

6. Children need caring and nurturing relationships with adults.

What We Believe

We believe that children need caring and nurturing relationships with adults because these connections form the foundation for all development and learning. Warm, responsive relationships help children feel safe, valued, and understood, fostering trust and emotional security. Through consistent, loving interactions, children learn how to regulate emotions, build social skills, and explore the world with confidence.

Why This is Important

Caring and nurturing relationships in early childhood settings are essential because they create the emotional security children need to learn, grow, and thrive. When children feel safe and connected to trusted adults, they are more confident in exploring their environment, trying new things, and forming positive relationships with others. These early bonds support brain development, emotional regulation, and social competence.

✓ What it looks like when we get it right.	✗ What it feels like when we get it wrong.
Educators greet each child warmly, speak to them at their eye level, and respond promptly to emotional needs with patience and care. Children feel safe, seen, and valued.	Adults are rushed, distracted, or inconsistent in their responses. Comfort is delayed or dismissed. Children may feel insecure, anxious, or withdrawn. They struggle to self-regulate and may act out in an attempt to seek connection.
The daily routine is predictable, and adults consistently fulfill their promises and meet expectations. Children are comforted when they are upset and celebrated when they are successful.	Schedules are chaotic, adults ignore distress, or promises are frequently broken. Children may feel uncertain or unsafe. This can lead to clinginess, acting out, resistance, or emotional withdrawal.
Educators take time to learn about each child's interests, temperament, family, and culture. Interactions are personalized and affirming. Children feel known and respected.	Children are treated generically, with little attention to their individual needs or backgrounds. Children may feel invisible or misunderstood, which can affect their confidence and willingness to connect with others.