

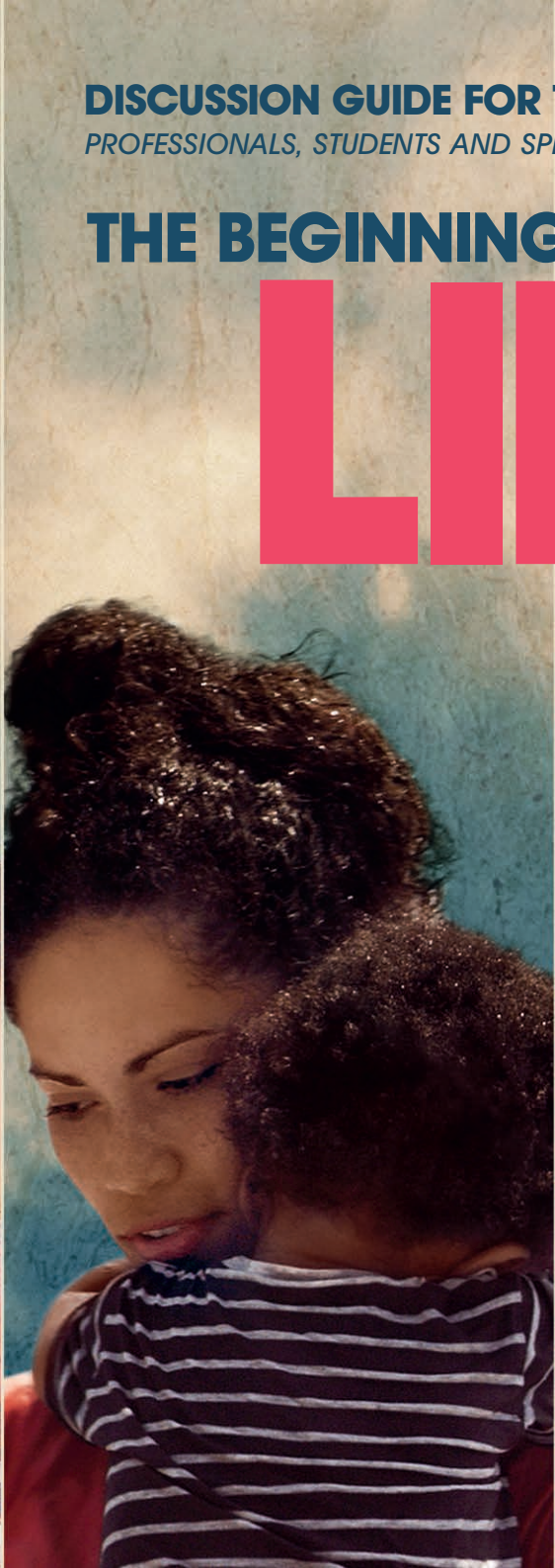
**DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR THE FILM**

*PROFESSIONALS, STUDENTS AND SPECIALISTS FROM VARIOUS SECTORS*

**THE BEGINNING OF**

**LIFE**

DIRECTED BY **ESTELA RENNER**



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# PRESENTATION

When you devote attention to the beginning of a story, you can change the whole story. The way in which children live their early childhood, from gestation up to 6 years, is crucial in defining their future. And ours.

**The Beginning of Life** invites everyone to reflect on how as a society we are taking care of the one moment that defines both the present and the future of humanity? Do we understand how an investment in the present is capable of defining – and changing – this future?

This post-screening material is a way of offering more resources to promote inspiring and consistent discussions, and help in discovering the importance of Early Childhood Development (ECD).

**This booklet was developed in modular fashion,**

**that is, so you can use the parts you wish,** in the way you find most appropriate and the order that makes most sense to you. Pick the activities you like best and, in case some of them cannot be applied, you can find inspiration to create your own exercise and deepen the reflection on the themes discussed.

And remember to let us know how it went after the activities. Your feedback, through VideoCamp, is very important to us. Don't forget to tell us what the discussion was like, what was learned and which were the favorite activities.

We are very happy that you want to be part of this movement to value Early Childhood Development.

**Together we can write a new story for humanity.**

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OPENING



# OPENING



Activity: 5 min.

Greet the group, explain the reason for the invitation and thank people for their presence.

## DIRECTIONS FOR OPENING

**Materials needed:** post-it notes or colored paper, a board or A4 paper and tape to place the paper on the wall.

**Step 1:** mediator distributes post-it notes or strips of colored paper and asks each attendee to write their name, profession and place of work.

**Step 2:** mediator asks each person to present themselves to the group and picks up the piece of paper.

**Step 3:** mediator sticks post-its or writes on a board or poster the services, levels and sectors represented.



# FILM SYNOPSIS



# FILM SYNOPSIS

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**Apresentation: 2 min.**

*The Beginning of Life* is a documentary that shows us the importance of the first years in the life of a child. Directed by Estela Renner (*Target Market: Kids, Way Beyond Weight*), the documentary was shot in nine countries. Estela interviewed child development experts and visited families in a variety of cultures, ethnicities and social classes in order to discover that creating a loving and safe environment for children during this phase is the biggest investment we can make on humanity.

REMIND THOSE PRESENT THE REASON THEY ARE THERE.

**SPEECH SUGGESTION:**

The film we are about to watch is a documentary. It doesn't tell one single story, but has many interviews with children, mothers, fathers, professionals and experts from various fields. There are also people from different countries, so the film will be dubbed or subtitled. Some terms - like brain connections, bond, parenting and toxic stress - will be used in the interviews and, if you're not sure what these mean, we will chat after the screening in order to share our knowledge.

**SPEECH SUGGESTION:**

Reiterate what the post-screening debate will be about

The theme of "The Beginning of Life" is of global interest, and the goal is to help us think about how we care for our children and, above all, what we can do differently to secure a better future for our society.

**SPEECH SUGGESTION FOR THE MEDIATOR:**

During the screening, note the aspects you consider most relevant for discussion at the end. You can write the scenes or quotes that you want to bring up during our talk on a piece of paper (mediator distributes, if they have, writing blocks and pens to each participant).

IMMEDIATELY  
FOLLOWING THE FILM



# IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE FILM



Questions: 15 min.

Invite the group to talk about the feelings, emotions and themes that came up watching the film.

What necessities came up, considering:

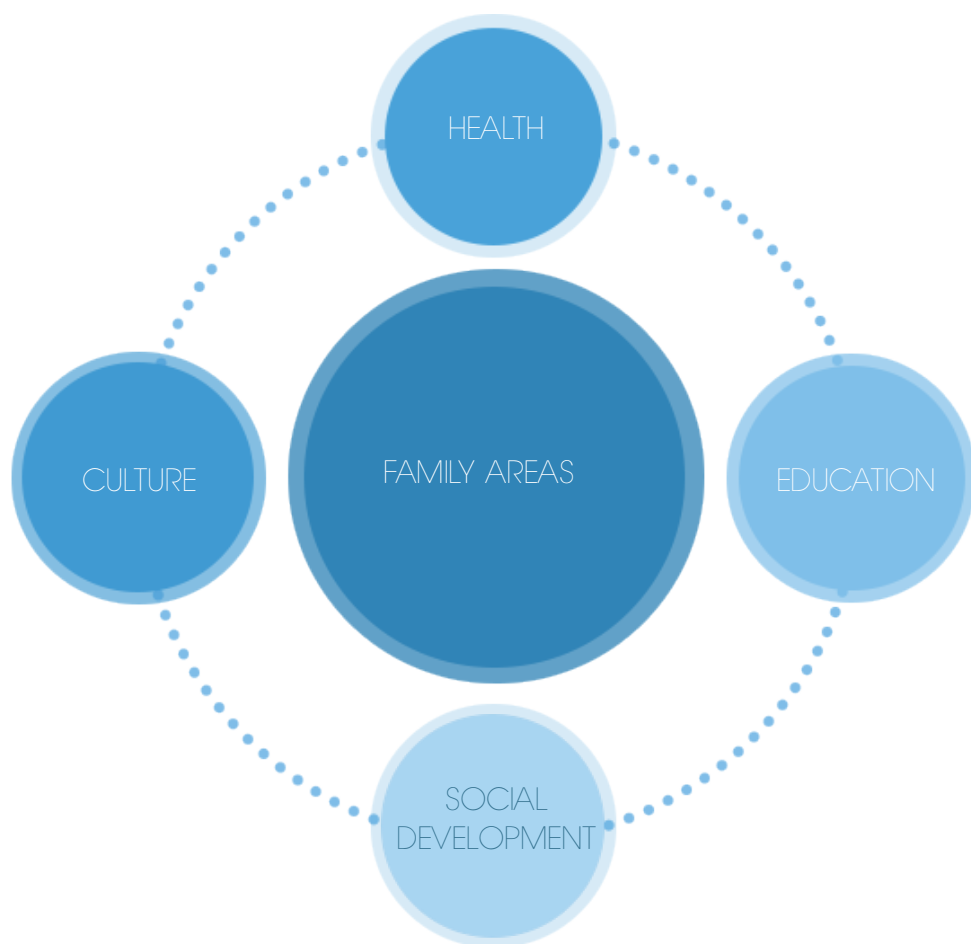
1. The family situations represented,
2. The structure of care services for the children and their family,
3. Your work on this issue.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR QUESTIONS:

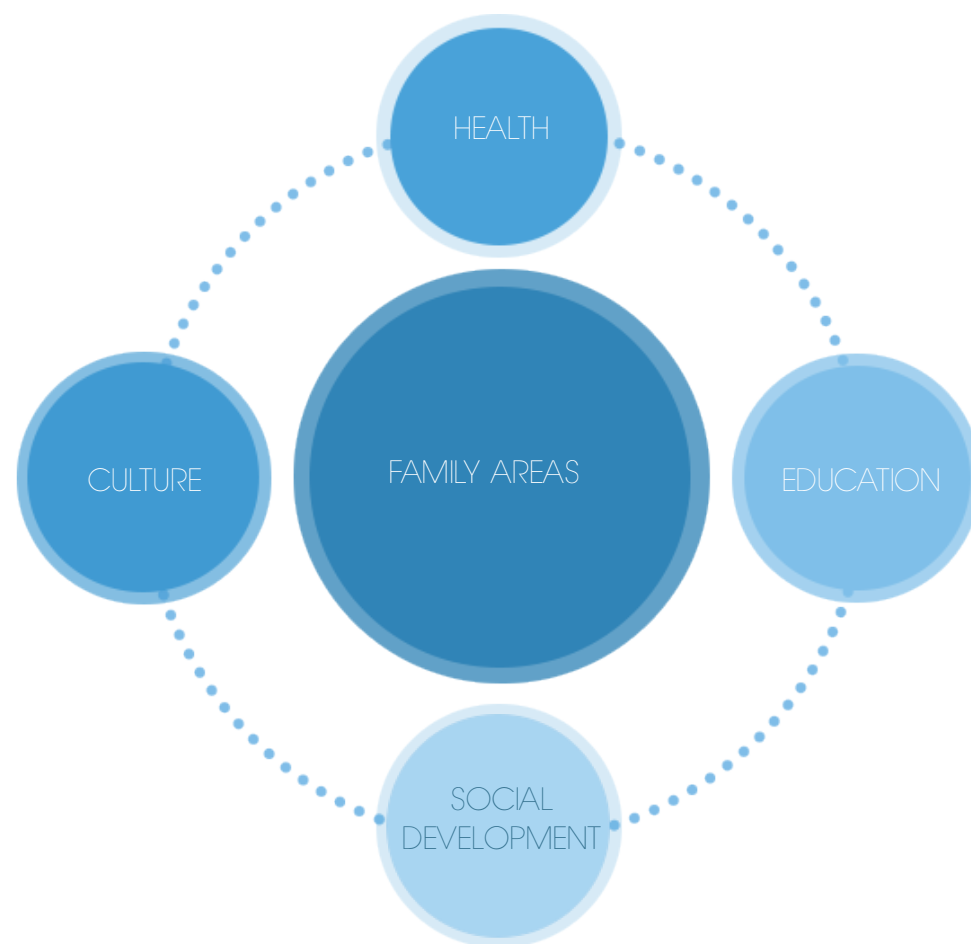
- What thoughts/feelings did the film provoke?
- What impressed you the most?
- Have you seen situations like the ones in the film in your own work?

The mediator writes down the main necessities and themes brought up by the participants and groups them together, building a thematic map by sector: education, health, social development and assistance, culture and others. The following is a suggestion for a map:

It is possible to divide the map into two models: one side indicating what already exists and, on the other side, what needs to be implemented by the services provided to families.



WHAT ALREADY EXISTS



WHAT NEEDS TO BE IMPLEMENTED

# THEMES FOR DISCUSSION



# DIRECTIONS

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The following themes are suggestions for the mediators to work together or separately, based on the interests expressed by the group and the time available to conduct the discussion.

Within each theme are suggestions for questions that can be used during a discussion or individual written activities, and suggestions for activities that can be conducted in groups of up to 20 people.

The durations are suggested so the activity does not become tiring after the screening of the film, but it is up to the mediator how long each activity lasts.



# EARLY CHILDHOOD AS A FIELD OF INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE

# EARLY CHILDHOOD AS A FIELD OF INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

is the period consisting of the first six full years or 72 months in the life of a child, that is, the period that goes from gestation up to the child's sixth year. the first six years of life represent a period of significant transformations and achievements that will serve as the foundation for the rest of their lives.

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See the full definition in this booklet's Glossary, Page 64



Questions: 15 min.  
Activity: 15 min

The mediator should bring up the definition from the glossary to start the discussion, identifying the different points of view of the concept.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION WITH THE WHOLE GROUP OR IN SUB-GROUPS:

*(if this is an individual written reflection, consider allowing more time for the group)*

The mediator should ask questions that encourage an exchange about what new information was covered by the film. Ask questions related to the group's understanding of the relevance of this period for a child's full development.

- For your area of work, what new information about childhood development did the film offer?
- What is the importance of this period, which goes from gestation up to 6 years?
- How have different sectors incorporated this information to support their practices?
- In your daily life, do you perform your work in a manner that is integrated with the other areas that involve the children?

## ACTIVITY

**Materials needed:** A3 paper or board and pens.

### STEP 1

Pick a few concepts important to the group.  
Examples: bonding, brain architecture, etc.

### STEP 2

Ask people to explain what is bonding (for example)  
and together write the group's definition on the board.





# THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRAIN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRAIN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

## BRAIN ARCHITECTURE

The building of the brain can be compared to the building of a house. In a house, construction starts with the floor and walls, then comes the roof and, finally, the water and electrical systems are installed. All of this must happen in the correct sequence, that is, to build the walls one must first make sure the floor is well set, and for the electrical wiring to be installed, the walls must be in place.

See the full definition in this booklet's Glossary. Page 64



Questions: 10 min.  
Activity: 15 min.

The mediator should bring up the definition from the glossary to start the discussion, identifying the different points of view of the concept.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION WITH THE WHOLE GROUP OR IN SUB-GROUPS:

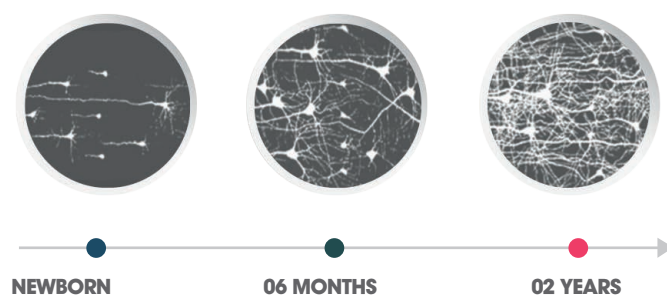
*(if this is an individual written reflection, consider allowing more time for the group)*

The mediator should explain the process of how connections in the brain are formed that was describe by various experts in the film.

## ACTIVITY

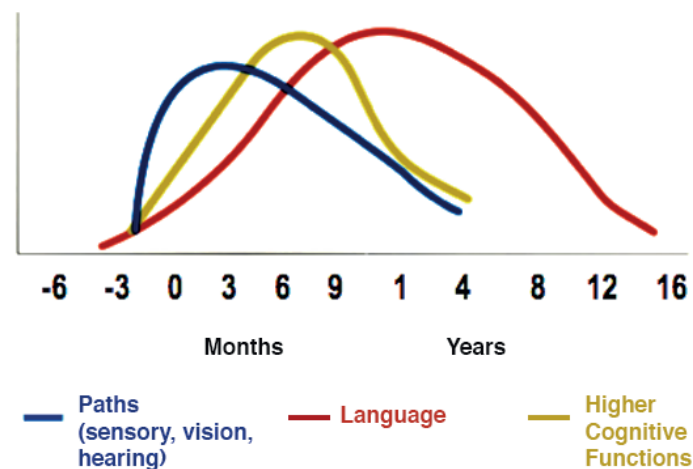
**Materials needed:** projection or print out of the images below.

## PROGRESSION OF SYNAPSE CREATION



FUNDAÇÃO MARIA CECÍLIA SOUTO VIDIGAL

## BRAIN DEVELOPMENT



C. NELSON. IN FROM NEURONS TO NEIGHBORHOODS, 2000

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The rate of creation of these connections in a child between 0 and 3 years old is very fast (700 to 1,000 new connections per second). This stage of development was only recently discovered and proves the importance of a stimulating environment.





SERVE & RETURN

# SERVE AND RETURN

## SERVE & RETURN

When kicking a ball around, children must pay attention to each other in order to exchange passes and move the ball forward. Similarly, when very small children and babies pass the ball to adults or other children in attempts to interact through sound or other movements and facial gestures, the adults have to pay attention in order to pass the ball back.

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See the full definition in this booklet's Glossary, Page 62



Questions: 10 min.  
Activity: 15 min.

The mediator should bring up the definition from the glossary to start the discussion, identifying the different points of view of the concept.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION WITH THE WHOLE GROUP OR IN SUB-GROUPS:  
*(if this is an individual written reflection, consider allowing more time for the group)*

O facilitador deve fazer perguntas que estimulem a troca de impressões sobre quais conhecimentos novos foram abordados no filme. Perguntas sobre o conhecimento do grupo acerca da relevância desse período para pleno desenvolvimento das crianças.

- Do you experience or see adults around you responding to a child's serve & return?
- How can you guide and explain the importance of this behavior for a child's development?

## ACTIVITY

**Optional material:** computer or projector to screen the video.

### STEP 1

Mediator screens the video serve and return (2 min) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m\\_5u-8-QSh6A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_5u-8-QSh6A)

### STEP 2

The mediator should present the concepts about how a child learns (see references on pages 49 to 57 of the Equipe Projeto Janelas Booklet):

Children learn by **exploring the world** (nature and their surroundings), **playing** (first with their own body, later with objects that stimulate their senses), **imitating** (the presence of an adult or another child is essential), **repeating** (for small children, repetition offers emotional security and helps them understand the world around them) and **relating** (and by creating relations between the things around them, which they observe, feel and test out).

### STEP 3

Participants should list the day-to-day situations in which children can have these experiences (the mediator can organize the situations according to the list above for the group to visualize)

The mediator can help and stimulate the conversation by asking:

- Which scenes in the film most remind you of this theme?
- What is the difference between play that involves interacting with people and the environment and activities like watching television or using the cell phone?





# CHILDREN AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

# CHILDREN AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

## STIMULATING AND PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENTS



Questions: 15 min.  
Activities: 20 min.

### STIMULATING AND PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENTS:

Affection is essential for the baby to feel safe and encouraged to explore his environment and develop autonomy.

---

See the full definition in this booklet's Glossary. Page 60

The mediator should bring up the definition from the glossary to start the discussion, identifying the different points of view of the concept.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION WITH THE WHOLE GROUP OR IN SUB-GROUPS:

*(if this is an individual written reflection, consider allowing more time for the group)*

- What role does the environment in which a child lives play in their development?
- At what moments did you notice this in the film?
- How is it possible to help and care for a baby's development if the adult has little time with them?
- Whose responsibility is it to assure a stimulating and protective environment?
- How do affection and bonding interfere in the relationship with the surroundings?

## ACTIVITY

### THE MUTE LEADS THE BLIND GAME

This activity seeks to bring people into the discussion of the roles of giver and receiver of care, and shows in a clear way the importance of the role of the adult and the environment in the child's development.

**Suggested materials to obtain a better outcome from the activity:**

fabric strips or handkerchiefs to cover the eyes.

#### STEP 1

Participants split up into pairs and choose which one will be the mute and which one will be the blind (who will have his eyes covered).

#### STEP 3

Reverse the roles – the mute becomes the blind and vice-versa. Then walk around the space for three more minutes.

#### STEP 2

For three minutes, the pairs should walk around the space available, with the mute conducting the blind.

#### STEP 4

The mediator asks the group to describe what the activity was like, identifying who was more comfortable in the role of conductor or being conducted.





# THE IMPORTANCE OF BONDING

# THE IMPORTANCE OF BONDING

## BONDING

According to Martha Harris (1995), *"a bond is the capacity of two people to experience and adjust to each other's nature, developed through continuous affectionate interaction."*

See the full definition in this booklet's Glossary, Page 66



Questions: 15 min.  
Activity: 15 min.

The mediator should bring up the definition from the glossary to start the discussion, identifying the different points of view of the concept.

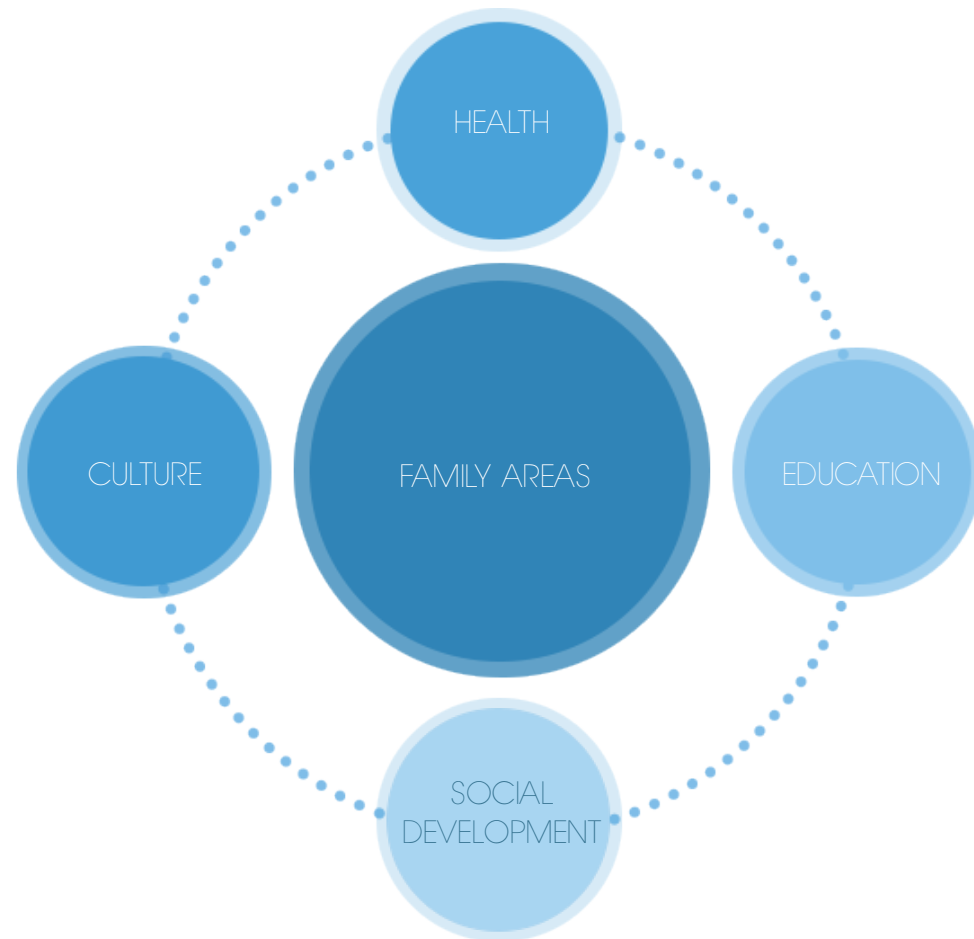
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION WITH THE WHOLE GROUP OR IN SUB-GROUPS:  
*(if this is an individual written reflection, consider allowing more time for the group)*

- Which scenes in the film show the importance of bonding?
- Do you think the families that use your services understand the importance of bonding and its relation to full development?
- In what way do the activities being carried out by different services (for health, education and social assistance) already encourage this understanding and strengthen family practices?

## ACTIVITY

**Materials needed:** map from the first post-film activity, colored paper or post-it notes and pens.

**STEP 1:** The mediator brings back the theme map created after the screening.



**STEP 2:** The mediator asks the participants to split up into groups.

**STEP 3:** The groups must answer the following question:

- **Space to reinforce the importance of bonding?**
- **What is already in place and what can be improved?**
- **In which circle can we reinforce the importance of bonding?**

Participants write the activities on post-it notes or colored paper. Examples: Education (parent-teacher meetings, children's adaptation in daycare, holiday festivities), Health (pre-natal care, mothers' support groups, childcare).

**STEP 4:** The mediator places on the map what is already being done, what can be improved, and potential areas for change.





FULL DEVELOPMENT

# FULL DEVELOPMENT

## FULL DEVELOPMENT

When we talk about full development, we include the development of physical, emotional, social and cognitive properties, and for this to fully happen, the child needs an environment that is comforting, harmonious, and rich in experiences starting in the pre-natal period, through care from the mother and father, the family, and interaction with the environment.

---

See the full definition in this booklet's Glossary, Page 61



Questions: 15 min.

The mediator should bring up the definition from the glossary to start the discussion, identifying the different points of view of the concept.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION WITH THE WHOLE GROUP OR IN SUB-GROUPS:

*(if this is an individual written reflection, consider allowing more time for the group)*

- How can we help families in the full development of their children?
- How can we address this issue with people in extremely vulnerable situations?
- How can we address full development for children with disabilities?
- What is the adequate care to help a child with disability reach their full potential?
- What services can the government offer to promote full development?



# BECOMING PARENTS

# BECOMING PARENTS

## PARENTING

The concept of parenting has been used to describe the set of activities carried out by the child's primary caregiver in their role of assuring the child's survival and full development, in order to encourage their social integration and slowly make them more autonomous.

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See the full definition in this booklet's Glossary, Page 63



Questions: 15 min.

The mediator should bring up the definition from the glossary to start the discussion, identifying the different points of view of the concept.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION WITH THE WHOLE GROUP OR IN SUB-GROUPS:

*(if this is an individual written reflection, consider allowing more time for the group)*

- How do adults prepare themselves to become fathers and mothers? Is this process natural? Is it easy?
- What are the easiest and hardest parts? Are the difficulties the same that a single father/mother encounters? And that same-sex couples encounter? And what about when parents have a child with a disability?
- Maternal and paternal functions: what is the importance of the presence of both in the development of the child? How do we treat this issue with same-sex couples? And with single parents?
- At what moments did you notice this theme in the film?
- Who can help the family to better perform these roles?





# NEGLIGENCE, ABUSE AND TOXIC STRESS

# NEGLIGENCE, ABUSE, AND TOXIC STRESS

## TOXIC STRESS

Is a serious condition that hinders a child's development.

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See the full definition in this booklet's Glossary, Page 64



Questions: 15 min.  
Activity: 20 min.

The mediator should bring up the definition from the glossary to start the discussion, identifying the different points of view of the concept.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION WITH THE WHOLE GROUP OR IN SUB-GROUPS:

*(if this is an individual written reflection, consider allowing more time for the group)*

- At what moments in the film did you notice this theme?
- When and who should intervene if there is a suspicion of abuse or negligence?
- How can we identify situations of toxic stress in our community?
- How can we help revert these practices?
- How can we identify extreme situations of exposure to violence and toxic stress during our work?
- How can we integrate actions in order to optimize their results for families?

## ACTIVITY

### Materials needed:

Modeling clay (if you don't have it, use paper and pencil)

### STEP 1

Mediator distributes the material to the participants and asks them to think of a scene in the film or a real-life situation in which negligence, abuse and/or toxic stress are present.

### STEP 2

Mediator asks the participants to represent the situation they pictured using clay or drawing.

### STEP 3

Each participant (or a few, if time is short) presents their image to the group and the mediator comments on them with the group's help.





# THE ROLE OF PLAY AND FAMILY CARE IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

# THE ROLE OF PLAY AND FAMILY CARE IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

## PLAY

The best path towards a full education. The benefits for the child include physical, cognitive, emotional and cultural development, as well as socialization and family interaction.

---

See the full definition in this booklet's Glossary, Page 60



Questions: 15 min.  
Activity: 15 min.

The mediator should bring up the definition from the glossary to start the discussion, identifying the different points of view of the concept.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION WITH THE WHOLE GROUP OR IN SUB-GROUPS:

*(if this is an individual written reflection, consider allowing more time for the group)*

If the mediator wants, before starting the activity they can ask the group what they think of the importance of play.

- Recalling what we saw in the film, how do children play?
- How can adults help create an environment that supports play?
- How can we adapt ourselves or our surroundings to encourage and support play for children with disabilities?
- How does play tell caretakers what the needs and interests of babies and children are at each phase of development?
- Are there myths and beliefs related to play?

## ACTIVITY

**Materials needed:** A3 paper or flipchart and colored pens to make a list. A computer or other system to screen a video on the internet.

### STEP 1 (optional)

Mediator screens the video serve and return (2 min) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m\\_5u-8-QSh6A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_5u-8-QSh6A)

### STEP 2

The mediator should present the concepts about how a child learns (see reference Any Time is a Time for Care, on page 55):

Children learn by **exploring the world** (nature and their surroundings), **playing** (first with their own body, later with objects that stimulate their senses), **imitating** (the presence of an adult or another child is essential), **repeating** (for small children, repetition offers emotional security and helps them understand the world around them) and **relating** (and by creating relations between the things around them, which they observe, feel and test out).

### STEP 3

Participants should list the day-to-day situations in which children can have these experiences (the mediator can organize the situations according to the list above for the group to visualize)

The mediator can stimulate the conversation by asking:

- **Which scenes in the film most remind you of this theme?**
- **What is the difference between play that involves interacting with people and the environment and activities like watching television or using the cell phone?**

If the mediator wants, they can end the debate or activity asking the group how they see the importance of play after having this discussion.





# INTERSECTORIAL ACTION AND STRENGTHENING EARLY CHILDHOOD

# INTERSECTORIAL ACTION AND STRENGTHENING EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Questions: 15 min.  
Activity: 15 min.

The mediator should bring up the definition from the glossary to start the discussion, identifying the different points of view of the concept.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION WITH THE WHOLE GROUP OR IN SUB-GROUPS.

*(if this is an individual written reflection, consider allowing more time for the group)*

If the mediator wants, before starting the activity they can ask the group what they think of the importance of play.

- What are the main difficulties we face when conducting actions that strengthen family care practices that promote full development?



## ACTIVITY

**Materials needed:** Projection or printout of the following graphs.

### STEP 1

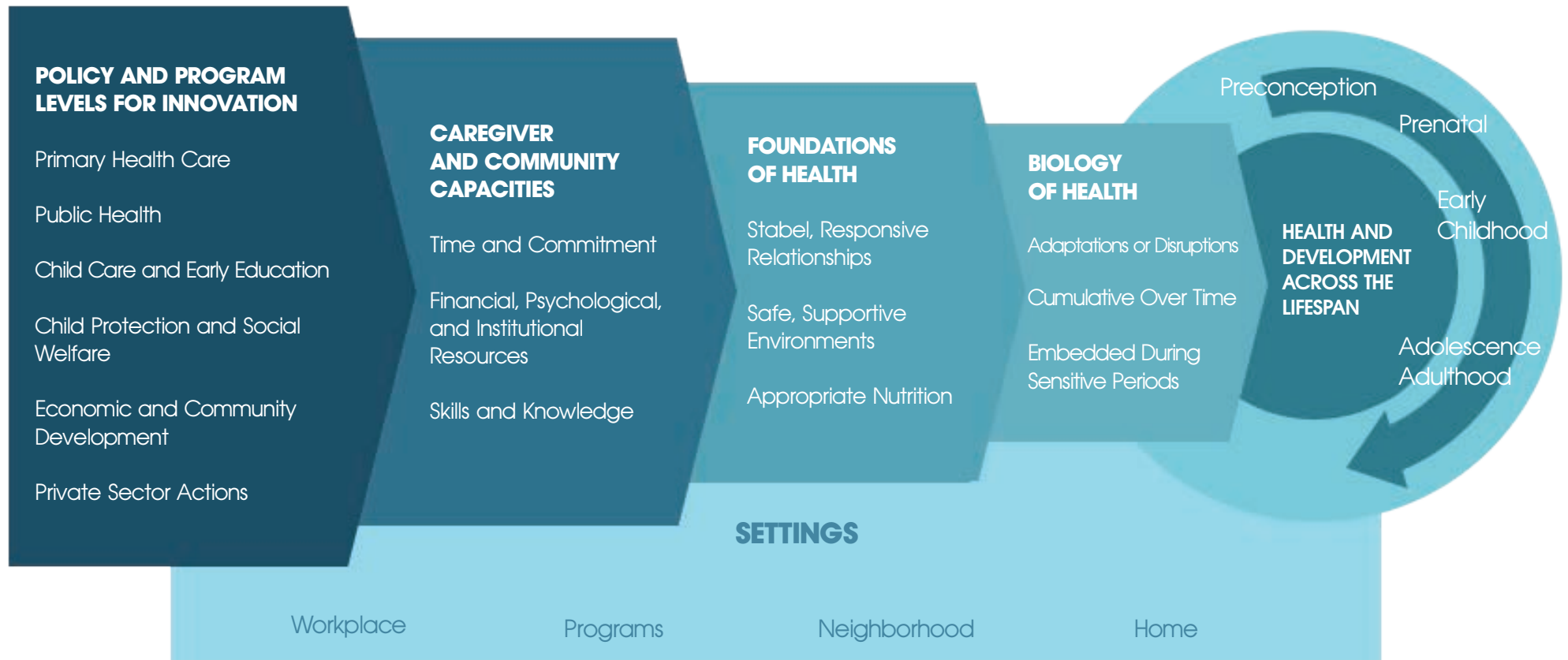
The mediator presents the image on the next page, created by Harvard's Center on the Developing Child, and explains the role of different areas in promoting a child's full development.

### STEP 2

The mediator divides the group into sub-groups.

### STEP 3

The mediator asks each group to list the main difficulties they have noticed in their daily routines, and to follow up by proposing actions to overcome these difficulties.



Center on the Developing Child, Harvard, 2010.

CLOSING



# CLOSING

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## CLOSING QUESTIONS

- What did you think about this film and our discussions?
- What can people do to improve development in the beginning of life, starting now?
- In what area do you feel mobilized to start rethinking your attitudes at this moment?
- What would you like to see the government, institutions and NGOs do?

## ACTIVITY

**Optional materials:** cell phone with space to record a video of the participants speaking, or ask that they quickly write on paper.

Ask each participant to tell the group what they are taking away with them from the activity, in one word or in less than a minute.

**Mediator, please send this video or written feedback along with the report to VideoCamp.**

Thank the participants and refer them to the websites of the entities that produced the film, and the film's own website, for more information.

**LINKS:**

[www.fmcsv.org.br](http://www.fmcsv.org.br)

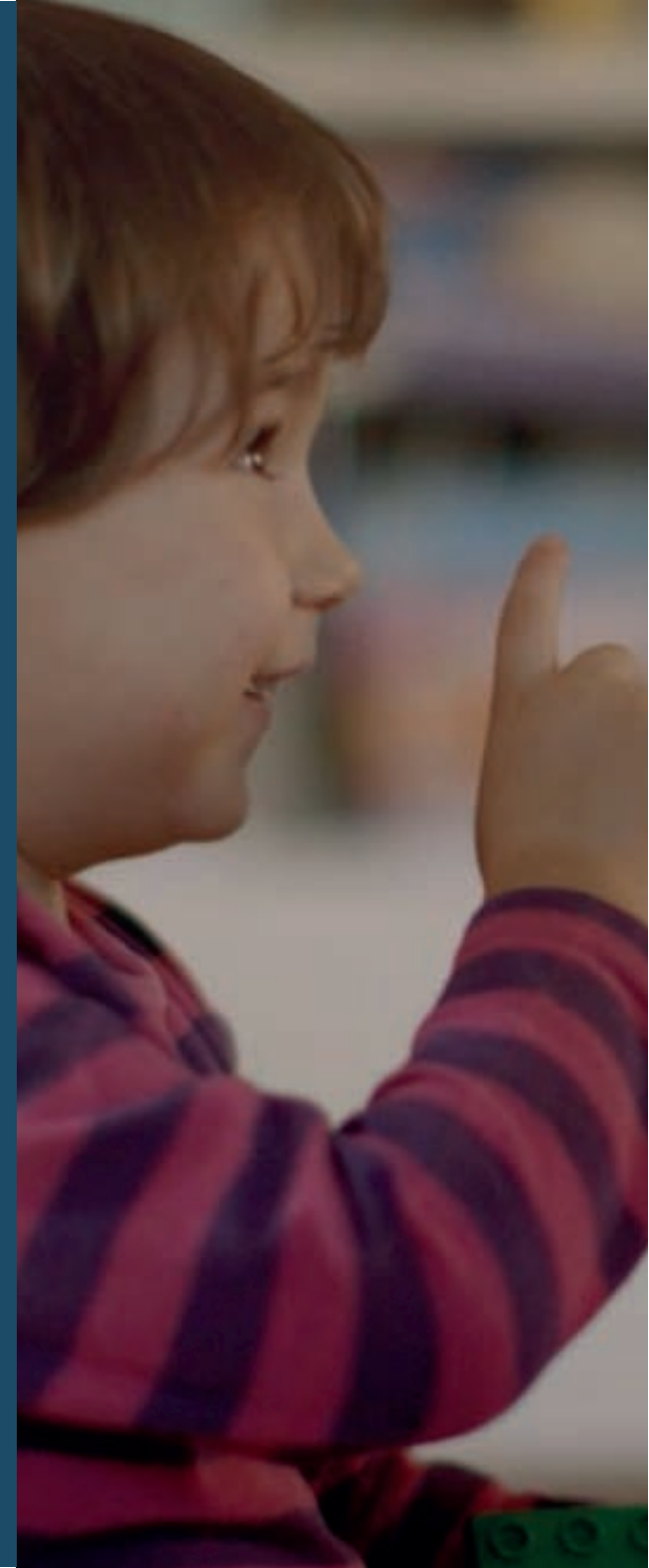
[www.alana.org.br](http://www.alana.org.br)

[www.bernardvanleer.org](http://www.bernardvanleer.org)

[www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

[www.ocomecodavida.com.br](http://www.ocomecodavida.com.br)

# GLOSSARY



### PRIMARY CAREGIVER:

The person who shares their his daily life with the child, interacts directly and establishes the closest emotional ties during the first years of life. The person directly responsible for taking care, offering adequate stimulation, educating, loving, imposing limits, strengthening autonomy and preparing the child for the challenges and opportunities of adult life.

### SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS:

The baby is a completely dependent being. When they are born, they enter a new and strange universe, experiencing different and sometimes unpleasant sensations when compared to the mother's womb. The relationship with the person who takes care of them is what helps them tolerate and understand these changes in this new world in which their personality will develop. The presence of adults who recognize and attend to their needs and the organization of a routine centered around the different stages of their development helps babies familiarize themselves with the world and have more confidence to discover and comprehend it. Affection is essential for the baby to feel safe and encouraged to explore the environment and gain autonomy.

### PLAY:

"The best path towards a full education. The benefits for the child include physical, cognitive, emotional and cultural development, as well as socialization and family interaction. When a child plays, they come into contact with their imagination, desires and feelings, they find out the strengths and limits of their own body, and establish relationships of trust (positive connections) with others. As they discover the world through play, they test their skills and abilities, develop

various languages and forms of expression, and broaden their view of the environment around them. By playing, they construct their identity without basing it on a single model (sometimes full of labels and prejudices), since they have the chance to experience situations in ways different from those of the “real” world. All of this happens while they are having fun (PNPI, 2010, p. 52).” Although childhood is the quintessential time for play, playing is not an activity exclusive to children. People of all age play, and the more adults hold onto their playful tendencies, the more creative they are and the better prepared they are to play with children.

### SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN:

Children from all over the world are very similar in their way of experiencing the world, each at their own rhythm and with their own preferences. Children with special needs may need greater help and attention from their parents, siblings, teachers and the community in which they live. These children also benefit greatly from spending their lives with other children, and a stimulating and protective environment helps them develop their potential, diminishing their frailties.

### FULL DEVELOPMENT:

Human development is a process of acquiring abilities that slowly takes a person from a condition of extreme dependency towards autonomy. When we talk about full development, we include the development of physical, emotional, social and cognitive properties, and for this to fully happen, the child needs an environment that is comforting, harmonious, and rich in experiences starting in the pre-natal period, through care from the mother and father, the family, and interaction with their surroundings. The involvement of the support network and

public policies that organize services to help with a family and child's necessities are also essential factors for the full development of a small child.

### FAMILY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT:

Child development, beginning in the pre-natal period, takes place within the context of the family. Supporting families that are pregnant or with children up to three years old means placing the focus on their strengths rather than their occasional weaknesses; it means developing their capacity to not give up, and help them recognize which people and organizations around them they can depend on. Any type of family can promote development in early childhood – including same-sex couples, opposite-sex couples, or including grandparents, aunts or uncles, or cousins; with single or divorced parents; with biological or adopted children, or many other types of unions. The important thing is that the family loves and protects the child, and that they help and encourage one another to help and stimulate them.

### MATERNAL AND PATERNAL FUNCTIONS:

Maternal functions relate to comforting and supporting the child. Paternal functions relate to helping the child recognize limits and construct a system of norms and values. Maternal and paternal functions are inseparable and balance each other. Both functions can be developed at the same time by the people taking care of a child, independent of their gender or blood relation, and are very important in building and strengthening bonds.

### SERVE & RETURN:

The environment in which the child lives influences the functions of their brain, which is in the midst of being built. There is an element that is very important for the construction of the brain

to succeed, which is similar to a kickabout between children and their parents and the other people responsible for them.

When kicking a ball around, children must pay attention to each other in order to exchange passes and move the ball forward. Similarly, when very small children and babies pass the ball to adults or other children in attempts to interact through sound or other movements and facial gestures, the adults have to pay attention in order to pass the ball back.

### PARENTING:

The concept of parenting has been used to describe the set of activities carried out by the child's primary caregiver in their role of assuring the child's survival and full development, in order to encourage their social integration and slowly make them more autonomous. It is considered the main duty of one generation (parents): to prepare the second generation (children) to handle the physical, economic and social situations they will encounter throughout their development.

### SENSITIVE PERIOD:

The time from gestation up to three years of age is the period in which synapses are created at an accelerated rate, leading to the construction of a rich and dense architecture within the brain. By four years of age, the brain of a child has already reached half of its potential. We consider this a sensitive period for the full development of a child and a window of opportunity to build the foundations of their adult life.

## BRAIN ARCHITECTURE:

The building of the brain can be compared to the building of a house. In a house, construction starts with the floor and walls, then comes the roof and, finally, the water and electrical systems are installed. All of this must happen in the correct sequence, that is, to build the walls one must first make sure the floor is well set, and for the electrical wiring to be installed, the walls must be in place. Something similar happens with the brain. The experiences of a person when they are a baby influence their physical development, that is, even after birth the child's brain is still being built, and the quality of its construction will depend on the experiences the small child has.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD:

The period consisting of the first six full years or 72 months in the life of a child, that is, the period that goes from gestation up to the child's sixth year. The first six years of life represent a period of significant transformations and achievements that will serve as the foundation for the rest of their lives. Early childhood includes very early childhood, the period that goes from gestation up to three years of age.

## SYNAPSES/BRAIN CONNECTIONS (Broadly speaking):

In broad terms, it is the process that occurs whenever a brain cell (neuron) is stimulated. Synapses are the point of contact between neurons, and they build paths that allow for connections between different parts of the brain.

## TOXIC STRESS:

A serious condition that hinders a child's development. When the baby feels an unpleasant or threatening sensation, their body unleashes a process in which they become alert and there

is a discharge of adrenaline, increasing their heart rate. If they are adequately attended to, that is, their essential needs are satisfied, the stress system is deactivated, creating a memory of satisfaction that helps their health. However, if the child's needs are systematically ignored, the stress lasts longer and hormones discharged by the sensation of threat harm the formation of synapses, which can impair learning and potential development. This can happen in situations where care is inadequate for a long period of time, and is most alarming in situations that prevent the parents from taking better care of their children. This is why it is important to identify situations (presence of mental illness in adults, drug use, extreme poverty, abandonment, violence, abuse) in which family or community practices prevent full development.

### BONDING:

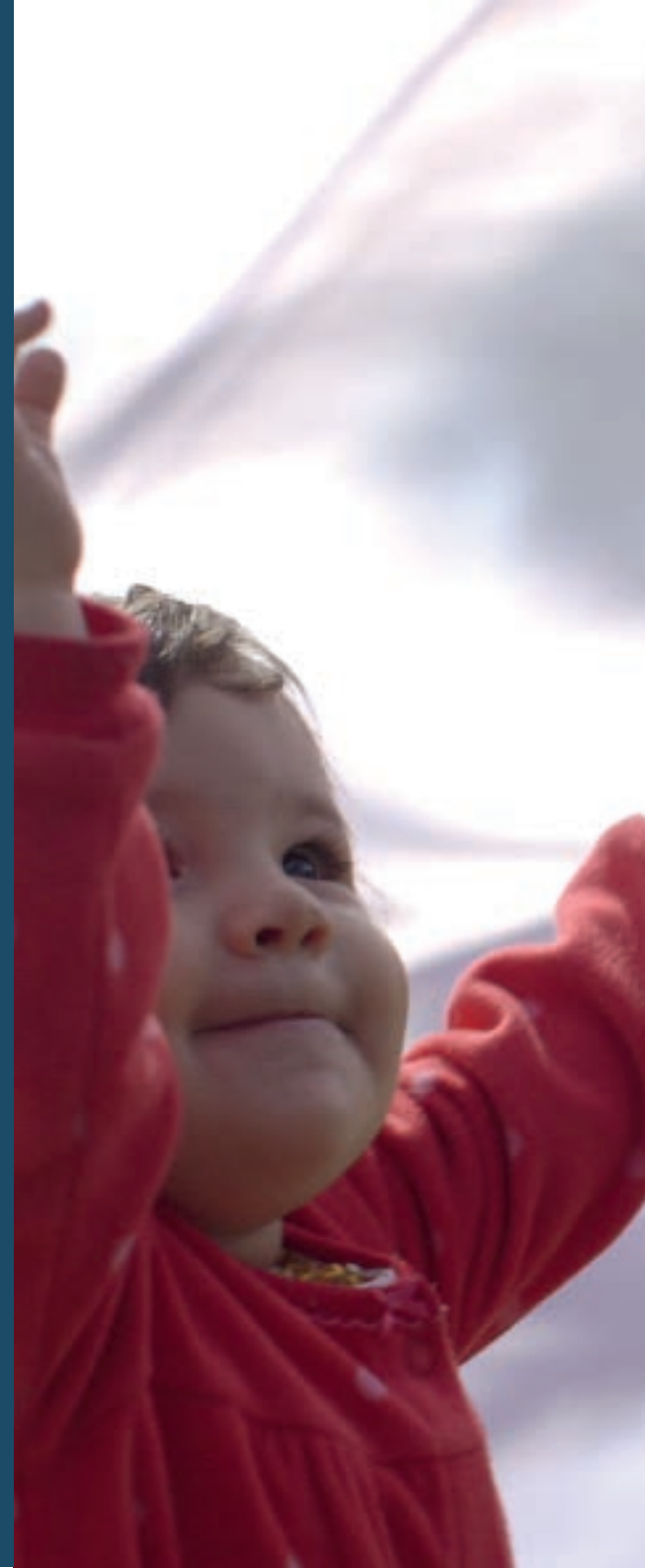
According to Martha Harris (1995), "a bond is the capacity of two people to experience and adjust to each other's nature, developed through continuous affectionate interaction." The development of this first bond, which serves as a model for all others, begins in the pre-natal phase, thanks to the physiological and emotional communication that exists between the mother and the baby, and deepens through breastfeeding and the loving care of the other adults that take part in the baby's daily life. Loving care is the set of actions related to attention and care that occur during the routine of feeding, hygiene, play, protection, socialization and establishment of limits. Through these actions, the child realizes that they

have a safe foundation on which they can trust and feel comfortable, accepted and protected. This connection can keep gaining strength during the entire process of childhood development, offering the child a foundation to build and broaden bonds with other people around them and, later on, with society in general.



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## FILM CREDITS



# REFERENCES

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