# Exploring

## infants and toddlers

**Capital District Child Care Council**

*a tipsheet for parents and caregivers of children ages 0 to 2*

## Dance With Me

Relationship based child care is based on three **R**'s:

### R
**Respectful**
**Responsive**
**Reciprocal**

A Respectful caregiver can let an infant know that she is going to move her by making eye contact and rubbing her hands together before she picks the baby up. She can offer a busy toddler a tissue, near a mirror, and ask the toddler to wipe his own nose.

A Responsive caregiver reads children's cues and then feeds, naps, and interacts with infants and toddlers based on their individual temperaments and preferences.

A Reciprocal caregiver involves even the youngest baby in care. She babbles with babies and mirrors their facial expressions back to them, with a face that says "I understand" or "You belong here". She acts as a newscaster for children, explaining what is going on around them and with their bodies. She and the children in her care are active participants in every daily routine and activity.

### *baby* + caregiver = curriculum

When caregivers believe the baby is the curriculum, their energy is directed towards spending time to know, to understand and to be available to meet each baby's unique needs. "Learning" babies requires careful observations and comfortable interactions in order to understand what a baby is trying to say. Once a caregiver learns a baby's cues, the "dance" can begin.

Here are some "steps" to take when "dancing" with babies...

- Observe what is happening with the whole child (physically, socially & emotionally)
- Provide a safe, calm environment
- Give one-to-one individualized attention/small group care
- Stay focused on the baby
- Create consistent routines in care
- Provide choices and options that support babies preferences
- Include babies in caregiving
- Wait for baby to respond during interactions
- Include that response in the next interaction
- Give slow, gentle, loving massages with your hands

*Resource: Your Relationship with the Baby is the Curriculum by Beverly Kovach & Denise DaRos-Voseles.*

### Our hands speak just as loudly to young children as our words

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