The R.I.E. Philosophy

We would like to welcome you to the Infant Program at Bright Horizons! Getting to know you and your child is our first priority! Communication is the key to building relationships that are based on mutual respect and understanding. We want to take this opportunity to tell new families about our program that incorporates a philosophy we refer to as R.I.E.

Resources for Infant Educarers, or R.I.E., is a philosophy of caregiving that comes from Magda Gerber. The philosophy upon which Magda has built and incorporated in the following ten principles was originally conceived by Emmi Pickler, MD, in Hungary and is well known in part of Europe.

10 Principles of Caregiving

1. **Involve infants and toddlers in things that concern them.** Don’t work around them or distract them to get the job done faster. Allow them to be active participants rather than passive recipients in all interactions.
2. **Invest in quality time**, when you are totally available to individual infants and toddlers. Trust and intimacy can best be developed during routine caregiving activities.
3. **Learn each child’s unique ways of communicating** (cries, words, movements, gestures, facial expressions, body positions, words) **and teach them yours.** Don’t underestimate children’s ability to communicate even though their verbal language skills may be non-existent or minimal.
4. **Invest in time and energy to build a total person** (concentrate on the “whole child”). Don’t focus on cognitive development alone or look at it as separate from total development.
5. **Respect infants and toddlers as worthy people.** Don’t treat them as objects or cute little empty-headed people to be manipulated.
6. **Be honest about your feelings** around infants and toddlers. Don’t pretend to feel something that you don’t or not to feel something that you do.
7. **Model the behavior that you want to teach.** Don’t preach.
8. **Recognize problems as learning opportunities, and let infants and toddlers try to solve their own.** Don’t rescue them, constantly make life easy for them, or try to protect them from all problems.
9. **Build security by teaching trust.** Don’t teach distrust by being undependable or often inconsistent.
10. **Be concerned about the quality of development in each stage.** Don’t rush infants and toddlers to reach developmental milestones.
The foundation of the R.I.E. Philosophy and its principals is RESPECT! The meaning of the word respect is somewhat abstract and not usually associated with infants and toddlers. Respecting young children, unlike other child-rearing fads that promoted the use of flashcards or teaching a baby to read, is unlikely to go out of style or found to be damaging to the child. Caregivers that respect infants and toddlers have learned to see them as competent human beings who, like all humans, deserve to be treated respectfully.

We honor each child’s unique capabilities and do not expect them to do what they are not yet ready to do. Babies do not need to be pushed or taught the next milestones. They will do it all by themselves when they are ready. Infants are perfectly designed to do exactly what they should be doing to achieve the next milestone. When adults put infants into positions they can not get in and out of themselves, they deny the child the opportunity to practice the skill on his or her own.

Our program allows babies to move freely, permitting them to learn about their world at their own pace. When infants are free to make their own choices, they do not depend on adults to constantly entertain them. This is important so caregivers can give each child one-on-one attention during routines like feeding and diapering. Routines are actually part of our curriculum and considered to be quality learning experiences. We always tell the baby what we are going to do before we do it. This practice eventually allows the child to anticipate what is going to happen which leads to their trust in us and in their environment.

We know how crucial the first three years of life are in developing basic lifelong patterns of coping, living, and learning. Research tells us that the most important factor is a child’s secure attachment with a warm, responsive, and caring adult. The first attachment, of course, is to the parents, but caregivers must also form attachment with the child. Your child’s primary caregiver will know your child best. The relationship they build together during routines will serve as an emotional refueling that will empower your child with a sense of trust and security. A prerequisite to all learning is trusting that your needs will be met by a consistent caregiver who knows and understands you.

If you would like more information about R.I.E., we recommend Your Self-Confident Baby by Magda Gerber and Allison Johnson. Other information is available upon request. We are always open to any questions you have regarding our family care services.