**Lesson 2: main activity 1 – videos, teacher sheet**

**Baby talk**

**(3.05 mins)**

<https://www.unicef.org/parenting/child-development/baby-talk-class>

Baby talk is more than a silly way to communicate, make it simpler, repeat words, speak slower, exaggerate the facial expressions. Babies react to baby talk - it is easier to listen to, they like the melodic patterns. These make it easier to listen to and learn from. Some of the main points for students to pick up on are:

* Care givers should **speak to their baby**, as they do everyday tasks, **read and describe books** and pictures (stimulation)
* Speech should be **simpler, slower, ‘sing song’, and with repeated words or phrases**.
* It helps to build bonds with carers (protection) which makes them feel safe and loved.
* It **prepares their brains for learning language**.

Extension research more able students: in psychology, this is called motherese (or parentese)

**Serve and return**

**(2.42 mins)**

<https://www.albertafamilywellness.org/resources/video/serve-and-return>

Early interactions between young children and their parents or caregivers are essential to promoting healthy brain development, and how these positive experiences help to build fundamental brain architecture in children. Serve and return occurs when a parent or caregiver is responsive to a child’s verbal cues and actions. By providing positive feedback via eye contact, sound, words and physical interaction, the adult helps spark the child’s interest and enthusiasm in practicing things like speech, language and social learning. Without active serve and return engagement, children can lose interest in these activities, potentially undermining the development of fundamental brain architecture.

Areas to encourage students to cover:

* The adult **notices the child’s need**
* The adult **responds to the child’s needs** through different interactions (voice, touch, eye contact, sound)
* This is important for developing the early neural circuits we looked at last lesson
* These become the foundations of brain development.

Extension research more able students: in psychology, this is called contingent responsiveness.

Alternative video (6 minutes) – includes how to engage in serve and return interactions in 5 easy steps. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/how-to-5-steps-for-brain-building-serve-and-return/>

**Intentional play**

**(4.57 mins)**

<https://vimeo.com/505601316/cde3ca6023>

Play is central to learning, particularly in the early years. It helps to lay the foundations for learning and development by increasing connectivity in neural circuits. Play gives opportunities for: thinking creatively, problem solving, language development, positive social skills, reading and learning to write. Make believe or pretend play is particularly important for developing some of the executive function skills. Adults can improve play experiences by playing along, joining in with the role play by asking questions. They can also look out for social interaction and use of language to interact with other young children and deal with frustration when it arises. The adult can facilitate here by asking questions and encouraging positive interactions. Play complexity should increase as they get older, adding further dimensions to the play. Adults can help support this by suggesting additional depth to the play or questioning to add detail and complexity to the play e.g. “have you thought about doing this… or… what would happen if you did that?”. Adults need to also give time for children to play alone. Promoting play enhances overall child development. It incorporates the principles behind serve and return interactions or contingent responses (see above).

Encourage students to give examples of questions they might use to improve the quality of play for developing skills or the types of games to play. Students might identify some of the following from the video:

* Take and make opportunities for **playful interactions** e.g. peekaboo. **Join in**.
* Play teaches **turn taking, focus and concentration.**
* **Follow the child’s idea** of how to play and how to use equipment.
* **Label and describe what is happening** as they play. This helps build their vocabulary and language skills. It shows the caregiver is paying attention.
* Caregivers can help children **increase the complexity of their play** interactions or build on what they are doing.

**Executive function and self-regulation**

**(3.50 mins)**

<https://www.albertafamilywellness.org/resources/video/executive-function>

This video discusses the importance of executive function, or the air traffic control system of the brain. Executive function encompasses the higher order operations that help us organize information and regulate our behaviour, including prioritizing, delaying gratification, planning ahead, coping with frustration, and following rules. Children with good executive function find it easier to get along with others and develop adaptive responses to social demands. Conversely, kids without well-developed executive function skills experience higher levels of frustration, problem behaviour and anxiety. Executive function skills develop early in life in stable environments with the support of attentive caregivers. Toxic stress and chaotic environments, on the other hand, tend to lead to weaker brain architecture as well as limited opportunities to learn and practice essential executive function skills.

(Toxic stress – prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective environments)

You might want to encourage students to:

* Explain of what **executive function skills** are. They may give examples from the balloons (cope with frustrations, follow rules, thinking, planning, organising, paying attention, self-regulation).
* Recognise that **these skills are** **learnt**. The most sensitive time for learning is 0-5 years old and adolescence (11-about 25).
* Caregivers can help by: **setting a good example with their own behaviour, practicing serve and return interactions, and preventing toxic stress.**
* Caregivers can help by providing a **stable, predictable and protective environment**.