

# An Introduction to Infant and Toddler Relationship-Based Care



## The Six Essential Program Practices for Relationship-Based Care

## What Is Relationship-Based Care?

Early relationships lay the foundation for all future learning and are at the core of quality care for infants and toddlers in group care settings.

Relationship-based care is:



A cohesive approach to high-quality care and education for children under age 3.



A framework for promoting strong relationships that support positive early learning and development outcomes for infants and toddlers.



### Primary Caregiving

is the practice in which an infant or toddler is assigned to one specific caregiver who is principally responsible for caring for that child in the care setting.

### Continuity of Care

is the practice in which primary caregivers and children stay together for as long as possible, preferably the first 3 years, creating opportunities for caregiver-child, caregiver-family, and child-child relationships to develop and deepen over time.

### Small Group Care

is the practice in which primary caregivers provide care for infants and toddlers in discrete groups, creating an intimate setting for interactions, care routines, and exploration.

### Individualized Care

is the practice of responding and adapting to each infant's and toddler's interests, needs, abilities, and unique temperament to support their healthy development.

### Culturally Responsive Care

is the practice of caring for children from culturally diverse families in ways that are consistent with their home practices and values.

### Inclusive Care

is the practice of actively including infants and toddlers with disabilities or delays in group care settings with appropriate accommodation and support.

## Why Is Relationship-Based Care Important?



Supports healthy development



Builds trust



Promotes security

## Learn More!

Relationship-Based Care  
<https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/relationship-based-care-worksheet-introduction>

## Source

Lally, J. R., & Mangione, P. L. (n.d.). *About the program for infant/toddler care*. WestEd: California Department of Education. <https://www.pitc.org/about>



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