# Meeting the Social and Emotional Needs of Infants and Toddlers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEED</th>
<th>WAYS TO MEET CHILDREN'S NEEDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| To feel safe and secure                      | • Be with me, both physically and emotionally  
                                             • Watch me as I play  
                                             • Talk to me about what I am doing  
                                             • Comfort me when I am upset  
                                             • Help me make sense of my negative feelings  
                                             • Structure my day and my environment  
                                             • Give me limits or boundaries for my behavior                                               |
| To feel worthy and loved                     | • Tell me how special I am  
                                             • Say my name often  
                                             • Notice me, even when I am quiet  
                                             • Accept and celebrate my unique feelings and characteristics  
                                             • Share your love with hugs and gentle touches  
                                             • Play with me  
                                             • Listen to and respond to me                                                            |
| To feel acknowledged and understood         | • Pay attention to me and try to understand what I'm saying with my words and my cues  
                                             • Respond sensitively to my needs  
                                             • Reflect my feelings through your voice, touch, and facial expressions  
                                             • Accept all of my feelings, even the negative ones                                         |
| To feel noticed and receive attention       | • Give me attention for positive behavior  
                                             • Redirect my negative behavior—show me something else I can do  
                                             • Appreciate my accomplishments and my efforts  
                                             • Initiate interactions with me; invite me to play  
                                             • Welcome me back when I need some attention  
                                             • Let me be your helper  
                                             • Touch me in loving, gentle ways  
                                             • Smile and let me know you enjoy me                                                        |
| To feel a sense of predictability           | • Structure my days so that I know what to expect  
                                             • Use loving rituals that give me a positive, familiar feeling about the activity we're doing  
                                             • Help me to anticipate changes or transitions  
                                             • Try to limit multiple changes at once or be sensitive if they happen  
                                             • Try to keep me with caregivers that I know and trust  
                                             • Give me choices  
                                             • Be consistent in how you take care of me  
                                             • Gently remind me about limits and expectations                                              |

© 2003 Kelly, Zuckerman, Sandoval, & Buehman
Encouraging Cooperation in Everyday Moments

1. Spend loving time together
2. State clear expectations
3. Use limits with flexibility and consistency
4. Reflect feelings—"I see you are happy; sad; excited; angry."
5. Give appropriate choices
6. Distract and re-direct
7. Establish routines and structure
8. Expect protest
Challenging Behaviors of Infants and Toddlers
Needs, Feelings, Behaviors

Unmet Social or Emotional Need

Feelings of Distress

Behavioral and Emotional Problems

Social Withdrawal

Aggression or Acting Out

© 2003 Kelly, Zuckerman, Sandoval, & Buehlman.