



Well Baby Center®
Mindful Parenting Group
Group Guidelines

Mindful Parenting Groups are innovative groups for parents and their infants, toddlers or preschoolers, ages three months to three+ years. **Mindful Parenting Groups provide a unique, developmentally based approach to promoting sensitivity, flexibility, and mindfulness in communications between parent and child, focused on enhancing the attachment relationship.** Weekly meetings address concerns such as sleeping, eating, motor development, social interactions, separations, fears, tantrums, and other challenges typical of infants and toddlers. Parents have opportunities to reflect on their experiences as parents as well as the impact of their own early childhood experiences. Each group time includes child-centered observation of the children at play, parent-centered reflection on what is observed, and time for questions about each child's development. For older toddlers, a group snack and a circle time with songs and finger-play is added.

Current attachment research indicates that a parent's capacity to reflect on the mental states and behaviors of their child, as well as their own mental states and behaviors, plays a central role in the development of a secure attachment relationship between child and parent. Secure attachment to a primary caregiver is a protective factor in a child's life, and is linked to optimal brain growth, social and emotional development, and lifelong mental health and well-being. **Mindful Parenting Groups aim to cultivate and enhance the security of attachment of infants, toddlers, or preschoolers and their parents.**

The following are some basic guidelines that will help make your group experience a relaxed and enjoyable learning experience for all participants.

Structure of group: The group time consists largely of three components: **child-centered observation, parent-centered reflection, and facilitation of social interactions.** During the initial **observation** period, we sit quietly and with curiosity about what the children might show us. If we allow ourselves to slow down inside we may see the finest details of our child's experience – and detect our own emotional responses. With an attitude of "watch, wait and wonder," we quietly note our observations, which the group will then **reflect** on after the observation time has ended. Group facilitators will guide the group experience and assist parents in **facilitation** of social interactions between children, if needed. After the first hour, a group leader will facilitate a **snack time**, as the children are developmentally ready. Children are free to take part in snack time or to continue to play as they wish, while parents observe. Following this, there will be a **discussion** period for more general or developmental questions and concerns regarding experiences occurring during or outside of group. Finally, a few minutes before the end of group time, the group facilitators, parents, and children are invited to join in a **circle time** for a few rhymes, finger-play, and songs, before the closing goodbye song.

Attendance: Please make every effort to be on time to each meeting and allow yourself and your child enough time for an unhurried journey from home to group. When you arrive, your shoes and those of



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your child should be removed prior to entering the play area. Please enter the room quietly, as the first 20 minutes or so will be spent in quiet observation. We recommend that you dress your child comfortably for unrestricted movement, avoiding clothing that is either too tight or too loose. In addition, if you expect that you will miss a meeting, please give your group facilitator a courtesy call at the earliest possible opportunity to let them know. If your child is clearly sick (e.g. is running a fever or is in the early stages of a cold), please stay home and allow your child to rest and recover.

Toys: The group facilitators will provide age appropriate toys for the children to explore and enjoy. Any toys from home should be left outside the immediate play area.

Diapering: Please feel free to change your toddler outside of the immediate play area or make use of the restroom in the outer hallway.

Feeding: For older toddlers, a snack will be provided during the group meeting, consisting of banana and water. Please do not bring outside foods, other than bottles if needed, into the play area – breastfeeding is also welcome. If your toddler requires food during the group, you may feed your child outside the enclosed play area.

Thank you for participating in Well Baby Center's Mindful Parenting Group. If you have any questions, please contact your group facilitators.