

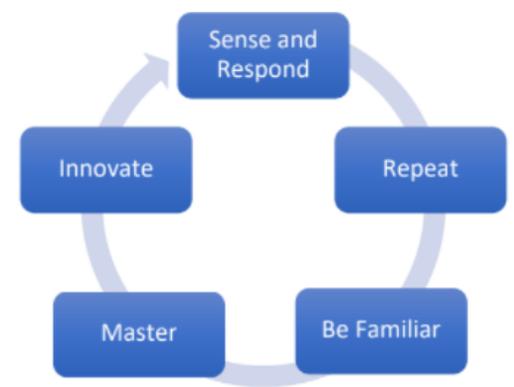


How Young Children Learn

Early in life, learning happens through repeating sensations---it creates the neural pathways that support recognizing something as familiar. We want to repeat what feels good, we want to master how to do it, and once mastered, we are driven to innovate.

Create Positive Routines

- Parents and caregivers help their children to learn by repeating cues for a routine. Be intentional: use positive emotion cues! Envision how you want your child to respond and offer positive support for them to do it.
- Use a cheerful voice to grab their interest/attention. Babies' brains are wired to prefer higher pitched, rhythmic sounds and speech. Including a song, rhyme, or rhythm into routines makes them enjoyable and will get cooperation from your child while getting things done! Learning is made easier for all of us when we are relaxed and attentive.



Challenging behaviors during routines

- Challenging behaviors are often a signal that a child needs to connect. Ignore the misbehavior (or respond with matter-of-fact emotion) and offer positive connection. Connecting through open-ended play can help your child join you in that calm center.
- Playfulness relaxes parts of our brain that can balance the stress-reactive parts. Playful interactions convey a crucial message to the child: "I enjoy you...I am here for you...in this moment we can share pleasure." Build in 20 minutes of play every day.

