

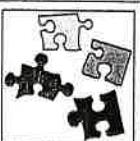
## Infancy Visit #16

- PIPE: Floor Time
- PIPE: Love & Limits 6-9 Months



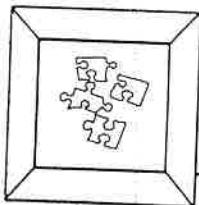
### Topics for Next Visit:

- 7 Month Growth & Development
- Baby Proofing, Safety & First Aid
  - Poison Control



# Floor Time





## Conceptual Overview

1. Playing with babies and toddlers is a good way to help them learn. It is also a way to give them confidence in their new skills. The most important part of playing is the sharing that takes place. Parent and child share the same space and the same focus. When they are playing together, they are usually sharing interest, excitement, and pleasure. This is what builds trust and confidence between them. This also helps to teach the child to focus attention on a task. What the child is doing with the toys is not as important as the communication with the parent. Sharing through play should happen spontaneously throughout the day (e.g., while diapering, feeding, cleaning the house). But there is a special magic for a baby or toddler when his parent gets on the floor and plays at his level with his toys. This should be a time when the parent is undistracted and can be totally child-focused.
2. Playing on the floor means engaging and respecting the child. By playing with babies and toddlers at *their* level and within *their* interest area, parents give children important moments of autonomy. They are letting their children direct the play. They are listening. This is the magic. Letting the baby or toddler show off what seems to be important and fun is what will motivate her to learn. When a parent imitates her or tries her ideas, she is thrilled. She will feel valued. She will try the task again when alone. This will lead to learning.
3. Floortime is a process for playing effectively with a child.

### Observation:

- Tune in to how the child is unique, noticing the child's mood and pace.

### Approach:

- Open the communication circle by following the child's special interest.

### Following the child's lead:

- Helping with — not doing — a task so the baby or toddler is successful.

### Extending and expanding the play:

- Take the child's imagination and ideas one step further than he or she might be able to without your support.

### Letting the child close the communication circle:

- Allow the child to bring the idea to a close and move on.

4. A child will engage with parents for a longer time and will spend more time focused on a task if parents join the child's choice of play without trying to direct it. As parents continue to play within their child's focus of interest, they can extend the type of play and the direction of the game toward more elaborate uses of the same toy. They can also expand the task into different forms of play. Extending and expanding play is called "scaffolding." It is a good way to

## **LISTEN**

### **TOPIC 5**

teach. With practice, this way of playing with a child can become a spontaneous part of a parent's style.

For example, the child chooses a truck; Mom says, "Great, a truck"; she lets her child play a while with the truck. Then she puts blocks inside it. The child takes them out, and they play "in and out" with the blocks. Then she stacks the blocks, and the child knocks them down. They laugh together. They have played three different learning skill games, while keeping the child focused.

5. Parents who learn to divert and set limits by laughing, loving, and playing rather than by scolding and demanding have better behaved children. Regulating a baby's or toddler's behavior can be done by diverting through surprise or interest, or by enjoying and imitating a behavior the child has done previously. Songs and music or exciting emotions also serve to change behavior and divert interest away from problem behaviors.

Some families do not value play as a function of parenting. Some parents associate remembered moments of abuse with being on the floor with an adult. It is important to value and respect each parent's personal feelings and to individualize your teaching to each situation. However, babies and toddlers gain skill and master tasks through play. Play is a major pathway to stability and resiliency in the child. Because of this, it is important that parents understand why sharing a baby's or toddler's interest in a play situation is a valuable part of parenting.

This topic is adapted from the work of Stanley Greenspan, M.D., renowned child psychiatrist and early childhood consultant. With Scholastic, Inc., and distinguished teachers and directors, Dr. Greenspan has created *Floortime: Tuning In to Each Child*. His research and works emphasize satisfying the emotional needs of each child.



## What Is Floortime?

Floortime is a special play time set aside for one-on-one play with a child. It is a time of shared understanding that will bring the two of you closer together. What the child does with the toys is not as important as the communication you share.

During Floortime, you get down on the floor so you are playing within the child's focus or interest and at his or her level. You tune in to whatever motivates or is of interest to the child. You engage the child, but follow his or her lead. It is a time to be child-directed. Let the child be in charge. Floortime is a process for making play time fun, and at the same time providing a positive structured experience to help the child learn and share positive emotions.

### FLOORTIME HELPS EACH CHILD...

- # become more alert and develop a longer attention span.
- # take more initiative during play and have fun learning.
- # become more flexible and tolerant of frustration.
- # become a better problem solver.
- # learn communication and relationship-building skills.

*Floortime is a philosophy and technique that was developed by Stanley Greenspan, M.D., Clinical Professor of Child Health and Development and Psychiatry at George Washington University.*



# The Five Steps of Floortime

## 1. Observation

- ▣ Tune in to your child.
- ▣ Notice your child's state of awareness and general mood.
- ▣ What is your child interested in? What are his or her favorite toys and/or play activities?

## 2. Approach

- ▣ Fit your approach to your child's level of energy.
- ▣ Open the communication circle by asking to join your child's play or by letting your child choose what to play with.

## 3. Follow the Child's Lead

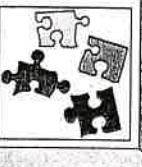
- ▣ Join your child's play.
- ▣ Imitate the child; do what he or she was enjoying doing.
- ▣ Take turns.
- ▣ Help the child be successful. Do not take over.
- ▣ Smile and support your child in play.

## 4. Extend and Expand the Play

- ▣ Take your child's imagination and ideas one step further.
- ▣ Extend the play by changing it slightly.
- ▣ Try something new with the same toy or activity.
- ▣ Then wait for the child to try to imitate you.
- ▣ Support his or her attempts to try new things.

## 5. Close the Communication Circle

- ▣ Be aware of when the child is tuning out.
- ▣ Let the child be in charge.
- ▣ Has your child had enough or wants a different activity?
- ▣ Wait to see if the child will re-engage.
- ▣ Then join your child in his or her next interest area.



## Techniques for Scaffolding Child-directed Play

- Structure for success (safe place, good timing, right toys).
- Let your child take the lead and decide what to play.
- Ask to join his or her play.
- Imitate his or her play or join in with turn taking.
- Share the child's enjoyment. Smile and laugh.
- Fix problems without pointing them out.
- Praise your child's efforts. "You did it. What a tall tower!"
- Extend the play by taking the child's ideas one step further.
- Demonstrate (model) a new way to play with the same toy.
- Wait to see if your child imitates you. Follow your child's lead.
- Help your child if he or she becomes frustrated or stuck.
- Divide problems into "doable" pieces.
- Let your child show you when to move on or when to quit.



## A Floortime Drama

Baby gets out a bag of blocks.

Mom finds a space of clear solid floor so the blocks won't fall.

Mom sits facing her baby.

Mom helps the baby unlatch the bag.

Mom allows the baby to open bag and pour out blocks.

Mom waits while her baby handles the blocks.

Baby bangs blocks together.

Mom bangs blocks together.

Baby hands a block out toward Mom.

Mom takes the block and hands it back to baby.

Baby smiles.

Mom smiles.

Mom stacks some blocks.

Baby knocks the stack down.

Mom stacks the blocks again and waits for the baby's next action.

Baby picks up a block and puts it in a truck.

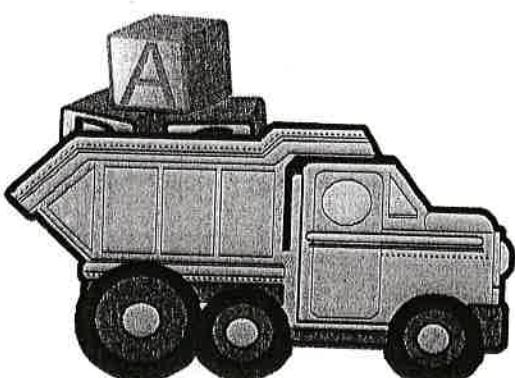
Mom asks her baby if they should fill the truck up.

Baby fills truck.

Mom pushes the truck and makes truck noises.

Baby makes truck noises, laughs, and looks at Mom.

Mom smiles and says, "Listen to that truck go!"





## Guidance and Modeling

- Guidance means showing babies how to behave; teaching the do's.
- Guidance means understanding a baby's temperament and emotional intensity.
- Guidance means stabilizing a baby's extremes.
- Guidance means planning ahead to avoid problems.
- Guidance means regulating through shared positive emotions.

### PARENTING TOOLS FOR THE 6- TO 9-MONTH-OLD BABY

By 6 months of age, babies gain a new skill daily. Their bodies and minds are rapidly changing and growing. They remember some things, but most things are new. It is a very confusing, but exciting, world. Parents provide structure, continuity, and balance to the baby's world. They are the model and guide to behavior.

**Plan ahead:** Have age-appropriate toys. Put dangerous or valuable items out of reach. Have open spaces to explore or clear surfaces to play on. Plan around feeding or sleeping times. Keep baby's schedule.

**Be developmentally appropriate.** Is this a task that is within baby's skill level? Is this something new for baby, or something familiar? Will baby chew it, bang it, throw it? Can baby watch you to learn what to do? Learning will take time and will require energy from the baby. Babies love to copy people.

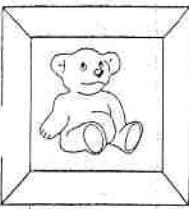
**Listen to the baby; give the baby choices.** Babies are motivated to practice and master new skills. At this age they will be trying new sounds and movements. Sometimes allow babies to take the lead. Then the parent can copy and guide the baby's behavior.

**Listen to the baby's state.** Is tiredness, hunger, or boredom making the baby's behavior off-balance?

**Teach the do's.** Let the baby learn from watching. Model surprise, excitement, and interest. Be sure the baby can see what is happening. Always talk about what is happening, using words like "We buckle the car seat to keep us safe. We pick up this game before we get the next." Through the "do's" parents can establish rules for safety, respect, and relationships.

The word "no" has no meaning for a baby. Saying "no" without anger must be followed by an action to show the baby the meaning of "no." Anger is not helpful. Be sure to show the baby what you do want. Your actions mean more than words.

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## Guidance and Modeling, cont.

Ignore behavior you don't like. Babies will try everything to get your attention. They will repeat any behavior that you respond to. A negative response from a parent is as interesting to a baby as a positive response. Giving *no response* will extinguish the behavior. This is a great tool for behavior management. Use it often.

Some of a baby's objectionable behavior happens because of a development stage, such as "banging" behavior. Such a behavior will run its course and disappear on its own. You cannot *teach* a baby to stop a developmental step! You will need to be tolerant and patient. Developmental behaviors will go away faster if you allow opportunity for practice and learning. Instead of becoming frustrated, find an acceptable place for the baby to bang things.

**Divert the baby.** Use rhythm, fun, and interest to divert a baby when he or she gets bored, fussy, or is interested in something forbidden. Change the game slightly. Change the environment. Change the toys. Babies have a very short attention span. They are usually diverted easily, especially if you use excitement in your voice. No need to scold or call attention to your concerns.

**Remove the baby, or remove the object.** Don't scold, just solve the problem. Guidance only works if it is effective. If the baby is banging a cup on the table, take the cup and substitute a rag doll. Say "no" or hold baby's hands quietly while you take the cup, but don't be cross. The baby will begin to understand the meaning of the word "no," and this will be helpful later. If the baby is reaching for the lamp, say clearly "no" and remove the baby to another spot. Give the baby something else new and interesting to play with. Remember, until babies have explored and learned about the things that interest them, they will go right back. A baby's desire to practice new skills may lead to problem behaviors.

**Demonstrate what you want to happen.** At this age, babies need to see their parents demonstrate what is wanted, e.g., taking the baby off the furniture and putting him onto the floor, guiding the baby's hand and spoon from the dish to her mouth, holding the baby's hand to pat the dog gently. Young babies do not understand verbal explanation or orders.

When you want to change the baby's behavior, do not laugh or tease. Speak clearly and firmly in a neutral tone so that your message will be understood. Your actions and your change of face and voice will also help keep the baby from being confused.

**Always ask "Why?":** When your baby seems out of control or is misbehaving, STOP! Before you do anything ask: "Why? ... Why are you acting this way? ... Do you want my attention? ... Are you hungry? ... Are you tired? ... Are you frightened? ... Are you confused? Are you overexcited? ... Are you practicing something new? ... Are you testing me?" When you can answer your "Why" question, your guidance will be more appropriate, and you will be more able to respond without anger.