



Expressing Warmth and Affection to Children

HANDOUT

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Expressing warmth and affection to children is important for a number of reasons:

- ✓ It shows children that teachers and other caregivers like them, enjoy being with them, are having fun with them, and are pleased with their efforts and accomplishments.
- ✓ It reassures and comforts children and contributes to secure relationships between children and adults.
- ✓ It provides models of positive, gentle behavior and is linked with children's ability to interact with peers.
- ✓ It leads to teachers' enjoyment of the warmth and affection of children.



Remember:

- ✓ Expressions of warmth and affection are most effective in the context of an ongoing positive relationship between a child and caregiver.
- ✓ Warmth and affection can be expressed in so many different ways including smiles, laughter, voice tone, words of endearment ("I missed you", "little one"), encouragement, and many types of physical contact (a quick pat on the head, a special handshake, gentle stroking, hugging).
- ✓ It is critical to express warmth and affection to children in ways that are sensitive to their individual preferences, family and cultural background, temperament, disabilities, and possible history of abuse. Some children may prefer very brief rather than lengthy touch, for example.
- ✓ Classrooms that are well organized and predictable set the stage for individualized, warm interactions with children.
- ✓ Children who are the most challenging are often those who need warmth and affection the most.

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