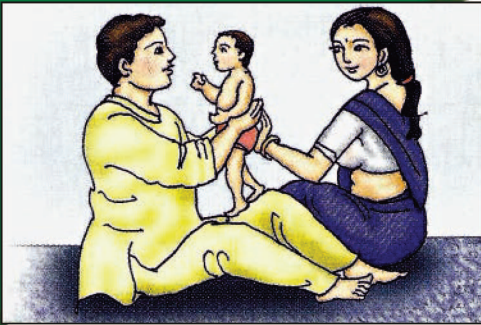




Making cooing sounds, responding to child's cues, pausing for child's response, telling the child about the surroundings are helpful for sustaining the interaction. Encouraging exploration, imitating child's actions or play will help make the interaction interesting.

Factor affecting Mother-Infant Interaction

Material factors:

- Lack of self confidence.
- Insensitivity to baby's needs.
- Ignorance and poor expression.
- Responding in the same way.
- Being emotionally upset and tense.
- Negligence and inattentiveness.
- Disappointment about baby's physical characteristics and sex of the child.
- Frustration about baby's crying.
- Depression.

Infant factor :

- Innate behavioural style of the child like:
 - Responsivity (able to respond to people & things around)
 - Irritability (getting distressed easily by crying)
 - Consolability (able to regulate stress by sucking hands or changing position)
- Dull, weak, and chronically ill baby.
- Sensory abilities like seeing, hearing, feeling by touch.
- Developmental disabilities.



EARLY INTERVENTION SERIES



MOTHER - INFANT INTERACTION



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Mother Infant interaction

Children cry, fuss and make body movements, which enables the mother / caregiver to attend and respond to the child by talking, cuddling or picking up. This becomes a means of communication, which helps the mother and child to understand each other. When the child is below 6 months he responds by cooing, babbling and making body movements. Gradually the child learns to talk and use speech and language for interactions. These interactions are mutual as the mother influences the child and child influences the mother.



Importance

Through these interactions the infant tries to imitate, vocalize and respond to the mother. It reinforces the child to respond which becomes the basis for learning.

This ability of the child to respond mutually forms the basis for development of behaviour. Therefore mother-infant interaction fosters:

- All round development.
- Opportunities for understanding and knowing about the surroundings.
- The ability to imitate, vocalize and respond to the environment and people.
- A bond that is essential for emotional well being.
- The ability to use speech and language.
- The ability to anticipate, manipulate and solve problems.
- Ample opportunities for stimulation and reinforcement.
- The ability to regulate the emotions.

Hence Mother-Infant interactions enable the child to build up expectations of the mother and provide a means for relating to people and objects in the surroundings.

When to interact

Learning to recognize and understand the infant's facial expressions helps the mother to engage the infant and respond to his behaviour accordingly. This becomes a motivation for the infant and helps to sustain the interaction, thereby promoting attention. This facilitates the mother and child to respond and interact mutually. For infants below one-year care-giving routines like feeding, bathing, diapering and dressing provide ample opportunities to involve them in interactions.



When children are two years old, involving them in family routines and encouraging them in simple activities like eating, bathing and dressing provide opportunities for interaction. As the child learns to anticipate that his or her behaviour can elicit the caregiver's responsiveness, he is encouraged to interact.

An infant's ability to respond depends on the kind of responses that mother/caregiver makes. Children respond when they are in a more positive state and when they are active.

The child's ability to respond positively increases when he:

- is alert and relaxed.
- looks at your face and listens to your voice by responding.
- has no discomfort like hunger, wet nappies or pain etc.

Child's ability to respond decreases when he:

- starts yawning and avoids eye contact.
- is getting drowsy and goes into light sleep state.
- tries to change position or does not respond.
- starts to suck on hands or fingers.
- is dull and lethargic due to illness.
- is hungry or uncomfortable due to wet nappies or pain etc.

How to interact

When interacting with the child observe for the cues and signals given by him. As you try to draw the child's attention, he begins to interact by attempting to smile, gaze or vocalize. The child's behaviour should guide your interaction and with it you will soon learn about your child's abilities. Try to keep the child in close proximity and maintain physical contact by touching, kissing and responding mutually. Eye to eye contact is also essential.

How to make interactions interesting

The following behavioural patterns help to make mother-child interaction interesting and responsive.

Behaviours that foster mother-infant interaction. Touching, smiling, holding, talking in varied intonation patterns, singing lullabies, rocking the child gently are essential for starting the interaction.

