

Presentation Title

**What is Baby Thinking and Feeling?: Infant Social Emotional Development During the First Few Months of Life**

**Presenters**

Dr. Keren Epstein-Gilboa

PhD, MEd, BSN, RN, FACCE, LCCE, IBCLC, RLC

Psychotherapist, Nurse, Childbirth Educator, Lactation Consultant,  
University Instructor and Lecturer

Private practice, Part time faculty Department of Early Childhood  
Studies, Ryerson University and part time lecturer Psychology  
Department University of Toronto at Mississauga

Infants are born with the ability to engage with others. They feel and think right from birth, albeit their interpretations of the world differs from adult perspectives. Initially, immature processes such as reflexes enable infants to form their initial connections. The complex and rapidly developing infant brain allows the young human to emote, interpret and store information that forms internal perspectives of others and the world around them. The capacity to store information also includes remembering events perceived as traumatic. Yet, immature verbal, memory and information processing capacities may impair the infant's capacity to store information in a manner facilitating resolution, and thus, might impair development in other areas. The presenter in this session will refer to established psychological models, and briefly review brain development and current research explaining infant emotional and social development. We will compare emotional development to physiological processes and note the contribution of facilitative actions such as normal birth, skin to skin interaction and breastfeeding to infant growth. Obstructive processes such as difficult birth, maternal infant separation and procedures associated with prematurity will be reviewed from an infant's emotional perspective.

Learning objectives:

By the end of the session the learner will be able to describe basic components of psychological theory explaining infant social and emotional development.

By the end of the session the learner will be able to explain the importance of normal birth, breastfeeding and mother infant proximity to infant development.

By the end of the session participants will state that they recognize how perceived normal intervention with infants may disrupt healthy social and emotional development.

By the end of the session the participant will be able to describe the impact of early trauma on infant and children's social and emotional development.

After this session learners will think about ways to enhance clinical work with infants and their families in order to support healthy development.