



Kinder College ELC

Infant Program Module (0–18 months)

(Revised: March 26, 2026)

1. Program Snapshot

- **Age Group:** 0–18 months
- **Ratio (Ontario):** 1:3
- **Group Size:** 10
- **Key Focus:** Attachment, emotional security, responsive caregiving

Key Risks

- Sleep safety
- Feeding (allergies/choking)
- Delayed response to distress
- Inconsistent caregiving

2. Emotional Development

A. Development (Why this happens)

Infants are in **Trust vs. Mistrust**.

- Developing **attachment** to caregivers
- Learning if the world is **safe and predictable**
- No ability to **self-regulate**
- Require full **co-regulation from educators**

B. What You Will See

- Crying (primary communication)
- Separation anxiety (6–12+ months)
- Clinginess with familiar educators
- Distress during transitions (sleep, feeding)

 These are **not behaviours to correct**

C. What Educators Must Do (Centre Standard)

Responsive Caregiving

- Respond promptly to all distress
- Use calm voice, gentle touch

Co-Regulation

- Hold, rock, soothe as needed
- Never expect self-soothing

Consistency

- Maintain primary caregivers
- Keep routines predictable

Emotional Safety

- Never ignore prolonged crying
- Never delay care to “teach independence”

3. Communication & Guidance (Centre Standard)

How We Speak to Children

At Kinder College, educators:

- Get down to the child’s **eye level** when speaking
- Use a **calm, respectful tone**
- Speak **to the child**, not across the room

👉 This builds connection, understanding, and respect.

💬 Positive Language Approach

We use **positive, guiding language** instead of reactive language. Instead of telling children what *not* to do, we tell them what *to do*.

Examples

- ❌ “No standing on chairs”
✓ “Chairs are for sitting”
- ❌ “Stop running”
✓ “Use walking feet inside”
- ❌ “Don’t throw toys”
✓ “Toys stay on the floor”

- ❌ “No yelling”
- ✅ “Use a quiet voice inside”

Why This Matters

- Helps children understand expectations clearly
- Reduces power struggles
- Supports **language development and self-regulation**
- Aligns with **respectful, responsive caregiving**

Key Reminder for Staff

“Say what you want children to do — not what you don’t want.”

4. Emergent Curriculum in Practice (Infant Program)

At Kinder College, infants are viewed as **capable, competent, curious, and rich in potential**.

Learning does not follow a pre-set plan. Instead, educators:

- Observe infants’ cues, interests, and developmental needs
- Respond through interactions, environment, and materials
- Extend learning through repetition, connection, and relationship

What This Looks Like with Infants

- An infant reaches for a toy → educator brings similar objects
- An infant enjoys a song → educator repeats and builds on it
- An infant shows interest in movement → educator provides space and support

 Learning is built through **responsive caregiving and interaction**

The Four Foundations in Action

Belonging

- Consistent, responsive relationships

Well-being

- Immediate response to emotional and physical needs

Engagement

- Sensory exploration and repetition

Expression

- Recognizing and responding to non-verbal communication

5. Daily Practice Checklist

Arrival

- Warm, calm greeting
- Communicate with parent (sleep, feeding)
- Maintain consistent caregiver

During Play

- Observe cues before intervening
- Provide sensory materials
- Repeat preferred interactions
- Narrate actions and emotions

Interactions

- Respond immediately to distress
- Provide co-regulation (hold/soothe)
- Maintain calm tone

Routines

- Use feeding/diapering for connection
- Maintain eye contact and communication
- Follow individual schedules

Reflection

- What cues did I observe?
- What can I extend tomorrow?

6. Key Risk Moments

- Drop-off transitions

- Staff inconsistency
- Delayed responses
- Sleep routines

👉 These directly impact **attachment and well-being**

7. Health & Safety Essentials

- Safe sleep practices (alone, on back, clear crib)
- Hand hygiene before/after care routines
- Bottle handling and labeling
- Constant supervision (within sight and sound)

8. Quick Reminders for Staff

“Infants cry to communicate, not manipulate”

“Co-regulation comes before self-regulation”

“Connection builds brain development”

“Consistency creates security”

Final Thought

“Your relationship with the infant is the curriculum.”