

Embodied Parenting
Infant Observation
&
Dance-Play

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Play, Joy, & Laughter

(Panksepp, 2001)

...the future of humanity will continue to be shaped substantially by the emotional character of our children. Because of their enormous resilience and plasticity, most children will thrive in a variety of environments... But... there is every reason to believe they will emerge with different emotional strengths and weaknesses depending on the emotional environments in which they have lived... our children might grow up better if we, as a society, were better informed about the psychobiological and emotional substrates of the human spirit... [supporting] the *desire of our children to really play in rough-and-tumble ways... – and to dance vigorously and play heartfelt music –* and then to try to determine empirically what such activities do for brain/mind development." (p. 138)



When I look,
I am seen,
so I exist.

~ Winnicott



Communication occurs through

- Facial expressions
- Posture
- Tone of voice
- Gestural exchanges
- Tempo of actions
- Jointly created actions creates "shared framework of meaning"

(Stern, 1985/2000 p.125)



Intuitive Parenting

(Papousek, 2011)

- Contingent responsiveness
- Adjusting nonverbal quality - actions speech
 - Deceleration
 - Exaggeration
 - Varying/simplifying style to compliment infant's regulatory capacity



Angel's Circles

(Papousek, 2011 p. 36)

- Sequence of ongoing positive parent -baby reciprocity
- Special moments of intersubjectivity
- Mutually regulated parent-infant everyday interaction
- Builds baby's regulatory capacity



Rough & Tumble Play

(Panksepp, 2001)

Teach caregivers effective emotional skills –promoting – warmth – nurturance – Vigorous playfulness – use therapeutically – for infants Gentle & Tumble Play



Rough & Tumble Play Gentle & Tumble Play

(Panksepp, 2001)

Stimulates joyful social connections – bonding – teaches ability to handle unpredictability

Developmental sequence:

- tickling –laughter
- into peek– a–boo
- into Rough & Tumble
- later more complex e.g. running /chasing
-



Mother provides protective container

Supports baby's emotional self-regulation



Patterns of Expectancies

(Beebe & Lachmann, 2002)

- Infant experiences a sense of self- efficacy
- Through **contingent** responses- accurate cue reading
- During interactive mutually affective exchanges
- Core for **future** develop of symbolic forms of self - and object representation

Bowlby ⁽¹⁹⁸¹⁾

- dynamic spontaneous nonverbal interactions create mental representations that organize experience



Quality of Mother-Infant Relationship Affects the Infant's Physiology, Neurophysiology, and Psychology

Body/biological (Hofer, 1981, 2000)

- "Hidden regulators" within ongoing relationship
- **Multisensory** and **nonverbal**
 - Touch
 - Warmth
 - Smell
 - Physical proximity/distance
 - Sensing of position and movement of limbs and body in space



How Do Babies First Learn

(Thelen, 1996)

- Not following unfolding pattern instructed by brain
- Body directs brain as infant experiences body through interactions with environment
- Learn about/explore body through *active improvisation*



Embodied Parenting



Dance Movement Psychotherapy



Sense of Body

(Tortora, 2006)

- Earliest experiences occur through the body
- Somatic, kinesthetic, sensorial, multisensory
- Through embodiment make sense of the world
- First dance of relating through body sensing - self & other



Embodied
Parenting

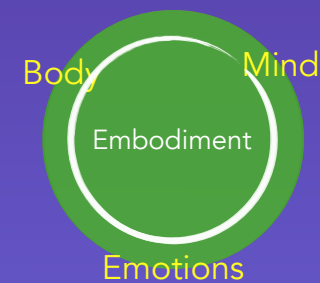
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Dancing
Dialogue

The EMBODIED NATURE of the experience = EMBODIED PARENTING “ felt- experience of parenting as it effects soc/emotional and all other levels of dev – special emphasis on dancing dialogue as key qualitative element of attachment = brings CS awareness to nature of the NV Exchange



Body • Mind • Emotions Continuum
= Embodiment



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Ways of Seeing

KEY PREMISE

All nonverbal acts have the potential to be communicative – go beyond the behavioral aspect of action and ask:

IF THIS BEHAVIOR/ ACTION IS A COMMUNICATIVE ACT, WHAT MIGHT THIS CHILD BE SAYING?



Attend

Reflect

Connect



Ways of Seeing Lullaby Circles

(Tortora in press)

- Quiet attuned embodied listening
- Attunement / mirroring vs directing
- [Mutual] Gaze
- Prosody - emotional speech
- Quality of touch
- Spatial proximity ~ Embraced space
- Nature of physicality
- Rhythmic simpatico
- Identify baby's behavioral states / regulatory capacity / arousal level



Variables Affecting Parent - Child Interaction

1. Sensitivities to cues
2. Reciprocity of interaction
3. Regulation-sensory sensitivities-arousal
4. Affect
5. Flexibility
6. Proximity and distance
7. Cultural influences - NV etiquette



Embodied Parenting Technique

(Tortora, 2006)

- Powerful role of attunement and mirroring
 - Emotional awareness/ regulation
 - Neurophysiological/sensorial regulation
- Follow child's lead into nonverbal interactive exchange
- Fosters embodied self discovery and enhances attachment relationship
- Spontaneous improvisations through nonverbal dialogue with movement, music and dance



Movement Activity Focus to Support Parent-Child Attachment (Tortora, 2011)

- Eye contact
- Trust
- Internal regulation of body & moods
- Self-discovery
- Object permanence
- Relating
- Independence
- Touch that supporting movement & motor development



Movement as embodied self-agency

- Basic Neurological Actions (BNA) - ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny as relates to development of self and other Bainbridge-Cohen (2012) Yield

Yield

Push

Reach

Grasp

Pull





The power of musicality
to facilitate and energize meaning in
communication is poignantly expressed
in music and dance therapy ...plays vital
role in nurturing Self...& our biological-
psychological make-up

~Malloch & Trevarthen



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Selected Books & Articles:

- Tortora, S. (2006) *Dancing Dialogue: The communicative role of movement with young children*. Md: Brookes Pub.
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- Tortora, S. (2011) The creative embodied experience: The role of the body and the arts in infant mental health. In *The Signal – Newsletter of the World Association for Infant Mental Health*, 19, 3, 1-8.
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The DANCING DIALOGUE

Using the Communicative Power
of Movement with Young Children



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ADTA- Embodied Parenting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulzVyyqPz3s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqqH0hhVV5o&index=8&list=PLrbXrO8yG6hqV18pngU4FPZHfWmkoUT> (Mandarin)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWhPmwkK55dc&index=4&list=PLrbXrO8yG6hqV18pngU4FPZHfWmkoUT> (Spanish)

Rock With Me! Babies From Around the World Lead the Dance! <http://youtu.be/XgKlUpFpyo>

