

## Stage 1: Self Regulation and Interest in the World

Birth-3 Months

**Goal: Becoming calm, attentive, and interested in the world.**

You can help your baby improve in this stage by helping your child look, listen, begin to move, and calm down. Her sense of security and awareness will help her understand more complex thoughts, help her brain develop, and lay the foundation for future learning.

Consider the following, and tailor your interactions toward your child's unique preferences to allow her to relax and learn. If it is not enjoyable for the baby, she may withdraw or shut down.

- What sights, sounds, touches, and movements bring her pleasure?
- Which senses keep him calm and get his attention? Does he like firm or soft touch?
- Does he like soft or loud sounds? High or low voices? Slow or fast rhythms?
- Does he enjoy energetic, animated facial expressions and sounds or calm, soothing interactions?

At this stage, if your infant becomes upset, your continuing relationship with him and the familiar sight of your face, the comforting sound of your voice, and your gentle touch and movements will provide him with a reassuring sense of security that helps him calm down and explore his world.

### Stage 1: Dos and Don'ts

- **Do:** interact with your baby, without distractions, for short stretches of time (20-30 minutes), several times per day. This is called "Floortime" and will help your baby's brain develop.
- **Do** Find enjoyable ways to involve your child's senses and movement at the same time
  - Help him use his muscles to turn his head, stick out his tongue, cuddle, and gradually move his arms and legs in rhythm with your voice
- **Do** Interact with your baby, do not just stimulate him with exciting toys.
- **Don't** leave him to gaze at the world on his own for very long stretches of time. You cannot spoil your child by spending too much time with her.

### Games to help your child master Stage 1:

- **The Look and Listen Game:** Lean in close to your baby and talk about his or her sparkly eyes, round cheeks, or big smile. Keep your face animated and your voice lively as you slowly move to the right or left, trying to capture your baby's attention for a few seconds.
- **The "Soothe Me" Game:** Soothingly touch your baby, stroking her arms, legs, tummy, back, feet, and hands to help the child relax. The back and forth rhythm of the rocking chair can be especially soothing. Try to gently wiggle his or her little fingers and toes in a "This Little Piggy" type of game. This game can also be played during diaper changing time.