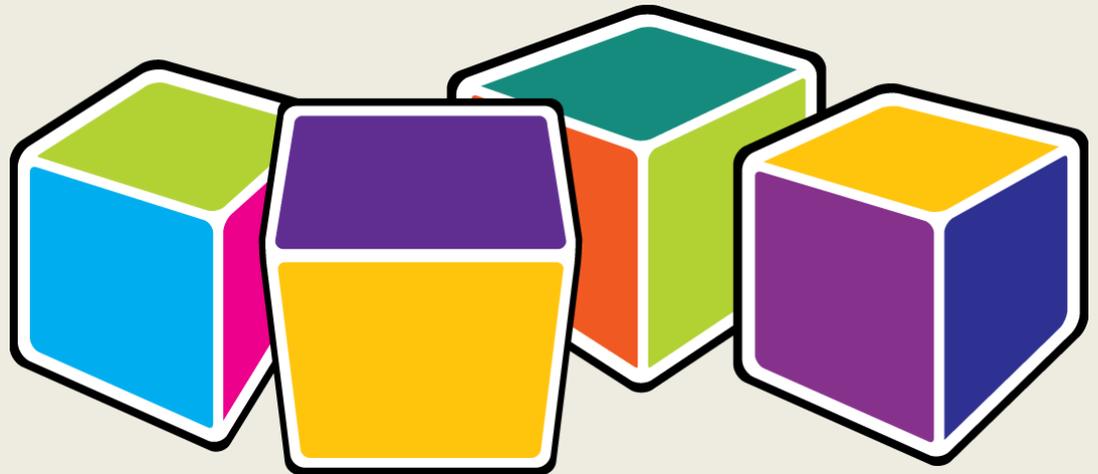


An overview of

# Handle with Care

Strategies for Promoting the Mental Health of Young Children in  
Community-Based Child Care

*Hinks Dellcrest  
Centre*



# Handle with Care Objectives

- To equip participants with the skills and information necessary to promote the mental health of children in child care centres through daily practices
- To identify the issues and challenges of implementing mental health promotion in child care at the community level

# Key Principles of Mental Health Promotion

- applies to whole population in the context of everyday life
- aims to enhance control and resiliency
- builds on individual and community capacity
- focuses on individual, the family and the community level
- addresses issues that affect everyone
- aims to enhance participation
- increases social cohesion and builds social support

# Mental Health Promotion and Related Concepts

Mental health promotion vs. prevention

Mental health promotion

- is aimed at general population rather than at risk populations
- seeks to bring about mental health rather than preventing specific mental illnesses

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# Handle with Care Overview

**Building Block 1:** Developing Trust Between Practitioner and Child

**Building Block 2:** Building and Ensuring Positive Self-Esteem

**Building Block 3:** Expressing Emotions

**Building Block 4:** Relationships with Other Children

**Building Block 5:** Respecting Diversity

**Building Block 6:** Change and Transitions

**Building Block 7:** Relationships with Parents

**Building Block 8:** Well-Being of Practitioners

**Building Block 9:** Environment



# BUILDING BLOCK 1

## Developing Trust Between Practitioner and Child



# Attachment System Activated When...

- Emotionally upset (afraid, sad, lonely)
- Physically hurt
- III

# Positive Attachments

## Provide a Foundation For

- Developing a sense of inner confidence and self efficacy
- Expressing curiosity and eagerness to explore the environment
- Regulating emotions and behaviour
- Enjoying harmony and pleasure in relationships with others, including peers
- Having the capacity to build secure and enduring relationships throughout life, including with their own children

# Centre Factors in Attachment

- **Low Child : Staff Ratios**
  - Enhance practitioner-child interaction quality
  - Practitioners can accommodate individual children
  - Especially important during infancy stage

# Centre Factors in Attachment

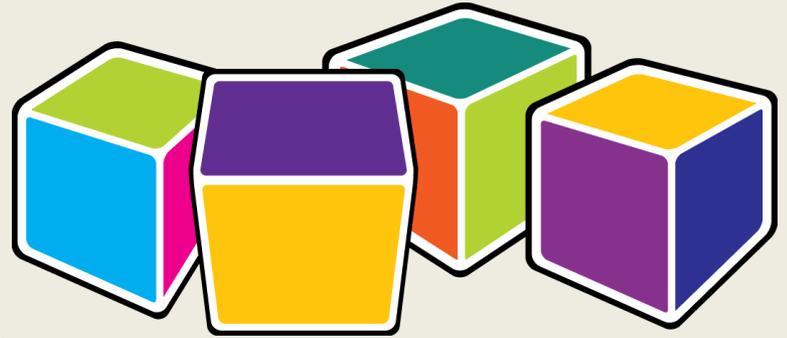
- **Low Staff Turnover**
  - Staff consistency allows for good practitioner-child relationships
  - Strong, trusting relationships are necessary for attachment
  - Low pay and poor working conditions lead to high turnover

# Centre Factors in Attachment

- **Parents' Informed Choice About Child Care Setting**
  - First communication between centre and home
  - Selection process influenced by:
    - Centre location; hours of operation; cost
    - Family background; household situations

# Centre Factors in Attachment

- **Strong Connections with Parents**
  - Active communication and parent involvement are needed
  - Good connections encourage information exchange
  - Promote positive practitioner-child relationships



# Handle with Care

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