THE DEVELOPING MIND:
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS TO SUPPORT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTION
Brain development begins during pregnancy.
The brain is the command center of the human body.
Birth to age 3 sees the fastest rate of brain development in the entire human lifespan.
If babies grew at the same rapid pace of their brains, they would weigh 170 pounds by the age of one month.
ALL caregivers who are a part of a child’s life impact his/her brain development.
Infants prefer human stimuli – your face, voice, touch, even smell – over everything else.
Early brain development has a lasting impact on a child’s ability to learn and succeed in school and life.
How the brain grows is strongly affected by the child’s experiences with other people and the world.
EXECUTIVE FUNCTION: SKILLS FOR LIFE AND LEARNING – HARVARD UNIVERSITY
EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

• Working Memory
• Mental/Cognitive Flexibility
• Self Control/Inhibitory Control
Three key factors: relationships, experiences, environment
T BERRY BRAZELTON
WALTER MISCHEL – MARSHMALLOW EXPERIMENT
HOW DO WE STRENGTHEN EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

• Be in relationship
• Label it when you see it
• Talk about self control
• Work on puzzles
• Provide/practice strategies to calm down
HELP YOUNG CHILDREN MOVE TO INDEPENDENCE

• Provide many diverse opportunities for play
• Opportunities to explore
• Talk with them
• Consistent caregiving routines
HELP YOUNG CHILDREN MOVE TO INDEPENDENCE

• Model the behaviors you want them to develop
• Work with them to complete new and challenging tasks
• Support them in familiar tasks when needed
• Give children opportunities to learn and explore on their own
RESOURCES

• Mind in the Making
• Vroom.org (not .com)
• Encyclopedia on Early Childhood
• Center on the Developing Child – Harvard University