



# NC SEEDLING

## The Importance of Healthy Relationships



Study to  
Explore  
Early  
Development

North Carolina  
**SEED**

**UNC-CH, Department  
of Epidemiology**

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[www.NCSEED.org](http://www.NCSEED.org)

Relationships built on trust and intimacy help children discover who they are and learn to understand others. Below are some ideas for nurturing relationship-building skills in infants and toddlers:

Allow for some unstructured, uninterrupted time with your child each day. Let her be the leader in deciding what to play. Don't multi-task during this special playtime—just be there with your child one-on-one. She will feel loved and special with your full attention.

Let your child know you're interested in his activities—whatever he is doing. You can show your interest by describing what he is doing:

"You are using so many beautiful colors to make that drawing." Or, get involved by following his lead. If he is putting blocks in a container, see if he'll take turns with you, or try to build something together.

Teach your child acceptable ways to vent anger, like drawing an angry picture or running in the yard. Label your own feelings, "I am happy because you helped me clean up," or, "I am sad that grandma had to fly home." It is important for your child to know that you have feelings too and that you have ways to cope with them so you can feel better.

Play games that explore feelings. Use puppets to act

out a young child's typical frustrations or fears, like having to share toys with a playmate, adjusting to a new baby, or separating from loved ones.

Be present during your child's play dates to help her learn and practice sharing, taking turns, resolving conflict, and feeling the joy of friendship.

(From "Zero to Three": [www.zerotothree.org/child-development/social-emotional-development/tips-on-helping-your-child-build-relationships.html](http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/social-emotional-development/tips-on-helping-your-child-build-relationships.html))



### NOTES

- SEED has enrolled nearly **2900** families
- About **1600** families have finished the study.  
THANKS for your help!!



## Music Influences Development

The musical exchange between babies and parents is a springboard for creativity and imagination. Toddlers enjoy making up nonsense words and new sounds to fit to familiar melodies, and they often make up songs to accompany activities. All of this helps develop young

minds and goes a long way toward nurturing a love of musical sound and language. Making up new songs with babies is a perfect way to encourage creativity. For example, songs to accompany everyday routines—such as "Happy Bathtime to You"—use imagination to make

these activities more fun.

Music is also a great way for both children and parents to express themselves. Children can vent anger, burst with joy, and everything in between. Music can also serve as a great diversion, such as when you sing a silly song as you strap your resistant toddler into his car seat.