities with your infant.

- ☐ Looking right at your infant's face when he/she looks at you.
- ☐ Talking back to your infant when he/she makes noises.
- ☐ Looking at and naming what your infant is looking at.
- ☐ Recognizing, accepting, and naming your infant's emotion.
- ☐ Using a positive baby talk* voice when you talk to him/her.
- ☐ Holding your infant so he/she can watch your face.
- ☐ Smiling and talking at your infant when he/she looks at you.
- ☐ Noticing how your infant tells you he/she likes something or wants to play more.
- ☐ Keeping your infant close when new people are introduced.
- ☐ Knowing how your infant tells you he/she needs to eat, sleep, or to have a diaper change.
- ☐ Comforting your infant when he/she is upset.
- ☐ Other _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

* A baby talk voice uses quiet, sing-song, exaggerated storytelling sounds and has a melody to it but the actual words spoken are typical adult words.