
Activities

For each *Handle with Care* Building Block, there are ten activities designed for parents or caregivers of infants, toddlers, or preschoolers.

These activities can be adapted to apply to specific age groups or multiple ages.

Each Building Block contains the following components:

Key Message: A message about the significance of the building block topic, including sub-messages written from the child's perspective

What We Know: Information that backs up what we know about the topic and why it is important to children's mental health and development

Activities: Stories, videos, role-plays, discussions, crafts, and games help participants to understand the *Handle with Care* components and to incorporate them into daily routines

Bringing it Home: Ways to help parents and caregivers reflect on what the materials mean to them in terms of their own personal life experiences, as well as possible ways to incorporate them into their daily lives and routines. Program facilitators are an important part of this reflection process

Bringing it Together: Emphasizes and explains how all Building Block topics and activities are interconnected and how enhancing and building one area naturally strengthens the other three areas

Other Resources: Options for gathering additional information and pursuing topics further



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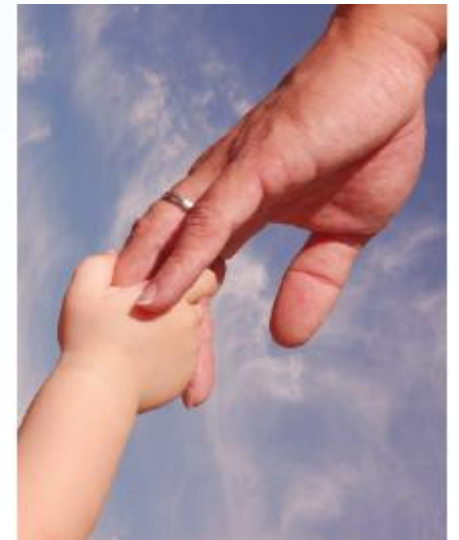


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**PROMOTING THE MENTAL
HEALTH OF YOUNG
CHILDREN... EVERY DAY**

**A Program for Families
and Caregivers**



What is Handle with Care?

- The *Handle with Care* program is designed to help parents and caregivers promote the mental health of young children from birth to 6 years.
- The program consists of simple interactive strategies that build on the strengths of parents and caregivers.
- It assumes every parent and caregiver has problem solving skills and potential resources, and wants what is best for the children in their lives.
- It celebrates parenting and caregiving, and recognizes the value of every parent, caregiver, and child.
- *Handle with Care* is for everyone who cares for or works with children: parents, as well as grandparents, neighbours and those who work in early childhood settings.
- *Handle with Care* is appropriate for all kinds of communities.



What is Mental Health?

Handle with Care is based on a number of important assumptions about mental health:

- Having mental health is a positive state of well-being: it is different from being free of mental illness.
- Positive mental health is a precious resource that can benefit everyone, even those with mental illness.
- Supporting children's mental health is an everyday aspect of health care, just as we support children's healthy bodies through good nutrition, exercise, and sleep.
- Mental health is part of our own and our children's overall health. It's about how:
 - we feel, think, and behave
 - we cope with the ups and downs of everyday life
 - we feel about ourselves and our life
 - we see ourselves and our future
 - stress affects us
 - we deal with negative things that happen in our life
 - capable or confident we feel
 - secure we feel about where we belong in the world



How the Program is Organized

Topics are organized in Four Building Blocks:

- Building Trust and Attachment
- Building and Enhancing Self-esteem
- Expressing Emotions
- Relationships with Others

The Building Blocks provide a range of information and activities. They can be used with groups that encompass parents and/or caregivers.
