

12–24 MONTH

## PROMOTING FIRST RELATIONSHIPS

# Connecting Strategies

### Way of Being

#### Before the Visit, Reflect and Wonder

“What might the baby be experiencing at this age?”

“What might the parent be experiencing?”

### Observations

#### Notice and Describe for Families

- Child’s engagement and disengagement cues that lets parents and providers know when the child wants to engage or needs a break
- Parent soothes and comforts their child (alleviation of distress)
- Child calms by looking at parent’s face to see if they are safe or by being back in their parent’s arms
- Child visually explores the room or engages with you from the comfort and safety of the parent’s arms
- Child ventures out to explore the exam room when they feel safe but then returns and checks in with the parent
- Shared delight
- Joint attention skills such as following the parent’s gaze, following a point and showing objects (all of which unfold from the relationship)
- Child’s new developmental gains—language explosion, joint attention, pretend play, 2-step problem-solving, expressing wants and needs
- Child’s “big ideas” and “big emotions”

### PFR Strategies—Examples

Based on your observations and following the family’s lead, use the below strategies during your visits.

#### Joining Questions

- What kinds of concerns do you have today?
- How is life with a (insert age)-year-old going for you/your family?
- Wow! Your baby is turning into a big kid. That can feel like such a big change for parents. How is it feeling for you?
- What is her personality like these days?
- What new things is your child doing? What kinds of things do you like to do together?
- How is he handling his big emotions? How are you doing handling his big emotions?

#### Strengths-Based Positive Feedback

- She is having so much fun exploring the room but she still loves to come back and check in with you.
- What a chatty little guy you have there! It is wonderful to see how much you both enjoy his emerging personality.
- That was so nice how you gave her a choice just now. She seemed to really love that.
- Your words sounded so kind just then when you asked him to stop climbing on the table.
- When he got his shoes on, he was so proud of himself and wanted to share with you right away—did you see him catch your eye to show you?

#### Positive Instructive Feedback

- I can see how much you delight in her. Your delight makes her feel loved and special which is really important for her to develop a feeling of self-confidence as she becomes her own little person.
- Your ability to tolerate all her big feelings and stay calm in that moment of distress was wonderful. This ability to not react and instead to reflect on your own feelings as well as your child’s feelings helps your child learn it is okay to have these negative feelings as well as how to handle such big emotions and move on. It helps her feel a sense of control—a feeling that is really important for her to develop a positive sense of self.
- Letting her choose which item in your diaper bag to play with—keys or wipes—helps focus her and gives her a sense of control. Giving her safe choices like that is a nice way to redirect her and still help her feel in control and in charge.
- It’s great to watch her helping you get ready to go. Allowing her to help pack the bag allows her to feel included and important which will help her as she develops a positive sense of self.

#### Supporting Reflective Capacity

- This age can feel difficult for parents. How are you managing with keeping up with his busy body and big ideas?
- Toddlers can have a way of making us feel really upset too. It’s hard for everyone in the family to regulate their emotions sometimes. How is that going for you?
- What do you think she’s thinking and feeling when she gets so upset? How is it for you when she gets so upset?
- What kinds of things might help you both reconnect after having a hard afternoon?