



Baby Talk: Resources to Support the People Who Work with Infants and Toddlers

Issue No. 114 November 2020

Early Music Experience

This 25-minute online module from the Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences (I-LABS) explains how music can be used to build relationships and support children's early learning. Each module delivers content through narrated PowerPoint slides with embedded videos. A discussion guide and handout are also available for this module. Get the scoop at <https://modules.ilabs.uw.edu/module/early-music-experience/>

The Architecture of the Brain

Have you ever wondered how experiences influence early brain development? This easy-to-read article, filled with hyperlinks to videos, articles, and resources, helps you understand how the brain develops from infancy through early childhood. The journey begins with a description of Dr. Takao K. Hensch's work on brain plasticity from a molecular and cellular biology perspective. Shifting to education, you'll learn how to play the Brain Architecture Game and discover how experiences influence brain development in the first eight years of life. Finally, you'll be exposed to clinical research on parent-infant relationships from luminaries such as Dr. Berry Brazelton, Dr. Kevin Nugent, and Dr. Ed Tronick. You'll learn about frameworks and approaches that can help us identify babies' and parents' strengths and needs, teach parents and children to connect with each other, and teach parents how to advocate for their children and themselves. Thanks, Sarah Roehrich, for this treasure. It's at <http://www.wisebrain.org/tools/wise-brain-bulletin/volume-14-4>

The Still-Face Experiment Shows the Damage Done When Caregivers Don't Respond

In the still face experiment, a parent and baby play together, mom smiling and cooing, baby pointing and smiling. Then, prompted by the researcher, the mother turns her face away and when she turns back her face is completely expressionless. The baby tries to get her mom to smile again, but she keeps up the flat affect, remaining neutral and unresponsive. Quickly, the child dissolves, desperately trying to make a connection. On a second prompt, the mother looks away, then turns back and when she looks at the baby again she's her normal self, soothing the baby who quickly recovers. The baby seems fine; the viewer is left shaken. See for yourself:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6czxW4R9w2g> A fathers version is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLNiXnJccUQ>

This recent article shares findings of similar results that occur when caregivers shift attention from a baby to a phone. Read more at <https://www.fatherly.com/health-science/still-face-experiment-flat-affect-baby/>

The Many Faces of the Modern Family

Families today are more diverse than ever. And same-sex parents are seven times more likely to adopt children than heterosexual parents. But does having gay parents affect kids? Developmental psychologists at the University of Kentucky followed nearly 100 adoptive families with children from early to middle childhood. They found no differences in family functioning between same-sex parents and heterosexual parents of adopted children. There was also no difference in how family make-up influenced adopted children's behavior or how the kids thought about adoption. Another recent study found that children raised by same-sex couples had higher test scores in school and were about 7% more likely to graduate from high school than children raised by different-sex couples. Read more or watch a video at

<https://positiveparentingnews.org/news-reports/the-many-faces-of-the-modern-family/>

GUMDROP: Get a Grip!

In these challenging times of COVID-19, it's more important than ever for adults to model effective ways to handle stress. Check out the model and the message in this video: https://youtu.be/x61qNZ_k4Eo

Baby Talk is a free, one-way listserv that is distributed monthly. Each issue features high quality, readily available, and free resources. To join the listserv, send an email with no message or signature block to subscribe-babytalk@listserv.unc.edu

Resources in Spanish are highlighted. All or part of Baby Talk may be freely shared or copied. For more information, please contact Camille Catlett at camille.catlett@unc.edu