

THE BASIS OF THE RIE APPROACH: RESPECT

Respect is the basis of the RIE philosophy.

We not only respect babies, we demonstrate our respect every time we interact with them. Respecting a child means treating even the youngest infant as a unique human being, not as an object.

OUR GOAL: AN AUTHENTIC CHILD

An authentic child is one who feels secure, autonomous, and competent.

When we help a child to feel secure, feel appreciated, feel that "somebody is deeply, truly interested in me," by the way we just look, the way we just listen, we influence that child's whole personality, the way that child sees life.

TRUST IN THE INFANT'S COMPETENCE

We have basic trust in the infant to be an initiator, to be an explorer eager to learn what he is ready for.

Because of this trust, we provide the infant with only enough help necessary to allow the child to enjoy mastery of her own actions.

SENSITIVE OBSERVATION

Our method, guided by respect for the infant's competence, is observation. We observe carefully to understand the infant's communications and his needs.

The more we observe, the more we understand and appreciate the enormous amount and speed of learning that happens during the first two or three years of life. We become more humble, we teach less, and we provide an environment for learning instead.

CAREGIVING TIMES: INVOLVING THE CHILD

During care activities (diapering, feeding, bathing, dressing, etc.), we encourage even the tiniest infant to become an active participant rather than a passive recipient of the activities. Parents create opportunities for interaction, cooperation, intimacy and mutual enjoyment by being wholeheartedly with the infant during the time they spend together anyway.

"Refueled" by such unhurried, pleasurable caring experiences, infants are ready to explore their environment with only minimal intervention by adults.

A SAFE, CHALLENGING, PREDICTABLE ENVIRONMENT

Our role is to create an environment in which the child can best do all the things that the child would do naturally. The more predictable an environment is, the easier it is for babies to learn.

As infants become more mobile, they need safe, appropriate space in which to move. Their natural, inborn desire to move should not be handicapped by the environment.

TIME FOR UNINTERRUPTED PLAY AND FREEDOM TO EXPLORE

We give the infant plenty of time for uninterrupted play. Instead of trying to teach babies new skills, we appreciate and admire what babies are actually doing.

CONSISTENCY

We establish clearly defined limits and communicate our expectations to develop discipline.