



Facilitator's Guide

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Accompanying video for *Supporting Older Infants' Learning* is available to stream at http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators_pd/.

“Supporting Older Infants' Learning” (07:39)

Segment 1: “Expand Language—All the Time” (0:52–3:34)

Segment 2: “Use Language to Support Exploration and Problem Solving” (3:35–4:49)

Segment 3: “Help Children Connect with Each Other and Make Friends” (4:50–7:39)

Introduction

This professional development module is designed to help you lead educators in using best practices to support older infants' learning. It is one of several modules developed for early childhood educators by the Department of Early Education and Care of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. For more information about this professional development module, visit http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators_pd/.

About this Guide

This Facilitator's Guide provides instructions and narrative for delivering a video-based training for early childhood educators. You'll find an agenda, learning goals, preparation suggestions, talking points, activities, and handouts. You'll also find general tips and resources to help you facilitate the training. Use these materials with the accompanying video to lead family child care and center-based educators in an engaging, content-rich training.

Note: To view the video referenced in this guide, go to http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators_pd/. Select *Supporting Older Infants' Learning*. Be sure you are able to stream the video prior to and while leading this training.

Key Ideas

- Older infants are more likely to move freely and explore when they have a familiar, trusted adult as a secure base. When not in physical contact, an adult's presence and reassuring voice give an older baby the confidence to travel further away as she practices crawling, scooting, pulling to a stand, and cruising and as she discovers interesting things and places.
- An adult's words and actions help an older baby learn about her world and other people. These interactions also support the baby's development of purposeful nonverbal communication (such as gestures, pointing, and signs) and, eventually, speech (and/or a signed language).
- Older infants are learning more about language than many people realize. Their babbling begins to sound more and more like sentences, questions, and stories in the languages they hear. They are beginning to understand the meanings of words and showing their understanding through actions. Responding to babies' actions, gestures, and babbles with words and/or signs and getting them to respond to your words, signs, and other communications is key at this stage. The more we talk *with* babies, the better!
- We build the relationships that are vital to older babies as we respond to their increasingly intentional communications. These positive relationships give them

confidence to explore their world and the people in it, to test out cause/effect relationships, and to experiment with how objects can move, fit, and work together.

- Older babies are developing social awareness. They look to trusted adults to keep them safe as they explore new places and people. Older babies sense educators' positive relationships with their family members, with each other, and with the other children in the group. When a trusted adult shows that she feels good about another person, the baby is likely to see that person as a friend to get to know rather than as a stranger to be wary of.

Learning Goals

After participating in this training, educators will be able to:

- Talk with babies who are not yet using (many) words in ways that expand their language.
- Use language to encourage, support, and expand older babies' explorations, grow their language and communication skills, and celebrate their discoveries.
- Help older babies interact with each other in positive ways.
- Reflect upon how their current practices support babies' learning and identify ways to be more effective.
- Plan how they might partner with families to support their children's learning.

Agenda

Introduction	10–15 minutes
Supporting Older Infants' Learning	15 minutes
Expand Language—All the Time	15–20 minutes
Use Language to Support Exploration and Problem Solving	15–20 minutes
BREAK (optional)	0–5 minutes
Help Children Connect with Each Other and Make Friends	15–20 minutes
Try It	15 minutes
Wrap Up	5–10 minutes
Total Time	90–120 minutes

Preparation

Before leading this training, you should:

- Watch the video and get to know the featured best practices.
- Read through the training module. Think about your own questions and how you might respond to your participants' questions. Become familiar with the key ideas (page 2) so that you can share them in a natural, conversational way and address any questions that might arise. Use the Resources for Further Learning handout to support and extend your expertise.
- Obtain and test the technology you need to share the video with participants and make sure you have a reliable Internet connection during the training.
- Gather any props or materials needed for the Try It activity.
- Rehearse and fine-tune your presentation to “make it your own.” Time yourself to make sure you are within the allotted time.
- Create a packet with copies of the following handouts for each participant:
 - Self-Assessment
 - Learning Log
 - Try It
 - Best Practices
 - Learning Guidelines and Standards
 - Resources for Further Learning
 - Training Evaluation
- Consider working with a partner the first time you lead this training. You can learn from and support each other when preparing, practicing, and facilitating. After the training, you can reflect on participants' evaluations together.

Facilitation Tips

Whether you're a new or experienced facilitator, these tips can help your training run smoothly.

- Arrive early to prepare the training room for optimal learning.
 - Place handout packets where participants check in.
 - Have pens or pencils, paper, and sticky notes or index cards on every table.
 - Check your technology setup to make sure the video plays without problems.

- Create an area in the room (a “parking lot”) where participants can submit questions (on sticky notes or index cards) that may be beyond the scope of the current discussion.
- Create a space that is inviting and comfortable.
 - Play soft music as people arrive.
 - Greet participants with a smile and a handshake. A personal introduction helps set the stage for collaboration and learning.
- Invite partner or small group discussion.
 - Before the training begins, invite educators to identify a partner. Explain that people learn best when they have a chance to talk about what they are learning or thinking.
 - Allow a few minutes for partners to introduce themselves to each other.
 - During the training, provide opportunities for partner interaction.
- Keep participants engaged.
 - Follow the “ten-two rule” as you present the training: Speak for no longer than ten minutes at a time and then provide participants at least two minutes of interaction or activity.
 - Avoid simply reading the talking points that have been provided. Become familiar with each point so that you can keep the training engaging, fluid, and conversational.

Training

Introduction

(10–15 minutes)

Welcome Participants to the Training

- Introduce yourself and share your background and experience. You may want to mention why you enjoy working with infants and/or educators of infants.
- Announce the length of the training (1½–2 hours) and note other logistics, such as break times, restroom location, and so on.
- Review the agenda and explain the structure of the training.
 - Participants will watch a video that explores how experienced educators support older infants' learning.
 - Participants will then watch segments of the video again, each segment focusing on a different key idea.
 - After each segment, participants will briefly discuss the main points and reflect on what they have learned. You will share your expertise as you build on participants' insights and address their questions.
 - Participants will also have the opportunity to share and reflect on their own practices. They will try out some strategies and identify practices they would like to do more often or with more intention.
- Share the learning goals and objectives. Participants will:
 - Learn how to talk with babies who are not yet using (many) words in ways that expand their language.
 - Practice using language to encourage, support, and expand older babies' explorations, grow their language and communication skills, and celebrate their discoveries.
 - Explore ways to help older babies interact with each other in positive ways.
 - Reflect upon how their current practices support babies' learning and identify ways to be more effective.
 - Plan how they might partner with families to support their children's learning.

- Introduce the Learning Log.
 - The Learning Log includes questions to help participants identify best practices and distill the important points made in each video segment. The *viewing questions* help focus participants' observations on key themes and strategies. The *reflection questions* help participants draw connections to their own experiences.
 - The Learning Log can also be used to jot down notes, questions, and ideas.
- Explain the “parking lot”—if, during the training, participants have questions that are not addressed or are beyond the scope of the current discussion, they can quietly display them in the “parking lot.” Assure participants that you will address their questions either one-on-one or in the group. In the case that you don't know an answer, try to suggest a helpful resource.
- Do an icebreaker activity to introduce participants to this module's themes and to get them ready to learn and interact. Play a simplified version of Charades to help participants practice communicating intentionally when they can't use words.

Charades

Older infants communicate intentionally—using body language, gestures, and babbles. They may also use signs if families or educators sign with them. Many babies are also beginning to say words, often in more than one language.

Charades is a traditional game that many participants may be familiar with. For this activity, keep the rules simple. The point is to experience the challenges of communicating with gestures and signs and of interpreting nonverbal communication.

1. Group the participants into teams of 3–6 members. Send each team to a different area of the room. Ask each team to choose a member to be their “actor.”
2. Give each actor a piece of paper and ask her to write the name of a well-known board book (such as *Pat the Bunny*; *Goodnight, Moon*; *Global Babies*; *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*; *Baby Dance*; *Where's Spot?*; *From Head to Toe*; *Goodnight, Goodnight Construction Site*; *Good Night, Gorilla*; and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*) and then pass it to an actor from another group. Note: If you are concerned that participants may not be familiar with books for older babies, borrow some from your local library or an early education and care program and display them for participants to look at as they come in.
3. Explain that in this version of the game, the actors can act out a key word, the title as a whole, or one or more story scenes.

4. When you say “Go,” the actor on each team will act out the book to help her teammates guess the book title on the card she received. She can use any part of her body to give cues, but cannot speak or write.
 5. Stop the game after 5 minutes or after each team has guessed their book, whichever comes first. Briefly discuss:
 - How difficult was it to communicate without words and to understand the nonverbal communications? What was easy and what was challenging?
 - Did this activity help participants empathize with babies who are just learning to talk, but can understand a lot more than they can say? What parallels did participants see?
- After the icebreaker activity, ask each participant to identify a partner to work with during the training and encourage them to share ideas. (You can offer small group discussions if you prefer.)

Complete the Self-Assessment

Educators grow and hone their skills by continually identifying their own strengths and training needs and reflecting on their own practices.

- Invite participants to complete the first half of the Self-Assessment to help them discover the skills they already possess and to identify those they would like to work on.
- Explain that toward the end of the training, participants will complete the second half of the Self-Assessment to measure their growth and learning.

Supporting Older Infants' Learning (15 minutes)

Introduce the Topic

Older infants are on the move—and curious. They want to know what everything is, where it fits, and how it works. They are also exploring how they fit—into different kinds of spaces and also how they fit into their social world. As with younger infants, they depend upon the reassurance of loved and trusted adults for the security that allows them to reach out and learn. Now, however, these adults provide a secure base from which older infants can set out and explore on their own.

Most older infants understand some language and are rapidly learning more. They communicate with increasingly expressive sounds and actions and may also use gestures, signs, and even a few words. As children make new discoveries and connections, language becomes an even greater support for learning. As with younger infants, back-and-forth

“conversation” helps build relationships and language, but older infants are now trying to understand and communicate intentional messages.

Introduce and View the Video

Introduce the video featuring Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Associate Professor of Education at Wheelock College, and family child care and center-based educators.



“Supporting Older Infants’ Learning” (07:39)

In the video, Professor Villegas-Reimers explains how older infants seek out learning opportunities and social interactions. Participants will follow family child care educator Maria and center-based educators Eileen and Demetria as they engage older infants in conversation and play. The educators offer a range of opportunities for children to explore, make connections, and learn how to communicate with others.

Explain that participants will view the video as a whole, discuss it briefly, and then look at specific strategies in more depth. Ask participants to pay close attention to how adults and babies connect and communicate with each other and how they maintain their connections.

Group Discussion

Ask a few volunteers to share something they noticed or wondered about as they watched the video. Encourage others to respond. Link participants’ contributions to the key ideas and learning goals (pages 2–3) as you note what you will be exploring in more depth during the training. Put questions in the “parking lot” so you can be sure to address them.

Expand Language—All the Time (15–20 minutes)

Introduce the Best Practice

The more language older babies hear, the more their language will develop. But *overhearing* doesn’t count—babies don’t learn language by listening to adults talk or by watching TV or videos. When an educator engages a baby in back-and-forth conversation and connects the conversation to an activity or discovery, he helps the baby’s language develop faster and more fully. Play times, feeding and changing times, and passing encounters provide opportunities to expand babies’ *receptive* (understood) language and their *expressive* (spoken or signed) communications.

- **Converse back and forth while playing together.** Responsive communication is key for older babies, who are associating words (and signs) with meanings. Give the baby a chance to respond to words—with words, sounds, actions, or imitation.

- **Keep the exchange going.** Respond to the baby in ways that acknowledge the baby's intent—by copying or extending her sounds, putting words to what she might be saying, answering her implied question, or sharing something new.
- **Pay joint attention.** During the older infancy period, babies develop the ability to follow a caregiver's gaze or direct his attention by pointing to, making sounds, or showing what they want. An educator and baby's *joint attention*, or shared focus on an object, helps the baby learn new words because she knows what the word refers to.
- **Pair words with gestures or signs to make meaning clear.** Research has found that talking with your hands speeds and supports language development. Older infants and young toddlers develop stronger language when their families and caregivers pair their words with gestures and signs.

Introduce and View the Video

Invite participants to watch again how Maria, Eileen, and a colleague expand older babies' receptive and expressive language as they converse back and forth during play and feeding times.

Tell participants they will watch a segment of the video in which educators and babies often use signs to communicate. Professor Villegas-Reimer points out the value of the increasingly common (and evidence-based) practice of teaching baby sign language. Many babies can learn signs before they say words. Using signs allows babies to communicate and be understood without using words. This can reduce babies' frustration and speed their verbal language development. To achieve the benefits of using baby sign language, educators should use words along with signs and make sure that families and other caregivers understand and reinforce the same signs and gestures.

Begin at 0:52 as baby Rafaela shakes the rattle drums and end at 3:34 as Eileen shows older infants a book. Ask participants to look for effective strategies used by the educators in the video. Use these questions to guide their viewing:

- *As you watch, what do you notice about how the babies communicate and how the educators expand the babies' language as they respond to those communications?*
- *What do you notice about how the educators use gestures, signs, and other nonverbal cues to focus babies' attention and help babies understand the meaning of their words?*
- *What do you notice about how the educators keep their conversations with babies going through multiple back-and-forth exchanges?*

Partner/Small Group Share

After viewing the video, get participants thinking, talking, and learning together.

- Invite participants to share with each other, in pairs or small groups, what they noticed as they watched. Challenge them to use the language stem *I noticed...* or *I wonder if...* rather than *I liked....*
- Suggest that participants jot down notes, ideas, or questions in their Learning Log.

Group Discussion

Share and expand on key points covered in the video. Use some of the following questions and talking points in your discussion. Ask participants to offer examples from the video as well as to draw upon their own experiences.

How do educators and babies show each other that they are connected?

- Here are some of the ways educators and babies convey their connection to each other:
 - Educators smile, pay close attention, reflect the child's emotions in their words and tone of voice, refer to past shared experience (for example, in the video a child chooses a story for Eileen to tell and she responds, "I knew you were going to pick that one"), and continue the conversation.
 - Babies pay close attention; show things to educators; imitate words and actions; respond when they think a pause is coming; and use words, babbles, signs, and actions to answer questions or continue the conversation.
 - Educators and babies show each other that they are connected by continuing their responsive communication through multiple back-and-forth exchanges.

What benefits do older infants gain from lots of back-and-forth conversation, even when they are not yet using real words?

- Through back-and-forth conversation, older infants:
 - Strengthen their ongoing relationship with adults who are important in their lives.
 - Learn to take turns in a conversation.
 - Learn to communicate in intentional ways and make themselves understood.
 - Begin to see themselves as important, competent people with "things to say" that others want to hear.
 - Learn words, phrases, and concepts.
 - Learn the meaning of words that they can't yet say, but will be able to use once they begin to speak.
 - May learn more than one language if given the opportunity.

What benefits do older infants gain from books and stories?

- Books and stories benefit older infants because they allow older infants to:
 - Look at clear, colorful pictures—something they very much enjoy (especially of other babies).
 - Focus on pictures and associate them with words or sound effects.
 - Learn to handle books and possibly try to turn pages.
 - Learn to associate reading with cuddling and pleasure.
 - Hear full sentences and storybook language such as “Along came the three little pigs” and “In the great green room.”
 - Learn the meaning of words that they are not likely to hear in everyday conversations.
 - Learn to follow a simple story sequence and may begin to learn how to tell a story.
 - Learn to understand that stories have beginnings, middles, and ends.
 - Begin to associate verbal and nonverbal (facial expressions, signs) communications.

What are some effective techniques for supporting and expanding older infants' language as you help them follow a story?

- During story time, an educator can:
 - Let a child choose a favorite book or story for the educator to read or tell.
 - Ask a child to help her tell a familiar story.
 - Use an enticing, expressive voice and exaggerated facial expressions.
 - Ask a question about a picture, story character, or upcoming event, and pause to give a child time to answer.
 - Use signs, gestures, and sound effects to make word meanings clear and to enhance the story.
 - Engage children in imitating or filling in signs, gestures, sound effects, and any words they may know. Pause to let a child fill in an action, word, or sound effect.
 - Act out parts of the story, putting words to actions.
 - Watch children's faces to be sure she has their attention, and vary her pace and expression accordingly.

- Treat older babies as worthy conversation partners. Respond to their signs of interest, spoken and unspoken questions, and participation in the storytelling or reading.

Option: You may want to ask participants if they use baby sign language in their program and if they share the signs with families. If several do, ask them to share their experience with the group.

View Again (optional)

Emphasize the key messages by showing the video a second time, if possible. Seeing the video again will give participants an opportunity to notice things they may have missed and to expand their learning.

Reflect

Help participants make the connection between what they've learned about expanding older infants' language and what they do in their own program. Ask educators to answer the reflection questions in the Learning Log.

Use Language to Support Exploration (15–20 minutes) and Problem Solving

Introduce the Best Practice

Older infants need to move freely and explore with a familiar, trusted adult as a secure base. The adult's presence (and reassuring voice when they are separated) gives an older baby confidence to travel further away as she practices crawling, scooting, pulling to a stand, or cruising and as she discovers interesting things and places. The adult's words and actions help the baby learn about her world and other people. At the same time, their interactions support the baby's development of intentional nonverbal communication and, eventually, speech (and/or a signed language).

Through their own activity and play, older babies discover the fundamentals of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). As they drop items in a bucket, travel across different surfaces, make their way around obstacles, or use a spoon to bang a drum, they learn how things move and fit into each other, how to solve problems by trying out different strategies, and how they can make interesting things happen, again and again.

- **Talk with babies as they explore spaces and materials that interest them.** As you talk about what the baby is doing, you'll help her learn words for objects and actions. As you converse back and forth, you'll build your relationship along with the child's language.

- **Use language to encourage children's problem-solving efforts and celebrate their successes.** Encouraging words support children's self-confidence, persistence, and language development.

Introduce and View the Video

Tell participants they'll watch a video segment in which they'll see adults supporting older babies' explorations, watching closely, offering help if needed, and commenting on children's discoveries and accomplishments. They'll hear Professor Villegas-Reimers point out that children "don't necessarily need help exploring." A tuned-in educator can use language to support and extend the child's experience in a way that validates and builds upon the child's interest and agenda.

Begin at 3:35 as Eileen shows children a book and end at 4:51 when Professor Villegas-Reimers appears. Ask participants to look for effective strategies used by the educators in the video. Use these questions to guide their viewing:

- *As you watch, what do you notice about what intrigues the children and holds their interest? What might they be learning?*
- *What do you notice about how an educator uses language to encourage children's problem-solving efforts and help them notice new possibilities? What interesting vocabulary words do the children hear?*
- *What do you notice about how an educator uses language to celebrate children's successes and discoveries with them?*

Partner/Small Group Share

After viewing the video, get participants thinking, talking, and learning together.

- Invite participants to share with each other, in pairs or small groups, what they noticed as they watched. Challenge them to use the language stem *I noticed...* or *I wonder if...* rather than *I liked....*
- Suggest that participants jot down notes, ideas, or questions in their Learning Log.

Group Discussion

Share and expand on key points covered in the video. Use some of the following questions and talking points in your discussion. Ask participants to offer examples from the video as well as to draw upon their own experiences.

What might older infants be learning as they explore objects, tools, containers, and interesting sensory materials?

- Older infants can learn many things by exploring, including:

- How to use a tool to accomplish a goal, such as getting something that is out of reach or making an object move in an interesting way.
- How things (including their own bodies) can move and fit in space.
- Gross and precise movements involved in lifting, turning, picking up, placing, drumming, etc.
- How to make things go faster or farther.
- How to persist at solving problems by trying different strategies.
- Concepts of size, shape, inside/outside, and cause/effect.
- Words for specific objects, materials, actions, categories (for example, flower, tool, container), attributes (for example, shape, size, texture), directions, and relationships (for example, inside, up, on top of).

How can adults use actions and words to facilitate children's explorations?

- Adults can:
 - Create safe spaces for exploration.
 - Offer interesting combinations of materials, including containers, tools, objects, and materials that behave in interesting ways. (Be sure materials do not pose any choking hazards, as older infants will likely put things in their mouths to learn more about them.)
 - Put out a few materials at a time so that children can focus.
 - Allow children to take the lead.
 - Talk about what they notice children doing.
 - Offer help when children seem stuck.
 - Put words to what children may be thinking as they figure things out (for example, "Do you think that will fit better, Alvina?")
 - Describe their own actions or thinking as they demonstrate new possibilities.
 - Offer verbal encouragement and occasional physical support for children's problem-solving efforts but let them work to master a challenge.
 - Comment on children's successful strategies.
 - Reflect children's pride and excitement by using specific words (for example, "You got the rings on the spindle!" rather than just "Good job!") to celebrate their successes.

View Again (optional)

Emphasize the key messages by showing the video a second time, if possible. Seeing the video again will give participants an opportunity to notice things they may have missed and to expand their learning.

Reflect

Help participants make the connection between what they've learned about using language to support exploration and problem solving and what they do in their own program. Ask educators to answer the reflection questions in the Learning Log.

Break (optional)**(0–5 minutes)****Help Children Connect with Each Other and Make Friends****(15–20 minutes)****Introduce the Best Practice**

Older infants develop an awareness of others. They are drawn to other children and want to play near them, see what they are doing, and sometimes imitate their actions. They want to join in simple group routines. When educators encourage *parallel play* (playing near another child and noticing each other, but without interacting) and imitation, they allow older babies to develop their social emotions, social skills, and sometimes preferences for certain children—their first friends!

Older babies can show remarkable sensitivity. When an older baby hears another baby cry, she may cry in sympathy or try to help. At the same time, older babies can be quite unaware of others' feelings. An older baby doesn't hurt others on purpose, but her exuberance, curiosity, or frustration can sometimes cause problems.

- **Arrange (and rearrange) the environment** so that children can practice emerging motor skills and explore interesting spaces and materials without interfering with each other.
- **Stay alert to prevent hurt feelings and accidental injuries.** Educators can't prevent every bump or toy snatch, but they can help an older baby notice that he hurt another child.
- **Teach empathy and kind behaviors.** Recognize and label children's emotions, model how to help or console another child, and teach "gentle touch."

Introduce and View the Video

Tell participants they will watch a video segment in which Maria and her colleague help ten-month-old Rafaela participate in older children's routines and imitate their actions. They'll also see how an opportunity for parallel play in Demetria's infant classroom goes awry, and how Demetria acts quickly to comfort a younger infant who got knocked over and to help an older infant learn to empathize and be gentle.

Begin at 4:50 as Professor Villegas-Reimer begins to speak and watch until the end. Ask participants to look for effective strategies used by the educators in the video. Use these questions to guide their viewing:

- *What do you notice about how Maria and her colleague help Rafaela to participate in the older children's circle time?*
- *What do you notice about how Demetria helps Evan learn to empathize and be gentle?*

Partner/Small Group Share

After viewing the video, get participants thinking, talking, and learning together.

- Invite participants to share with each other, in pairs or small groups, what they noticed as they watched. Challenge them to use the language stem *I noticed...* or *I wonder if...* rather than *I liked....*
- Suggest that participants jot down notes, ideas, or questions in their Learning Log.

Group Discussion

Share and expand on key points covered in the video (and, if appropriate, the Try It activity). Use some of the following questions and talking points in your discussion. Ask participants to offer examples from the video as well as to draw upon their own experiences. (**Option:** If time is short, you may want to postpone the Group Discussion until after the Try It activity and incorporate it into the Wrap Up.)

Does anyone have an example of an older infant friendship or an older infant's kind behavior that they would like to share?

How can educators facilitate social awareness and beginning friendships for older infants?

- Educators can:
 - Give babies well-supervised opportunities to play near other children.
 - Offer just a few objects for children to play with.
 - Offer duplicate or similar toys so that children can imitate each other.

- Notice which children like to play near each other, and encourage their friendship with your words, reassuring presence, and nonverbal communication.
- Offer two older infants a large toy that they can use together, such as a ball to roll back and forth, a large surface to bang on, or a large block to push. Show them how to play together.
- Include an older infant in group songs and rituals for brief periods. Feature his name in songs sung frequently. Help him participate by imitating other children's actions, such as bouncing and clapping.

It is common for older infants to knock others over, snatch toys, pull hair, and sometimes bite. How can educators help older infants to learn to empathize and be gentle?

- Educators can:
 - Be mindful of “teachable moments”: respond quickly when a child hurts another child or hurts someone's feelings.
 - Comfort the hurt child and let the hurter see what's happening.
 - Gently include (and if necessary comfort) the hurter, and let him know that the other child needs comforting.
 - Use a calm voice to model comforting behavior.
 - Help the hurter practice gentle touch and comforting.
 - Teach words such as gentle, sorry, and feel better.
 - Put words to children's feelings and actions.
 - Express affection for both children.
 - Help children practice gentle touching with dolls, objects, and pets.
 - Model kind behavior toward children, colleagues, and family members. Remember that older infants sense an educator's positive relationships and look to trusted adults to see who they can trust (social referencing).

View Again (optional)

Emphasize the key messages by showing the video a second time, if possible. Seeing the video again will give participants an opportunity to notice things they may have missed and to expand their learning.

Reflect

Help participants make the connection between what they've learned about helping older infants connect with each other and make friends and what they do in their own program. Ask educators to answer the reflection questions in the Learning Log.

Try It

(15 minutes)

The Try It activity helps educators think about how to apply new ideas to their own programs. Divide participants into groups of 3–6 and direct participants' attention to the Try It handout.

Let's Explore

Educators will work together to think of ways to use language to support and extend babies' explorations.

- Provide each group with 4–8 items, including at least one of each of the following types:
 - *Containers or wrappers:* boxes, paper bags, cups, plastic bottles, tissue boxes, cardboard tubes, plastic containers with lids, pans with lids, baby blankets or scarves, wrapping paper, spindles
 - *Tools:* spoons, ladles, crayons, dowels, cardboard tubes, drinking straws, toy hammers or mallets
 - *Objects that move or attach in interesting ways or make sounds:* rattles, squeakers, plastic rings, interlocking blocks, small balls, toy vehicles, chains, bendy straws, pipe cleaners, balls of putty or play dough, fabric swatches, scarves, shoe laces
- Give participants a couple of minutes to play with their materials. Then ask them to work together to:
 - Brainstorm and demonstrate at least ten things that an older infant might try as she explores these materials individually and in combinations.
 - List some of the interesting vocabulary words that they might use to support a child's exploration, help him with a challenge, suggest a new possibility, or celebrate a success.

Wrap Up

(5–10 minutes)

- Give participants an opportunity to share something they noticed or wondered about as they watched the segments of the video or participated in the Try It activity. Address any questions that arise, as well as questions in the “parking lot” that would add to the group's experience.

- Invite participants to complete the second half of the “Self-Assessment” and then measure their growth and learning.
- Ask participants to look over their notes from the training and jot down three things that they want to remember from today in their Learning Log.
- Invite partners or small groups to meet and share their three “keepers.” Then ask a few participants to share their “keepers” with the larger group.
- Thank participants for attending. Remind them that they can re-view the video and get lots of activity ideas at Resources for Learning:
<http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators/>.
- Encourage them to fill out and return the Training Evaluation.

Glossary

baby sign language: a set of conventional signs designed to make it easier for older infants and young toddlers to communicate with their caregivers

expressive language/communication: the words and phrases a child speaks and/or the specific, mutually-understood signs and gestures she uses to communicate meaning

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parallel play: playing near another child and noticing each other but without interacting

receptive language: the words and phrases a child understands

social referencing: the process by which young children check with trusting adults to see how to react to new situations and people, including whether new people can be trusted



Self-Assessment

Name: _____

Date: _____

Before the training: Place a ✓ in the box that best represents your current comfort level.

After the training: Place a ✓ in the box that best represents your new comfort level.

1 = Very uncomfortable 2 = Uncomfortable 3 = Neutral 4 = Comfortable 5 = Very comfortable

	Before					After				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
General I am comfortable with my ability to . . .										
Build a trusting relationship with an older infant that supports his exploration.										
Partner with families of older babies to support their children's learning.										
Expand Language—All the Time I am comfortable with my ability to . . .										
Talk back and forth with children who are not yet using (many) words in ways that expand their language.										
Read and tell stories to older infants in engaging ways.										
Use signs, gestures, and other nonverbal communications to help older babies know what my words mean.										
Use Language to Support Exploration and Problem Solving I am comfortable with my ability to . . .										
Create safe, interesting spaces that invite older infants to explore.										
Offer older infants interesting combinations of objects, tools, containers, and materials.										
Use language to help older babies explore materials in new ways and to celebrate their discoveries.										
Help Children Connect with Each Other and Make Friends I am comfortable with my ability to . . .										
Include an older baby in older children's rituals and activities.										
Support older babies' developing social awareness and help them make their first friends.										
Help older babies learn kind behaviors.										



Learning Log

Expand Language—All the Time

View

In the video:

- *What do you notice about how the babies communicate and how the educators expand the babies' language as they respond to those communications?*
- *What do you notice about how the educators use gestures, signs, and other nonverbal cues to focus babies' attention and help babies understand the meaning of their words?*
- *What do you notice about how the educators keep their conversations with babies going through multiple back-and-forth exchanges?*

Reflect

In your program:

- *How do you expand older babies' language?*
- *What did you learn that you will take back to your learning environment and put into practice?*

Notes

Use Language to Support Exploration and Problem Solving

View

In the video:

- *What do you notice about what intrigues the children and holds their interest? What might they be learning?*
- *What do you notice about how an educator uses language to encourage children's problem-solving efforts and helps them notice new possibilities? What interesting vocabulary words do the children hear?*
- *What do you notice about how an educator uses language to celebrate children's successes and discoveries with them?*

Reflect

In your program:

- *How do you help babies explore interesting materials in new ways?*
- *How do you use language to support and extend babies' explorations, encourage their efforts, and celebrate their discoveries?*
- *What did you learn that you will take back to your learning environment and put into practice?*

Notes

Help Children Connect with Each Other and Make Friends

View

In the video:

- *What do you notice about how Maria and her colleague help Rafaela to participate in the older children's circle time?*

- *What do you notice about how Demetria helps Evan learn to empathize and be gentle?*

Reflect

In your program:

- *What strategies do you use to help babies become more aware of other children, enjoy their company, and treat them kindly?*

- *What did you learn that you will take back to your learning environment and put into practice?*

Notes



Try It

Let's Explore

Use language to support and extend babies' explorations.

1. Choose 4–8 items from the list below to explore. Select at least one from each category.

- *Containers or wrappers:* boxes, paper bags, cups, plastic bottles, tissue boxes, cardboard tubes, plastic containers with lids, pans with lids, baby blankets or scarves, wrapping paper, spindles
- *Tools:* spoons, ladles, crayons, dowels, cardboard tubes, drinking straws, toy hammers or mallets
- *Objects that move or attach in interesting ways or make sounds:* rattles, squeakers, plastic rings, interlocking blocks, small balls, toy vehicles, chains, bendy straws, pipe cleaners, balls of putty or play dough, fabric swatches, scarves, shoe laces

2. Brainstorm and demonstrate at least ten things that an older infant might try as she explores these materials individually and in combinations.

3. List some of the interesting vocabulary words that you might use to support a child's exploration, help him with a challenge, suggest a new possibility, or celebrate a success.



Best Practices

Older infants are on the move—and curious. They want to know what everything is, where it fits, and how it works. They are also exploring how they fit—into different kinds of spaces and also how they fit into their social world. As with younger infants, they depend upon the reassurance of loved and trusted adults for the security that allows them to reach out and learn. Now, however, these adults provide a secure base from which older infants can set out and explore on their own.

Most older infants understand some language and are rapidly learning more. They communicate with increasingly expressive sounds and actions and may also use gestures, signs, and even a few words. As children make new discoveries and connections, language becomes an even greater support for learning. As with younger infants, back-and-forth “conversation” helps build relationships and language, but older infants are now trying to understand and communicate intentional messages.

Expand Language—All the Time

The more language older babies hear, the more their language will develop. But *overhearing* doesn't count—babies don't learn language by listening to adults talk or by watching TV or videos. When an educator engages a baby in back-and-forth conversation and connects the conversation to an activity or discovery, he helps the baby's language develop faster and more fully. Play times, feeding and changing times, and passing encounters provide opportunities to expand babies' *receptive* (understood) language and their *expressive* (spoken or signed) communications.

- **Converse back and forth while playing together.** Responsive communication is key for older babies, who are associating words (and signs) with meanings. Give the baby a chance to respond to words—with words, sounds, actions, or imitation.
- **Keep the exchange going.** Respond to the baby in ways that acknowledge the baby's intent—by copying or extending her sounds, putting words to what she might be saying, answering her implied question, or sharing something new.
- **Pay joint attention.** During the older infancy period, babies develop the ability to follow a caregiver's gaze or direct his attention by pointing to, making sounds, or showing what

they want. An educator and baby's *joint attention*, or shared focus on an object, helps the baby learn new words because she knows what the word refers to.

- **Pair words with gestures or signs to make meaning clear.** Research has found that talking with your hands speeds and supports language development. Older infants and young toddlers develop stronger language when their families and caregivers pair their words with gestures and signs.

How do educators and babies show each other that they are connected?

- Here are some of the ways educators and babies convey their connection to each other:
 - Educators smile, pay close attention, reflect the child's emotions in their words and tone of voice, refer to past shared experience (for example, in the video a child chooses a story for Eileen to tell and she responds, "I knew you were going to pick that one"), and continue the conversation.
 - Babies pay close attention; show things to educators; imitate words and actions; respond when they think a pause is coming; and use words, babbles, signs, and actions to answer questions or continue the conversation.
 - Educators and babies show each other that they are connected by continuing their responsive communication through multiple back-and-forth exchanges.

What benefits do older infants gain from lots of back-and-forth conversation, even when they are not yet using real words?

- Through back-and-forth conversation, older infants:
 - Strengthen their ongoing relationship with adults who are important in their lives.
 - Learn to take turns in a conversation.
 - Learn to communicate in intentional ways and make themselves understood.
 - Begin to see themselves as important, competent people with "things to say" that others want to hear.
 - Learn words, phrases, and concepts.
 - Learn the meaning of words that they can't yet say, but will be able to use once they begin to speak.
 - May learn more than one language if given the opportunity.

What benefits do older infants gain from books and stories?

- Books and stories benefit older infants because they allow older infants to:
 - Look at clear, colorful pictures—something they very much enjoy (especially of other babies).
 - Focus on pictures and associate them with words or sound effects.
 - Learn to handle books and possibly try to turn pages.
 - Learn to associate reading with cuddling and pleasure.
 - Hear full sentences and storybook language such as “Along came the three little pigs” and “In the great green room.”
 - Learn the meaning of words that they are not likely to hear in everyday conversations.
 - Learn to follow a simple story sequence and may begin to learn how to tell a story.
 - Learn to understand that stories have beginnings, middles, and ends.
 - Begin to associate verbal and nonverbal (facial expressions, signs) communications.

What are some effective techniques for supporting and expanding older infants' language as you help them follow a story?

- During story time, an educator can:
 - Let a child choose a favorite book or story for the educator to read or tell.
 - Ask a child to help her tell a familiar story.
 - Use an enticing, expressive voice and exaggerated facial expressions.
 - Ask a question about a picture, story character, or upcoming event, and pause to give a child time to answer.
 - Use signs, gestures, and sound effects to make word meanings clear and to enhance the story.
 - Engage children in imitating or filling in signs, gestures, sound effects, and any words they may know. Pause to let a child fill in an action, word, or sound effect.
 - Act out parts of the story, putting words to actions.
 - Watch children's faces to be sure she has their attention, and vary her pace and expression accordingly.

- Treat older babies as worthy conversation partners. Respond to their signs of interest, spoken and unspoken questions, and participation in the storytelling or reading.

Use Language to Support Exploration and Problem Solving

Older infants need to move freely and explore with a familiar, trusted adult as a secure base. The adult's presence (and reassuring voice when they are separated) gives an older baby confidence to travel further away as she practices crawling, scooting, pulling to a stand, or cruising and as she discovers interesting things and places. The adult's words and actions help the baby learn about her world and other people. At the same time, their interactions support the baby's development of intentional nonverbal communication and, eventually, speech (and/or a signed language).

Through their own activity and play, older babies discover the fundamentals of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). As they drop items in a bucket, travel across different surfaces, make their way around obstacles, or use a spoon to bang a drum, they learn how things move and fit into each other, how to solve problems by trying out different strategies, and how they can make interesting things happen, again and again.

- **Talk with babies as they explore spaces and materials that interest them.** As you talk about what the baby is doing, you'll help her learn words for objects and actions. As you converse back and forth, you'll build your relationship along with the child's language.
- **Use language to encourage children's problem-solving efforts and celebrate their successes.** Encouraging words support children's self-confidence, persistence, and language development.

What might older infants be learning as they explore objects, tools, containers, and interesting sensory materials?

- Older infants can learn many things by exploring, including:
 - How to use a tool to accomplish a goal, such as getting something that is out of reach or making an object move in an interesting way.
 - How things (including their own bodies) can move and fit in space.
 - Gross and precise movements involved in lifting, turning, picking up, placing, drumming, etc.

Best Practices (CONTINUED)

- How to make things go faster or farther.
- How to persist at solving problems by trying different strategies.
- Concepts of size, shape, inside/outside, and cause/effect.
- Words for specific objects, materials, actions, categories (for example, flower, tool, container), attributes (for example, shape, size, texture), directions, and relationships (for example, inside, up, on top of).

How can adults use actions and words to facilitate children's explorations?

- Adults can:
 - Create safe spaces for exploration.
 - Offer interesting combinations of materials, including containers, tools, objects, and materials that behave in interesting ways. (Be sure materials do not pose any choking hazards, as older infants will likely put things in their mouths to learn more about them.)
 - Put out a few materials at a time so that children can focus.
 - Allow children to take the lead.
 - Talk about what they notice children doing.
 - Offer help when children seem stuck.
 - Put words to what children may be thinking as they figure things out (for example, "Do you think that will fit better, Alvina?")
 - Describe their own actions or thinking as they demonstrate new possibilities.
 - Offer verbal encouragement and occasional physical support for children's problem-solving efforts but let them work to master a challenge.
 - Comment on children's successful strategies.
 - Reflect children's pride and excitement by using specific words (for example, "You got the rings on the spindle!" rather than just "Good job!") to celebrate their successes.

Help Children Connect with Each Other and Make Friends

Older infants develop an awareness of others. They are drawn to other children and want to play near them, see what they are doing, and sometimes imitate their actions. They want to join in simple group routines. When educators encourage *parallel play* (playing near another child and noticing each other, but without interacting) and imitation, they allow older babies to develop their social emotions, social skills, and sometimes preferences for certain children—their first friends!

Older babies can show remarkable sensitivity. When an older baby hears another baby cry, she may cry in sympathy or try to help. At the same time, older babies can be quite unaware of others' feelings. An older baby doesn't hurt others on purpose, but her exuberance, curiosity, or frustration can sometimes cause problems.

- **Arrange (and rearrange) the environment** so that children can practice emerging motor skills and explore interesting spaces and materials without interfering with each other.
- **Stay alert to prevent hurt feelings and accidental injuries.** Educators can't prevent every bump or toy snatch, but they can help an older baby notice that he hurt another child.
- **Teach empathy and kind behaviors.** Recognize and label children's emotions, model how to help or console another child, and teach "gentle touch."

How can educators facilitate social awareness and beginning friendships for older infants?

- Educators can:
 - Give babies well-supervised opportunities to play near other children.
 - Offer just a few objects for children to play with.
 - Offer duplicate or similar toys so that children can imitate each other.
 - Notice which children like to play near each other, and encourage their friendship with your words, reassuring presence, and nonverbal communication.
 - Offer two older infants a large toy that they can use together, such as a ball to roll back and forth, a large surface to bang on, or a large block to push. Show them how to play together.

Best Practices (CONTINUED)

- Include an older infant in group songs and rituals for brief periods. Feature his name in songs sung frequently. Help him participate by imitating other children's actions, such as bouncing and clapping.

It is common for older infants to knock others over, snatch toys, pull hair, and sometimes bite. How can educators help older infants to learn to empathize and be gentle?

- Educators can:
 - Be mindful of “teachable moments”: respond quickly when a child hurts another child or hurts someone's feelings.
 - Comfort the hurt child and let the hurter see what's happening.
 - Gently include (and if necessary comfort) the hurter, and let him know that the other child needs comforting.
 - Use a calm voice to model comforting behavior.
 - Help the hurter practice gentle touch and comforting.
 - Teach words such as gentle, sorry, and feel better.
 - Put words to children's feelings and actions.
 - Express affection for both children.
 - Help children practice gentle touching with dolls, objects, and pets.
 - Model kind behavior toward children, colleagues, and family members. Remember that older infants sense an educator's positive relationships and look to trusted adults to see who they can trust (social referencing).

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Learning Guidelines and Standards

This professional development module is aligned to Massachusetts learning guidelines and standards.

Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers

Social-Emotional Development:

- Relates to, trusts and becomes attached to consistent educators.
- Notices and interacts with children of a similar age.
- Acts as a social being by engaging with others and the world around them.
- Experiences and expresses a range of emotions.
- Begins to regulate own feelings and behavior.
- Develops a positive sense of self.

Language and Communication Development:

- Demonstrates the meaning of language by listening.
- Develops expressive language.
- Engages in social communication.
- Engages in pre-reading activities.
- Develops in multiple language acquisitions when considered a dual language learner.

Cognitive Development:

- Refines reflexes into purposeful actions.
- Develops memory skills.
- Performs simple actions to make things happen and displays a beginning understanding of cause and effect.
- Develops problem-solving skills.
- Explores materials and discovers mathematical concepts.

- Explores the environment making new discoveries.
- Discovers creative expression through music, drama, dance and art experiences.

Physical Health and Well-Being Development:

- Develops ability to move the large muscles (gross motor).
- Develops ability to control and refine small muscles (fine motor).
- Develops sensorimotor skills where children use their senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch—to guide and integrate their interactions.

Approaches to Learning:

- Shows eagerness and curiosity as a learner.
- Becomes intentional and persistent in their learning and discovery.

Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Center and School Based:

- **Curriculum and Learning 1A: Curriculum, Assessment, and Diversity: Level 2** Materials that promote cultural and individual identity, family relations, cultural appreciation, and cognitive and social development are integrated into the curriculum and children's everyday experiences.
- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 3** Educators engage children in meaningful conversations; use open-ended questions; provide opportunities throughout the day to scaffold children's language which supports the development of more complex receptive and expressive language; encourage children's use of language to share ideas; stimulate problem solving; and guides children in engaging in positive peer interactions.
- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Level 4** Educators utilize teaching strategies that ensure a positive classroom environment, engage children in learning and promote critical thinking skills.

Family Child Care:

- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 2** Educator has participated in formal professional development on how to support positive relationships and interactions with children through positive, warm and nurturing interactions.
- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 4** Educators engage children in meaningful conversations, as age and developmentally appropriate; use open-ended questions and provide opportunities throughout the day to scaffold their language which supports the development of more complex receptive and expressive language, support children's use of language to share ideas, problem solve and have positive peer interactions; Educators utilize teaching strategies that ensure a positive classroom environment, engage children in learning and promote critical thinking skills.



BRAIN BUILDING IN PROGRESS

Resources for Early Learning

Supporting Older
Infants' Learning

Resources for Further Learning

Find more information on supporting older infants' learning.

Giving Children Nonverbal Cues about Words Boosts Vocabularies. (June 24, 2013). *Science Newsline*. University of Chicago.

<http://www.sciencenewsline.com/summary/2013062422510021.html>

Lally, J. Ronald. (November 2009). The Science and Psychology of Infant-Toddler Care: How an Understanding of Early Learning Has Transformed Child Care. ZERO TO THREE, pp. 47–53.

http://zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/Lally_30-2.pdf

Resources for Early Learning. Media-rich learning resources for educators, parents, and caregivers of children.

<http://www.resourcesforearlylearning.org>

Why Do Toddlers Bite? Finding the Right Response. ZERO TO THREE.

<http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/challenging-behavior/chew-on-this-resources-on-biting.html>



Training Evaluation

Thank you for your participation. This evaluation is designed to evaluate what you have learned at this training. Please take the time to complete the evaluation by rating each question "1" through "4" with "4" being the highest.

Training: _____

Presenter: _____

	1	2	3	4
Did the presenter identify the learning goals at the start of the training?				
Were the learning goals met?				
Did the material presented meet your needs and expectations?				
Was there time for discussion and questions and answers?				
Were the handouts current and relevant?				
Was the presenter knowledgeable and able to answer relevant questions?				
Did the presenter make use of different learning modalities (audio, visual, etc.?)				

What did you learn that you will be able to apply to your work?