

# **Early Childhood Development** **Joining A System of Care**

**An ELF 2.0 Presentation**

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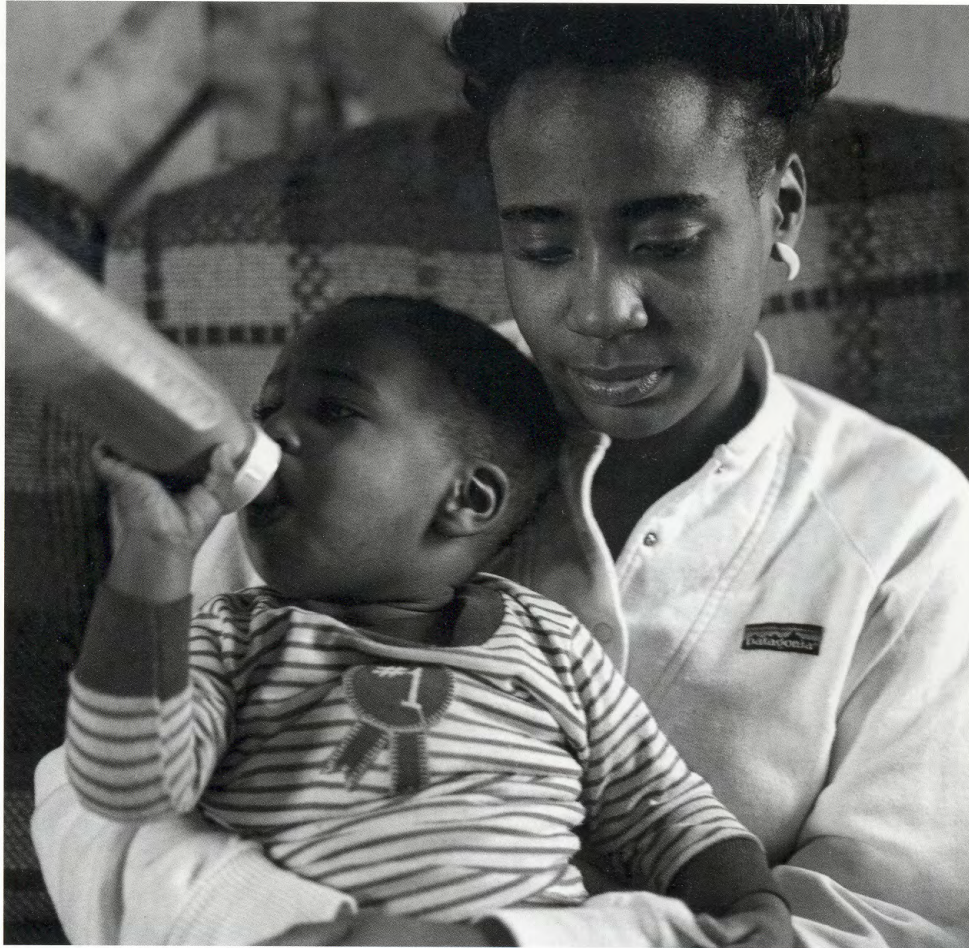
# Early Childhood Development

## Joining A System of Care



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Orange County, North Carolina, 1987

What does  
this family  
need?

A vibrant, childlike painting of a fairground scene. The scene is set on a green, curved ground with a red border. In the foreground, several people are depicted: a woman in a yellow jumpsuit holding a pink balloon, a woman in a green patterned top and yellow skirt, a child in a blue hat and shirt, and a child in a red shirt and yellow pants. To the right, a woman in a blue dress is riding a brown horse, and another woman in an orange jumpsuit is riding a brown horse. In the background, there are more people, including a child in a green shirt pushing a red cart, and several brown horses. The sky is blue with various colored balloons (pink, blue, yellow, purple, orange, red) and a pink hot air balloon. The overall style is expressive and colorful, with visible brushstrokes and a joyful atmosphere.

**Human beings become a  
reflection of the world in  
which they develop.**

Bruce Perry

# A child's development occurs through a complex, dynamic, self-organizing process

- Driven by CNS maturation, status, history
- Experience dependent
- ALWAYS RELATIONAL
- Characterized by periodic and predictable disorganization (**Touchpoints**)
- Has a unique individual trajectory given biology, family, culture, history

# Joining a system of care



- The cross-cultural and historical norm is that parenting is nested in a broader system of relationships
- We are seeking a shift from asking the child and family to join a new system to our joining their system
- Touchpoints offers a means to join the family system of care

# What are Touchpoints?



**“Touchpoints”** are *predictable* periods of disorganization in a child’s development that can *disrupt* family relations, but can also provide an *opportunity* for providers to connect with parents.

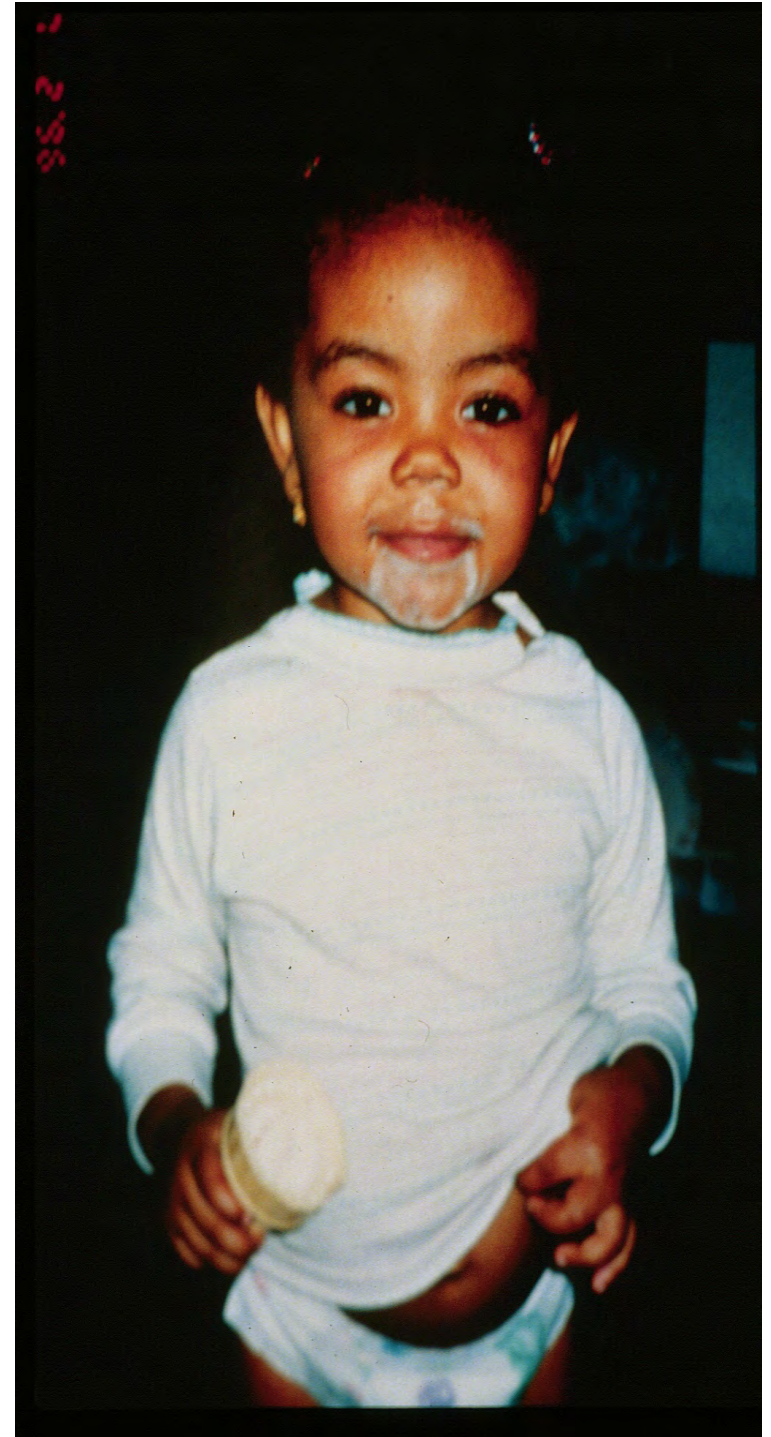
# Regressions in a child's behavior can disorganize parents





# **TOUCHPOINTS**

- The Ideal Baby - Pregnancy
- The Real Baby - Newborn
- The Energy Sink - 3 weeks
- The Rewarding Baby - 6-8 wks
- Looking Outward - 4 months
- Up at Night - 7 months
- The Pointer - 9 months
- The Walker - 12 months
- The Clinger - 15 months
- Rebel With a Cause - 18 months
- Getting to "No!" - 2 years
- "Why?" - 3 years
- What I Do Matters - 4 years
- Who I Am Matters - 5 years
- Entering the Real World - 6 yrs.



Questions?

# 3 Principles



- 1) Use the behavior of the child as your language
- 2) Look for opportunities to support parental mastery
- 3) Focus on the parent child relationship



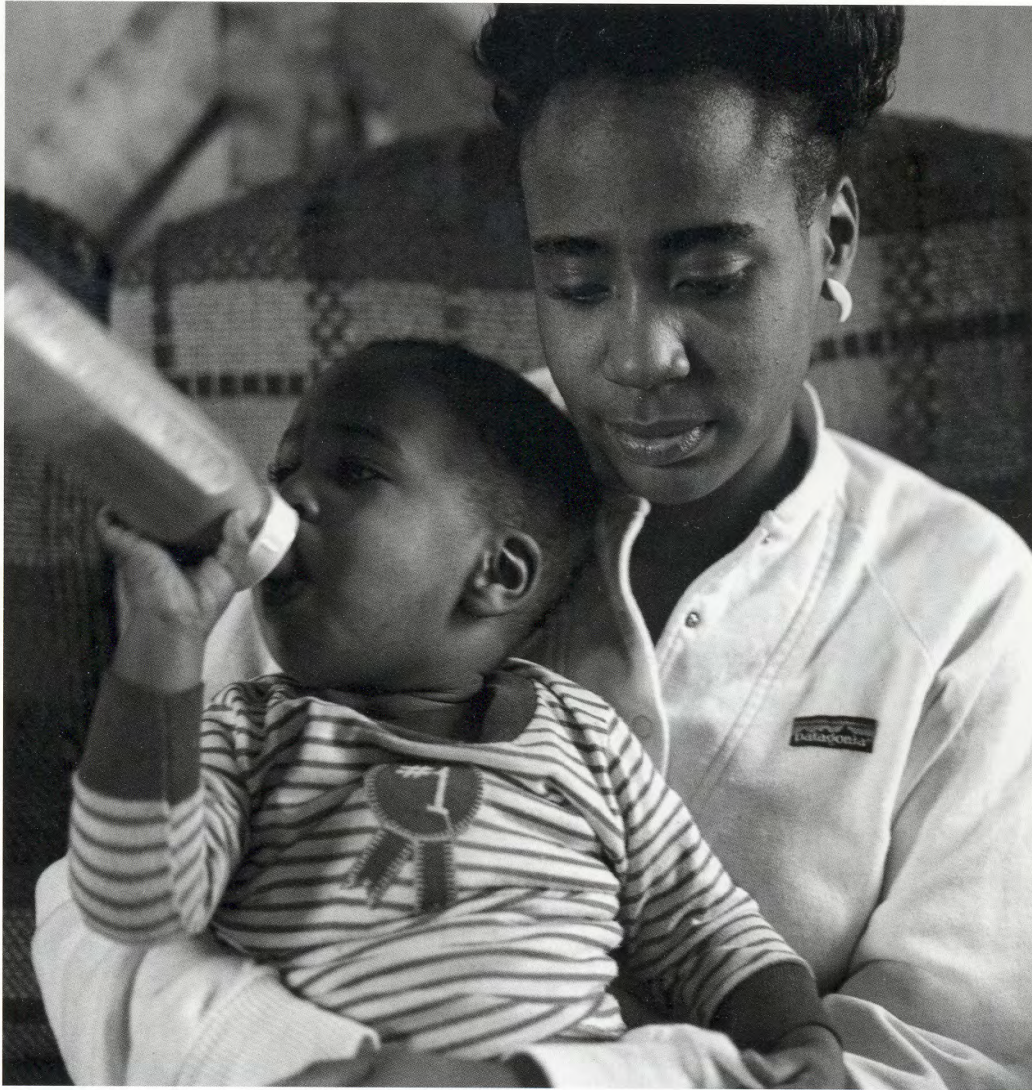
Use the behavior of the child  
as your language.



Mebane, North Carolina, 1988

Focus on the  
parent child  
relationship

Questions?



Orange County, North Carolina, 1987

# Support Parental Mastery

# Tasks of the first year

- State regulation
- Attachment to caregiver
- Development of trust
- Sense of self
- Causality and object permanence



# Mobility - 9 months



It is exciting seeing him do all of these new things, but I will have to adjust to the changes. Before, where he couldn't really move, I had an advantage because I could get a lot of things done, but now that he can move I am constantly running after him trying to do what I got to do too.

# 9 months



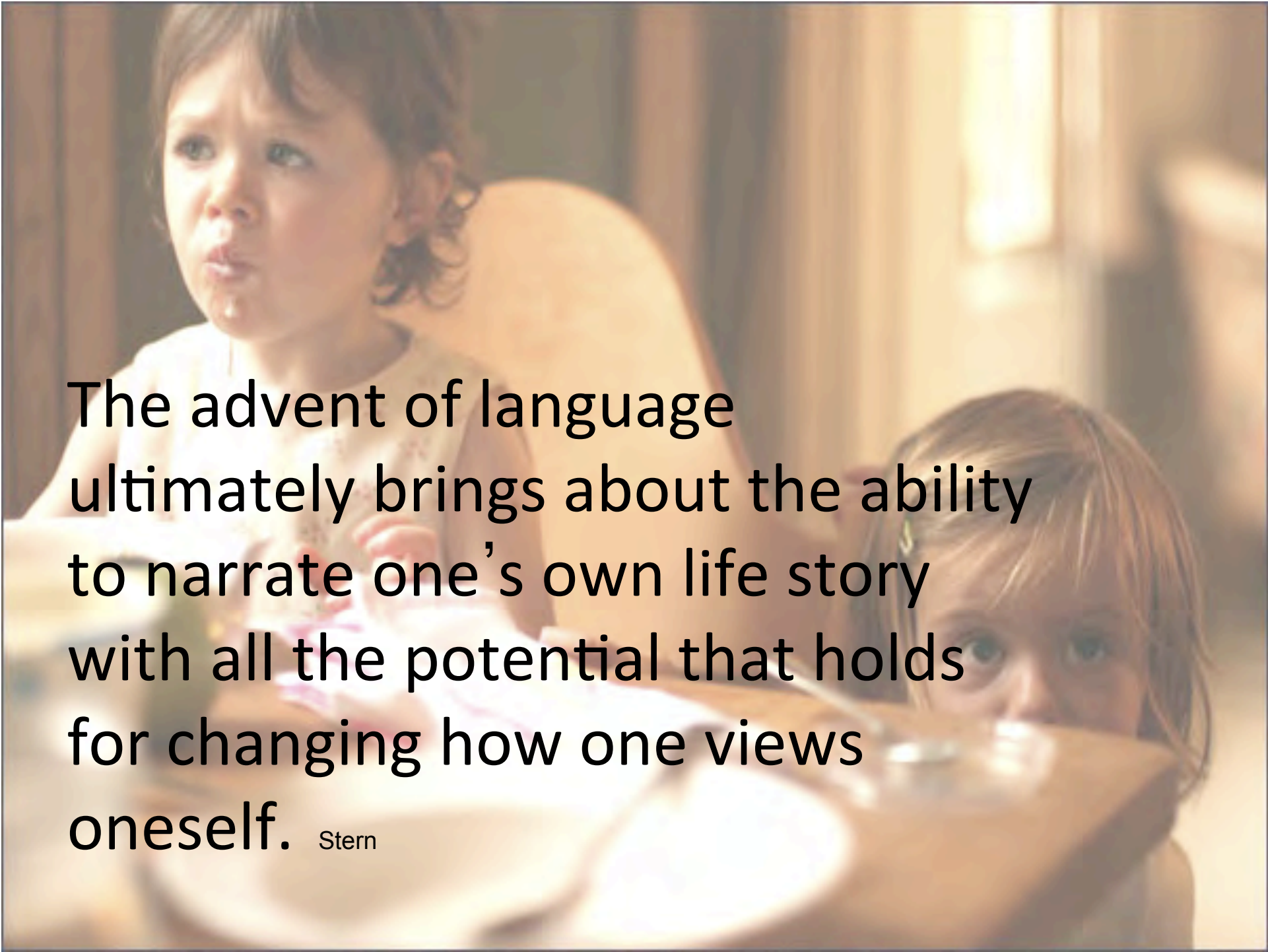
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If I'm sitting next to where he is he's O.K., but if I leave the room and he sees me leave I've had it. So if I'm already out of the room and it's O.K... I have to run past the living room to get outside or he'll start up.

# Toddler Tasks



- Sense of self, autonomy
- Representational thought and language
- Mastery, self control
- Separation/exploration
- Social rules



The advent of language ultimately brings about the ability to narrate one's own life story with all the potential that holds for changing how one views oneself. Stern

# Parent of a toddler:

One perfect spring day as I sat on my deck, I looked up from the book I was reading to see my daughter, then 21/2, nose-to-nose with the daffodils in our garden. Bending from one flower to another, she gave each of them a gentle kiss. Swamped with love and pride that I had produced such a sweet and tender child, I rushed to sit beside her. That's when she calmly turned, looked me straight in the eye, and said, "Go away, I don't want you here. I want Daddy." I was devastated.

[Margery D. Rosen, "Pushing Your Buttons", p. 54.]

# Preschool Tasks

- Able to feel and recognize a full range of emotions in self and others
- Able to express and communicate feelings
- Organizes behavior to achieve a goal
- Beginning competence with symbol systems
- Engages in dramatic play



# Paley:

We were taught to say that play is the work of children. But watching and listening to them, I saw that play was nothing less than Truth and Life.

# Emma - 4 years old

Emma's parents shielded her from news about September 11. She never put arms on the girls she drew.

After she was allowed gun play she put arms on her drawings. When asked about her tower building play she replied: "I want to know about the Towers, and I'm very interested in fighting."

Gross and Clemens  
(2002)



# Tyrone: 5 years

“Look what I made, look at my vampire,” and he holds it up for all to see. Mrs. Wright, who overhears from the other side of the room, calls out, “Tyrone, I want some nice bunnies, no vampires - Do you hear me? After Tyrone completes his picture, now corrected, he takes it to Mrs. Wright for approval, saying, “See, the vampire turned back into a bunny.” Mrs. Wright takes the picture... “you wrote your name backwards...” Polokow, p. 132.

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Thank you

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Questions?



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