



Why Infant Mental Health Experts Say Sensitive Care & Play Trump Early Academics

April 27, 2016
Early Childhood Investigations Webinar
with
Ruth Anne Hammond



Poll #1 Why are you here today?



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What is Mental Health?



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Poll #2 What is *Infant* Mental Health?



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Infant Mental Health is...



Alicia Lieberman, PhD

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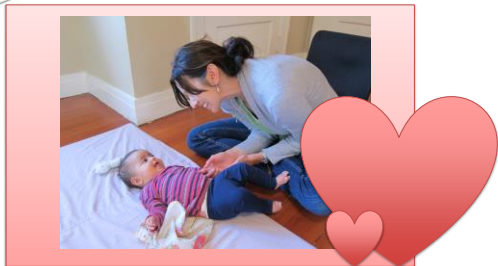
“Babies come into the world looking for us.”

-- Jeree Pawl

Clinical Professor Emerita, UCSF School of Psychiatry
Past President, Zero to Three
(IMH Goddess!)



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Babies' Love
is like
Romantic Love



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Poll # 3 What is Attachment?



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Lateralized Right Hemisphere Development

“...developmental neuroscience indicates that attachment transactions shape the connectivity of specifically the early developing right brain, which is dominant for control of vital functions supporting *survival* and for the processing of emotions.” – Schore (1994, 2005, 2013)

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The Brain is an Experience-Dependent Organ

The infant brain increases from 400g to 1200g in the first year – it triples in size – because of learning.

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Embodied Awareness

Relationships are built through body-to-body to communications which are

- rapidly exchanged
- outside of conscious awareness
- processed by and encoded in the right brain

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Bowlby's Attachment Theory

John Bowlby was the first to see the consistency of the child's relationship with a primary caregiver as essential to later mental health.

His student, Mary Ainsworth, expanded this insight to describe specific patterns of relationship and their effect on the child's attachment security.

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Patterns of Attachment per Mary Ainsworth

- Secure
- Insecure/Ambivalent (or Anxious)
- Insecure/Avoidant
- Disorganized



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Babies Need Love
All Day Long



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Poll # 4 What is IPNB?



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What is Self-Regulation?

It is a system of biological survival mechanisms that support homeostasis and sociostasis.

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States of Arousal in Infants

- Quiet sleep
- Active sleep
- Drowsy
- Quiet alert
- Active alert
- Flooded

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Schore's Regulation Theory:



"The experience of being with a regulating (or dysregulating) other is incorporated into an enduring interactive representation." – Allan Schore (1994)

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Regulatory Boundaries

When arousal levels are too high or too low, outside the boundary within which the individual is able to successfully stay integrated, a caring partner is needed to help the individual return to a healthy sense of self...and self worth. This is the role of the caregiver.

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Dissociation

If a child is either under-aroused due to lack of attention, affection and care (neglect), or in a chronic, unrelieved state of anxiety and fear, the child may simply "check out" and go into pathological hypo- (low) arousal. If this dissociation happens, development of the brain is stalled.

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Down Regulation and Up Regulation

"...experiences with a self-regulating other are essential for encountering the normally expected range of self-experiences, and without the other's presence and responsive behavior, the full range simply does not develop." - Daniel Stern (1986, pp. 198-199)

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Auto-Regulation

Self-soothing and self-initiated interest or excitement can be seen as activities of auto-regulation.

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Interactive (or Co-) Regulation

Turning to others for help in recovering from stress or feelings of low vitality leads to interactive regulation.

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Co-regulation (with the input of another)



Auto-regulation (independent)



Healthy Self-Regulation

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**Reciprocity is the Goal
of
Mutual Regulation**

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Trauma Interferes with Development

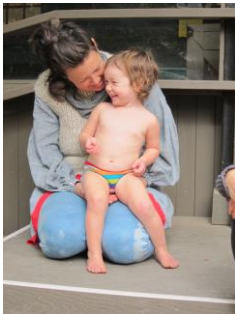
When young children are victims of serious trauma (or regular, ongoing smaller traumas), and their stress is un-regulated, they cannot build optimally healthy brains, relationships and ways of being.

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**“There is no such thing as a baby.
There is a baby and someone.”**

-- D.W. Winnicott

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**Educaring®
is
Preventative
&
Promotes
Security**

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**How does PLAY fit into the
Infant Mental Health
picture?**



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PLAY is a Primary Process



“The most wonderful tool provided to achieve full socialization of the brain is the psycho-physical PLAY system of the mammalian brain.”

-- Jaak Panksepp (2008)

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**Play is babies' work.
(Thanks, Dr. Montessori!)**



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**Poll # 5
What is RIE?**



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Educaring® Includes:



- RESPECT FOR & TRUST IN THE INFANT
- FOCUSED ATTENTION DURING CARE
- FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT & PLAY
- SENSITIVE OBSERVATION
- EMOTIONAL AUTHENTICITY
- SELECTIVE INTERVENTION
- SAFE, PREPARED ENVIRONMENT

Loving relationships and uninterrupted play, as promoted by the Educaring® Approach, allow babies and young children to follow their bliss, and bliss builds the best brains!



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References

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Recommended Reading

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