



Thoughts to Share

Parenting is a state of being that applies to every moment of family life. A parent simply turning their attention toward their child does not always generate feelings of overwhelming joy. Yes there are joyful moments, however daily life is often hectic, turning attention away from parenting. It is the little routine moments that accumulate which strengthen family life.

Yesterday, while enjoying tea in a local coffee shop, I noticed two parents with a toddler and infant. Dad watched their two children while Mom placed a drink order. During that moment, much eye to eye contact occurred between Dad and baby. Dad used an energetic relaxed voice inflection to gain his toddler's attention. Dad reached and gently jiggled his baby's foot, then rubbed his toddler's shoulder. Smiles were exchanged between baby, Dad, and toddler. Dad hugged his toddler. The toddler stroked his baby sister's head. This all took place in just a few minutes.

Responsive parenting takes practice with mindful intent and practical actions incorporated throughout the day. The method of asking for permission and mindfully watching for permission given is an intentional moment. When parents use these moments they spark positive cellular memories that influence their children's brain

The Tao of Motherhood by Vimala McClure

Someone who travels often knows the best routes. Someone who speaks for a living knows when to pause. Someone who works with numbers knows how to add and subtract in her head.

A wise mother knows: It is her state of consciousness that matters.

Her gentleness and clarity command respect. Her love creates security.

To learn the Way, children need to respect the Mother. To learn the Way, mothers need to cherish the Child

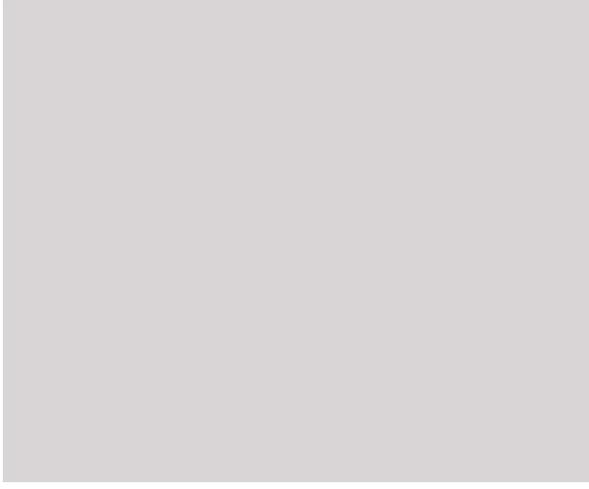
Thus each follows nature and finds the Self.

Have you visited the home page recently? There you will see new Blogs from Vimala. She is sharing her thoughts once a week. [Come check it out.](#)

growth. Imagine what is growing inside a child's brain, what is behind a parent's actions when a child experiences daily parent baby massage moments. Spend time this week pointing out to parents those mindful moments they take with their child and share how these moments are nurturing healthy brain development.

Angela Rau

Board President



The Science of Neglect



The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child has released a Working Paper on The Science of Neglect: The Persistent Absence of Responsive Care Disrupts the Developing Brain.

This paper presents that the Building Blocks of thriving communities and well-functioning societies rest on the health and development of their people. Beginning immediately after birth, a strong foundation for human well-being requires responsive environments and supportive relationships to build sturdy brain circuits, facilitate emerging capabilities, and strengthen the roots of physical and mental health.^{1,2,3} Through mutually rewarding, "serve and return" interactions with the adults who care for them (see sidebar below), young children are both initiators and respondents in this ongoing process.

Book Review: *Sage Parenting: Where Nature Meets Nurture* by Rachel Rainbolt, MA

Book review by Suzanne P. Reese, CEIM, IAIMT

At first glance, *Sage Parenting: Where Nature Meets Nurture* by Rachel Rainbolt, MA can look overwhelming. While I'm a reader, as a mother, I don't generally look at a near-400 page book and think "Hey, I think I'll read that right now!" - not anymore. I'd made the commitment to read and review *Sage Parenting* though, so there I was getting myself started and, much to my surprise, it was a very easy read! It's not the kind of book you have to read cover-to-cover in one shot. It's the kind of book where you pick and choose what you want/need to read at that moment, and when you read it, it's more like listening to a friend talking. *Sage Parenting* is the kind of book that affirms a lot of what we already know as parents while introducing new ideas. *Sage Parenting* is there to remind us that we have the inherent knowledge we need to do what's right for our ourselves, our families and our children, that we must not adhere to anyone else's standards, and no matter what parenting choices we make, there is always another way, and it might be a way we had not



These reciprocal and dynamic interactions are essential for healthy development and literally shape the architecture of the developing brain.^{4,5}

Because responsive relationships are developmentally expected and biologically essential, their *absence* signals a serious threat to child well-being, particularly during the earliest years, and this absence activates the body's stress response systems. When decreased responsiveness persists, the lost opportunities associated with diminished interaction can be compounded by the adverse impacts of excessive stress activation, the physiological effects of which can have lifelong consequences. This multidimensional assault on the developing brain underscores why significant deprivation is so harmful in the earliest years of life and why effective interventions are likely to pay significant dividends in better long-term outcomes in learning, health, and parenting of the next generation.

[Read more or download the paper here](#)

Babies' Brains Benefit from Music Lessons, Even Before They Can Walk and Talk

After completing the first study of its kind, researchers at McMaster University have discovered that very early musical training benefits children even before they can walk or talk. They found that one-year-old babies who participate in interactive music classes with their parents smile more, communicate better and show earlier and more sophisticated brain responses to music.

considered, that we didn't even know existed - and maybe it's a fit, maybe it's not, but now we have a choice. *Sage Parenting* is a lot like the infant massage approach we teach, it offers parents choices. There is no *one* way to do things, and the *right* way to do things is the way that feels best in your heart - that's where *nature meets nurture*. Speaking of infant massage, *Sage Parenting* is written by an IMUSA CEIM so, of course, there is a whole chapter on infant massage - chapter six to be exact! Rachel Rainbolt is honest about everything, she doesn't leave anything out, and it's all from personal experience. She is a mother of three and is an active parent educator, so she's really on the front lines of everything pregnancy and parenting. I recommend *Sage Parenting* to any parent and parent-to-be who wants to be on the listening side of intelligent conversation that lifts them up and like Glinda the Good Witch from *The Wizard of Oz* says, "You've always had it, my dear."

Modern Parenting May Hinder Brain Development, Notre Dame Researcher Claims by [Darcia Narvaez, PhD](#)

"Life outcomes for American youth are worsening, especially in comparison to 50 years ago," says Darcia Narvaez, Notre Dame professor of psychology who specializes in moral development in children and how early life experiences can influence brain development.





The findings were published recently in the scientific journals *Developmental Science* and *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*.

"Many past studies of musical training have focused on older children," says Laurel Trainor, director of the McMaster Institute for Music and the Mind. "Our results suggest that the infant brain might be particularly plastic with regard to musical exposure." [Read more](#)

Infant Massage in the NICU by Lisa Bader

As an occupational therapist and CEIM working in a NICU, my job may be quite different from many CEIMs around the world. I wanted to share with you some insight into the world of premature infants and specifically what infant massage looks like in the NICU.

It is first important to have a basic understanding of the preemie brain. The brain of a premature infant is quite different from that of a full term infant. In 2003, a study revealed what had been suspected for years. The MRI of 260 babies born more than 10 weeks early and weighing less than 1250 grams were compared with those of full term infants. The premature babies had 30% less gray matter (the brain's thinking cells) than full term babies and 40% less white matter (connections) (Dunn, 2003). We also know that the brain of infants in the last trimester of pregnancy is wiring at 40,000 connections per minute! Furthermore, the infant's brain at 35 weeks weighs only two-thirds of what it

"Ill-advised practices and beliefs have become commonplace in our culture, such as the use of infant formula, the isolation of infants in their own rooms or the belief that responding too quickly to a fussing baby will 'spoil' it," Narvaez says.

This new research links certain early, nurturing parenting practices undefined the kind common in foraging hunter-gatherer societies undefined to specific, healthy emotional outcomes in adulthood, and has many experts rethinking some of our modern, cultural child-rearing "norms."

[To continue reading the article](#)

Call for Papers From WAIMH

Journal of Social Service Research: Call for Papers

Research on the Challenges Faced by Families with Very Young Children Experiencing Health or Mental Health Problems



Deadline: March 15, 2013

Journal of Social Service Research is seeking multidisciplinary research-related manuscripts for a special issue on the challenges faced by families with very young children experiencing health or mental health problems. Topic areas related to the stressors and challenges affecting parents and families of this child population will be considered for peer review. Manuscripts on relationships between illnesses and family interactional patterns as well as how culture, race and ethnicity impact chronically ill children and their families are encouraged.

All articles need to reflect research that is data-based OR extensive literature reviews

will weigh at 40 weeks (Engle et al., 2007). In the third trimester, the progress in brain development depends upon experiences in the womb-or NICU in the case of premature babies (Graven, 2007). Nurses, parents, therapists, and doctors need to understand that they are affecting the infant's brain development with each and every interaction in the NICU. It is everyone's job to create adaptive responses versus maladaptive responses in the brain. In the NICU, protection of the developing brain from environmental insults and noxious stimuli is critical. This concept, called neuroprotection, is not new to the medical world but is a fairly new idea to the NICU. Neuroprotection encompasses all interventions that promote normal development of the brain and prevent disabilities.

[To read the full article](#)

Parent Newsletter

Would you like to help your parents stay connected with Infant Massage USA®? Let them know about parent newsletter. It's easy. Just go to InfantMassageUSA.org. Scroll to the bottom of the home page and click on [Sign-up for our parent newsletter or to receive information about our upcoming trainings](#). They can register to receive our Parent Newsletters.

Help with Parent Newsletter

Do you enjoy writing? Do you think of information you would like to share with parents? Crystal Whittington would love to have others join her in collecting information for the newsletter. We currently publish the parent newsletter quarterly. With a little help we might be able to publish every month. Contact Crystal at cwhittington@harding.edu or send an email to general.info@infantmassageusa.org

that clearly outline previous research and make recommendations for future research. Deadline for submission is March 15, 2013.

Information on related topics, submission guidelines and how to contact the Guest Editor is available at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01488376.2012.703581>

Please direct any questions to the Guest Editor:

Ana Leon, PhD, ana.leon@ucf.edu

Our Dolls Are Our Most Important Teaching Tools

As a CEIM, you may have noticed how important your doll is as you teach families infant massage. Besides allowing you to demonstrate the strokes, your doll helps you show parents how to ask permission of their baby. You use your doll to show positioning for massage. When the [real!] babies get fussy and parents can hardly hear you, you pick up your baby doll and give it a hug, and everyone follows suit. We give extra dolls to couples or parents with sleeping babies to help them learn the strokes.

CEIMs name their dolls and develop a relationship with them, just as we want our parents to feel close to their own babies.

In Angela Underdown's research on "Interventions to support early relationships: mechanisms identified within infant massage programmes," she observed that "when facilitators actively communicated with their dolls throughout the session, mothers

copied, talking more with their babies.” [To read more](#)



The [Infant Massage Warehouse](#) carries infant massage dolls in four ethnicities and three different styles. You may want to replace your current doll, or keep extra dolls for parents who need them. You will also find small sunflower oil bottles for your classes, Vimala’s infant massage book at a great price when you buy it in bulk, CDs for your class and for parents, and much more. You can also [download](#) a warehouse flyer to hand out to parents you work with.

Jody Wright, CEIM, IAIMT, and our Infant Massage Warehouse manager

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