


# The importance of the early years

In the early years, children learn how manage their emotions, trust others, and build a solid sense of who they are.

## Foundations of future development: Early caregiving

Young children learn about life by watching us and being with us. By responding (or not) in a timely and sensitive way, you're teaching your child how relationships work.

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- Responding sensitively to emotions shows children that feeling are manageable
  - If we can show that we're not overwhelmed by their feelings, they can – over time – see their feelings as tolerable and begin to manage them with greater ease.
  - If we see children's feelings as worthy of interest and care, they will learn to meet their own feelings with a similar openness.

From these early caregiving interactions, children will learn answers to many questions, like:

- *Am I worthy of attention?*
- *Can I rely on those around me to help?*
- *Should my emotions be avoided and ignored?*
- *Can I safely share my big feelings with others? Will they understand?*

**Babies who consistently have their emotional and social needs recognised and responded to, are better able to handle stress and challenges.**