

Name _____

Date _____

Use an X to mark the box that answers each statement best for you	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I know what the child development domains are					
I am familiar with the CDC's, "Learn the Signs. Act Early." tool for tracking child development milestones					
I can communicate clearly about early brain development with others					
I understand that creative play can help children make progress in multiple child development domains					
I can talk about the importance of play for young children with parents					
I know that individual children have their own unique ways of learning					
I know how to find information that can help me plan for individual learning experiences in my FCC home					
I am aware of the content in the California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations publication					
What do you hope to learn from this training?					

Brain Architecture

The brain is one organ, but it does a lot of different things. Here are some of them:

- The brain helps us survive by controlling breathing, telling our organs to work, and giving the signal when we feel our safety is threatened so we can fight, run, or freeze.
- The brain is where emotions come from (even though emotions are felt in the rest of the body).
- Brains are responsible for awareness, thinking, planning, and making decisions.



Like a house wired with electricity, in order for strong connections to be in place, the brain needs good wiring from the foundation to the first floor and then on up to the second story. The way the brain gets wired is by having experiences. When you experience something, brain cells called neurons fire off and connect the different parts of the brain. These connections build pathways that can be used again. The more experiences a child has, the stronger the pathways in the brain will be. When the pathways don't get used, they become weak and the brain stops using them (a process called "neural pruning"). During the first three years of life, children's brains create billions of neural connections. As children grow older, the number of new connections being made slows down. Since brains are being built in the first few years of life it is very important for children to have good experiences early on. It is possible to build new connections later in life, but it can be harder to do.

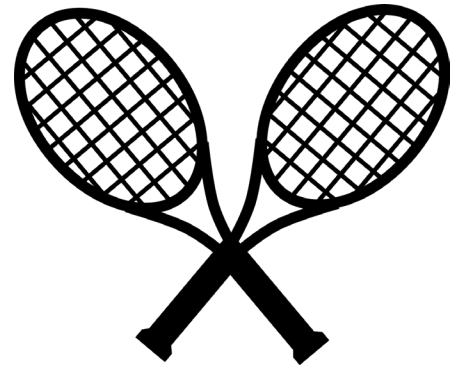


Here is an example of how a caregiver can take part in forming a neural pathway for an infant:

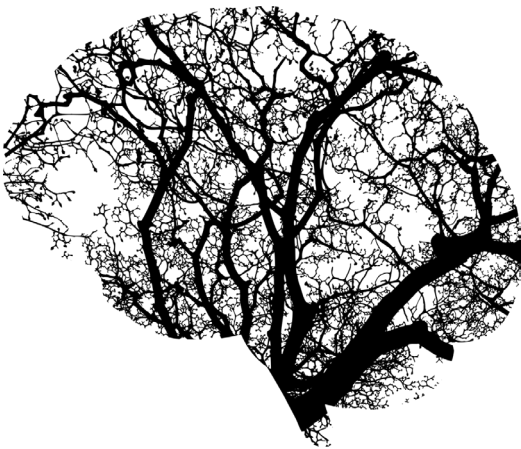
When a baby cries, they are sending a message to get their needs met. This signal comes from the survival part of the brain. When a caregiver responds to the baby's needs by holding, feeding, and talking to them, the baby feels good and this soothes the emotional part of the brain. When the caregiver responds to the baby consistently, the infant learns they are safe, their needs will be met, and they can trust others to care for them. In this scenario, a pathway has been created that connects the survival and emotional parts of the brain to the thinking and learning part of the brain.

Serve and Return

The concept of Serve and Return comes from the sport of tennis in which players hit a ball back and forth to each other across a court. The reason Serve and Return is used to describe brain development is because it is important that adults and children interact by communicating back and forth with each other. Adults can help brain development by reflecting back sounds and facial expressions, offering care and comfort, encouraging movement, laughter, talking, reading and so much more. Every time a child signals a desire to interact, and an adult responds, neurons fire from different parts of the brain. This helps to build pathways that the child will need for all future learning.



Toxic Stress



Experiences help the brain to grow. Just as the brain can be wired with positive connections, it can also be negatively affected by stress. Not all stress is bad. In fact, we need stressful experiences to develop healthy coping mechanisms, the ability to adapt, and become resilient. However, the younger we are, the more we need a reliable adult to provide safety and consistency. We now know that stressful experiences fall along a continuum: at one end there is positive stress and tolerable stress. At the other end is toxic stress. An example of positive stress is starting a new job where there is a learning curve. This kind of experience can be both stressful and positive, because it provides challenges that help us grow. Another kind of stress is called tolerable stress. Tolerable stress occurs when something very difficult happens, like breaking a leg or the death of a loved one, but there

is support from others to help us get through the experience. In addition, with tolerable stress, there is a clear beginning and end. Toxic stress occurs when a person goes through strong or frequent adversity, or the difficulty lasts for a long time, but meaningful support is not provided.

Here's how toxic stress can harm a child's brain: when a child tries repeatedly to get their needs met, but the adults in their life do not respond in a supportive way, the survival part of the brain goes into overdrive. Once the survival part of the brain is on alert, it produces stress hormones that can damage the child's mental and physical health in the long term. In addition to problems with an overactive stress system, children who have been severely neglected have not had the chance to build pathways between different parts of the brain, so they may have trouble with learning, health, relationships, and other issues.

Think of a child in your care, or a child that you know. In the chart below, circle the types of play you have noticed this child engaging in. What could you say to the child’s family to explain how this play supports their development? Jot down your ideas below.

Examples:

“Leo has been playing with Chantalle almost every day! They’ve invented a frog game and pretend to jump into a pond. Their legs are getting so strong, and it seems like Leo made a connection with the book we have been reading about amphibians. It’s amazing how playing helps them grow!”

“Holly has been holding the squishy ball and hitting it on the floor, saying “ba ba ba ba” out loud. I’ve been noticing how coordinated she is when she grabs the ball. And she is really practicing those “b” sounds; I can tell she recognizes that “ba” goes with the word “ball” when I talk with her about it.

Type of Play	Examples	Connection with Development
Creative	Dancing, drawing, painting, playdough, collage, playing with found objects and natural materials	Allows children to think, plan, explore, practice language and communication, strengthen their muscles, express emotions
Games	Peek-a-boo, turn-taking games, play activities where children make up rules	Helps children learn cooperation and self-control, strengthens relationships, explores social boundaries, practice negotiating and conflict resolution
Language	Babbling, repeating sounds, singing, joking, telling stories	Communicate feelings and needs, learn from others, form ideas about how the world works, foundation for literacy
Physical	Repeating enjoyable motions, manipulating small objects, building/stacking/arranging objects, exploring through movement	Strength, balance, coordination, spatial awareness, understanding of ability of agency and self-regulation
Pretend	Using objects to represent other things, pretending to be animals, characters, and machines, exploring social roles, dramatic play with friends	Helps children learn cooperation and self-control, form ideas about how the world works, strengthens relationships, explores social boundaries, practice negotiating

Cognitive

What was your thought process as you were making the gift?

How how did you plan what to do during this activity?

Social and Emotional

What kinds of feelings came up while you made the gift?

How did social interactions impact your experience?





Perceptual Motor

How was your body involved in making the item (hands, eyes, ears, fingers, posture)?

How could the creative process be adapted to accommodate for an injury or difference in the way your body works?

Language and Communication

What role did language and communication play in your experience?

Child's Name:	Age:
 Favorites	 I'm ready for
 Family input	 New Experiences

Questions to guide individualization choices	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the child enjoy doing? (i.e. what makes the child smile and laugh, or hold's the child's interest) • How does the child respond to new experiences? (i.e. does the child engage immediately or observe first and then participate) • What have you observed this child playing with often? • Who does this child play with or near the most? • How do you connect with this child? • Are there art or sensory materials this child enjoys? • Does the child have a favorite book? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills have you observed the child practicing (motor, language, thinking, social, emotional skills)? • Do you have documentation on this child's skills (i.e. writing, painting, drawing, photos of play)? • Do you have any info from assessments (for example, ASQ)? • Based on documentation, observation and assessment, what do you think this child is ready to try?

Social-Emotional Development Foundations Cut-Outs

<p>Interactions with Adults</p> <p>Children learn how to play with, talk to, and get care and attention from adults</p>	<p>Relationships with Adults</p> <p>Children form close bonds with adults who provide warm, reliable care</p>	<p>Interactions with Peers</p> <p>Children learn how to play with, talk to, and get attention from other children</p>
<p>Relationships with Peers</p> <p>Children become interested in other children and making friends</p>	<p>Identity of Self in Relation to Others</p> <p>Children learn about who they are and how to relate to others</p>	<p>Recognition of Ability</p> <p>Children learn about what they can do in their world</p>
<p>Expression of Emotion</p> <p>Children show how they feel through facial expressions, sounds, movement and words</p>	<p>Empathy</p> <p>Children learn about understanding others and how to respond to the feelings of other people</p>	<p>Emotion Regulation</p> <p>Children learn how to manage their feelings with the help of others and by themselves</p>
<p>Impulse Control</p> <p>Children learn how to wait, act safely, and follow social rules</p>	<p>Social Understanding</p> <p>Children learn about the emotions and actions of other people</p>	

Language Development Foundations Cut-Outs

<p>Receptive Language</p> <p>Children learn words, sounds and sign language made by others</p>	<p>Expressive Language</p> <p>Children practice using sounds, words and sign-language</p>	<p>Communication Skills & Knowledge</p> <p>Children learn how to communicate</p>
<p>Interest in Print</p> <p>Children pay attention to pictures, books, art, patterns in cloth, writing, etc.</p>		

Cognitive Development Foundations Cut-outs

<p>Cause-and-Effect</p> <p>Children learn that when something happens it can cause another thing to happen</p>	<p>Spatial Relationships</p> <p>Children learn how things move and fit in different spaces</p>	<p>Problem Solving</p> <p>Children learn how to reach a goal or figure out how something works</p>
<p>Imitation</p> <p>Children copy the actions of others</p>	<p>Memory</p> <p>Children's ability to remember past events and experiences grows</p>	<p>Number Sense</p> <p>Children learn about how many and how much</p>
<p>Classification</p> <p>Children use what they know to group, sort and categorize objects and people</p>	<p>Symbolic Play</p> <p>Children pretend with objects, actions and ideas</p>	<p>Attention Maintenance</p> <p>Children learn how to focus on people, objects, and actions</p>
<p>Understanding of Personal Care Routines</p> <p>Children practice taking care of their bodies</p>		

Perceptual and Motor Development Foundations Cut-outs

Perceptual Development

Children use their senses to understand what is happening and how things work

Gross Motor

Children move the large muscles in their bodies

Fine Motor

Children move the small muscles in their bodies

Age of child in months:

Your Name:

Domain:

Foundation:

Dear _____,

I found out about this foundation and I read up on some examples. What do you think about my ideas to support this foundation?

**Glue Foundation
Cutout Here**

Age of child in months:

Your Name:

Domain:

Foundation:

Dear _____,

I found out about this foundation and I read up on some examples. What do you think about my ideas to support this foundation?

**Glue Foundation
Cutout Here**

Postcard Instructions:

1. Take two squares from the Infant/Toddler Foundations basket.
2. Glue one square on top of each of the designated boxes on the two postcards.
3. For each postcard, think of a child (real or imaginary) between ages 0-36 months.
4. Use the examples from the California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations* to help you come up with two ideas for supporting the foundations on your squares for that child
5. Write about your ideas in the blank spaces on your postcard
6. Deliver the postcards to your pen-pal and discuss

*Examples are found on these pages:

Social-Emotional pp. 14-34

Language pp. 47-54

Cognitive pp. 65-82

Perceptual and Motor pp. 94-99

Guiding questions:

In order to support a child in this foundation:

- What toys or materials would you need, if any?
- What kind of activities could you do?

