

The precursor of the mirror is the parent's face

The importance of shared pleasure in parent-infant interactions

Astrid Berg

University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University

President of the World Association for Infant Mental Health



WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR
INFANT MENTAL HEALTH

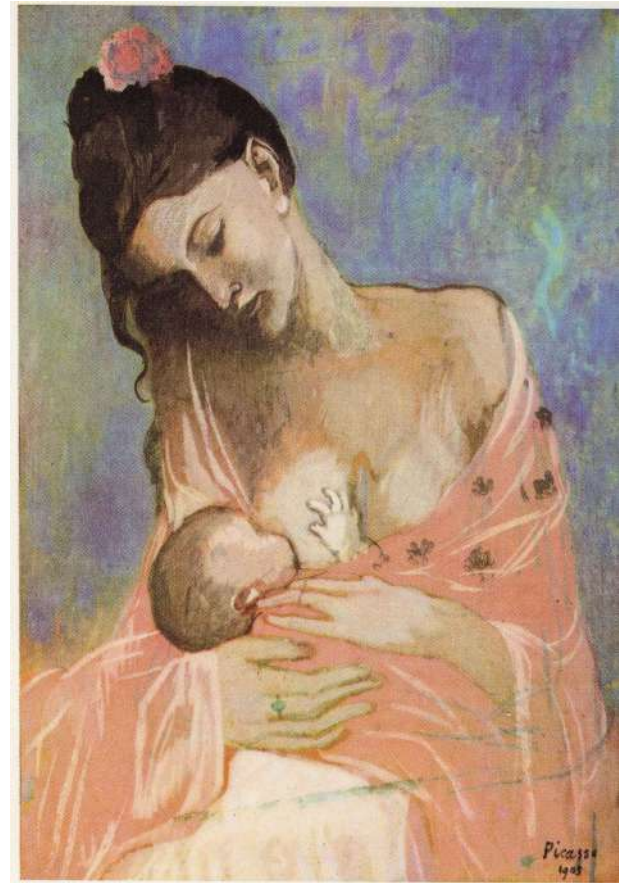


UNIVERSITEIT
STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY

Overview

- The role of vision in early interactions
- Play and shared pleasure
- The Arts as primary prevention

A clinical case



Picasso

The prenatal stage

“Winnicott believed that the baby in the womb becomes specifically linked in fantasy with the ‘good internal object’...”

(p 102 , Davis and Wallbridge)



Chagall

Early interventions

- Minding the Baby (MTB) – Parental Reflective Functioning (Arieta Slade)
- Psychotherapy Centered on Parenthood (PCP) – (Nathalie Nanzer, Marta Goma, Antonia Ilairo)
- Pregnancy Ultrasound – Richter et al (Slemming et al, 2020)

“Now, at some point the baby takes a look round. Perhaps a baby at the breast does not look at the breast. Looking at the face is more likely to be a feature.....What does the baby see when he or she looks at the mother’s face? I am suggesting that, ordinarily, what the baby sees is himself or herself.

In other words the mother is looking at the baby and ***what she looks like is related to what she sees there....***the baby whose mother reflects her own mood or, worse still, the rigidity of her own defences. In such a case what does the baby see?” (p 131 in *Playing and Reality*)



Orchardson



Munch



“The sense of self....is lost unless observed and mirrored back by someone who is trusted and who justifies the trust and meets the dependence.” (Winnicott, p 71 in *Playing and Reality*)

The 'Shared Pleasure' paradigm



Shared Pleasure (SP)

***“the parent and child
sharing positive affect in
synchrony”***

expressed in facial
expressions such as a
laugh or curving of mouth
to smile, together with a
direct gaze contact, and a
simultaneous or
synchronized beginning
and ending

Puura et al 2002

Infant Psychiatry, Tampere University Finland



Correlates of SP

Shared positive affect between mother and infant:

- Has been found to correlate with **attachment security** and is highly malleable in the first 12 months of life
- is an important feature **fostering positive psychological development** and moderating the effects of other risks such as parental psychopathology.
- may be expected to be associated with **lower levels of emotional and behavioral problems** in the child

MIRJAMI MANTYMAA et al,
Infant Mental Health Journal 2015

- The longer the SP moments lasted, the fewer internalizing and externalizing problems were evident at **2 years**.
- SP had a protective role against **parental psychopathology**: when there were longer SP moments, the children were less affected by parental mental health issues, while those with shorter SP moments showed increased symptoms when exposed to parental psychopathology.



Maternal Shared Pleasure, Infant Withdrawal, and Developmental Outcomes in a High Risk Setting in South Africa

Anusha Lachman^{1*}, Marlette Burger², Esmè R. Jordaan^{3,4}, Jukka Leppanen⁵, Kaija Puura⁶ and Dana J. H. Niehaus¹

¹ Department of Psychiatry, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa; ² Department of Psychiatry, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa; ³ Department of Psychiatry, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa; ⁴ Department of Psychiatry, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa; ⁵ Department of Psychiatry, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa; ⁶ Department of Psychiatry, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa

Early Child Development and Care



ISSN: 0300-4430 (Print) 1476-8275 (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/gecd20>

Shared Pleasure in early mother–infant interactions: a study in a high-risk South African sample

Anusha Lachman, Dana J. H. Niehaus, Esme R. Jordaan, Jukka Leppanen, Kaija Puura & Belinda Bruwer

To cite this article: Anusha Lachman, Dana J. H. Niehaus, Esme R. Jordaan, Jukka Leppanen, Kaija Puura & Belinda Bruwer (2019): Shared Pleasure in early mother–infant interactions: a study in a high-risk South African sample, Early Child Development and Care, DOI: [10.1080/03004430.2019.1613651](https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2019.1613651)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2019.1613651>

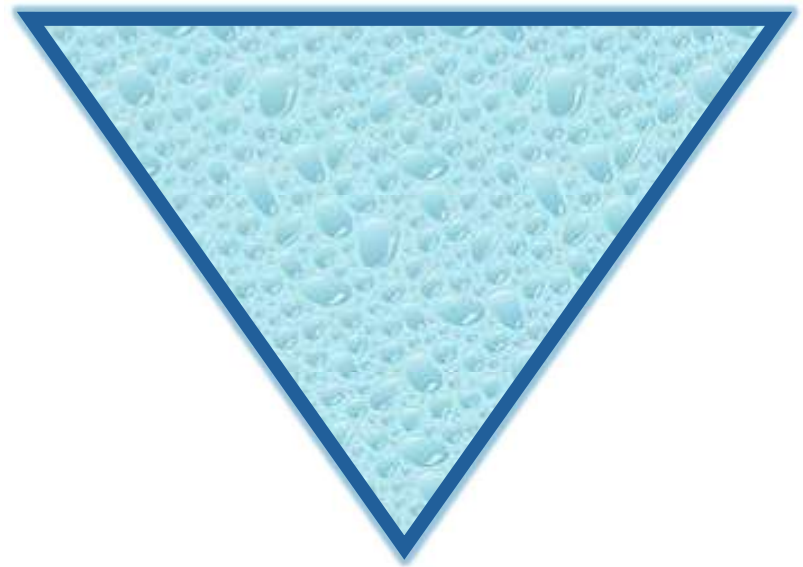
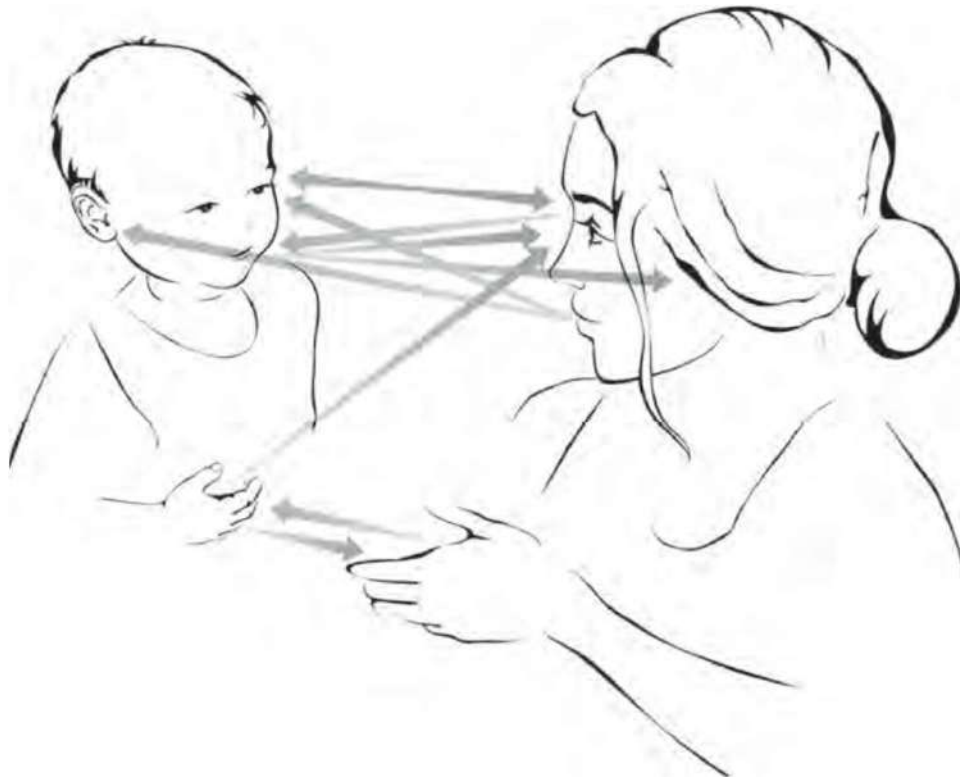
Findings from South Africa

- Altogether, our work indicates frequent occurrence of positive SP moments in reciprocal dyadic interactions despite environmental and maternal risk factors in the context of an LMIC.
- A better understanding of the mechanisms underlying the extraordinary resilience noted here, as well as of how early mother-infant synchronicity is associated with better outcomes, may ultimately contribute to the development of interventions to further enhance early child development
- Potentially SP may be a marker for impaired synchronicity in mentally ill mothers

Clinical Application of Shared Pleasure

- We have developed a Basic Infant Mental Health Screening Tool
 1. Concern for the child
 2. Mother's mental health
 3. Weight
 4. Eye contact between infant and caregiver
 5. Shared pleasure
 6. Worry of the primary health care worker
- SP is one of the 6 items we look at
- To flag at risk dyads

The transitional space



Winnicott's *Playing and Reality* (1971)

“...the infant's transition from a state of being merged with the mother to a state of being relation to the mother as something outside and separate....” (p.17)

“...this intermediate area of experience...constitutes the greater part of the infant's experience, and throughout life is retained in the intense experiencing that belongs to the arts and to religion and to imaginative living, and to creative scientific work.” (p.16)

From Playing to Shared Pleasure to the Arts



“... the potential value of the arts in contributing to core determinants of health, playing a critical role in health promotion....”

(p 57 in the WHO report)

Two Art Projects

- The CHIME project from The Gambia
- The Baby Theatre project from Cape Town

The CHIME Project (Stewart et al 2022)

Social singing, culture and health: interdisciplinary insights from the CHIME project for perinatal mental health in The Gambia

**Lauren Stewart ^{1,*}, Bonnie B. McConnell², Buba Darboe³,
Vivette Glover⁴, Hajara B. Huma³, Katie Rose M. Sanfilippo¹, Ian Cross⁵,
Hassoum Ceesay⁶, Paul Ramchandani⁷, and Victoria Cornelius⁸**

¹Psychology Department, Goldsmiths, University of London, London, UK, ²School of Music, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT 2601, Australia, ³The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Banjul, The Gambia, ⁴Institute of Reproductive and Developmental Biology, Imperial College London, London SW7 2AZ, UK, ⁵Centre for Music and Science, University of Cambridge, Cambridge CB3 9DP, UK, ⁶The National Centre for Arts and Culture, Banjul, The Gambia, ⁷PEDAL Research Centre, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, Cambridge CB2 8PQ, UK and ⁸Imperial Clinical Trials Unit, School of Public Health, Imperial College London, London SW7 2AZ, UK

*Corresponding author. E-mail: l.stewart@gold.ac.uk

Health Promotion International, 2022;37(S1):i18–i25
<https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daab210>
Advance Access Publication Date: 16 February 2022

CHIME

CCommunity

HHealth

IIntervention through

MMusical

EEngagement

CConnectedness

HHope

IIdentity

MMeaning and

EEmpowerment.





HOW CAN GROUP SINGING SUPPORT EXPECTANT MOTHERS?

MORE VIDEOS

<https://www.chimeproject.com/>





<https://www.chimeproject.com/>



The Magnet Theatre in Observatory, Cape Town



Theatre for the Early Years

- Recent developmental research and an understanding of neuroscience resulted in the emergence of a new audience for the performing arts.
- A local NGO Theatre, the Magnet Theatre, adapted a production that originated in Ireland. They called their production **SCOOP: Kitchen Play for Carers and Babies**
- Through intensive interaction with the babies, the four performers reveal innovative ways to connect and communicate with infants.

SCOOP: Kitchen Play for Moms and Babes



Father-infant Involvement

- In many countries, particularly those with largely patriarchal societies like South Africa, getting men involved with their infants and young children poses a challenge (Richer and Morrel, 2006).
- In our study we were looking for a novel intervention which would move away from a didactic approach involving instructions on health care and parenting and offer a fun and interesting opportunity for fathers to become more interested in and involved with their young babies.

Father involvement

We know that fathers play a significant role in enhancing the healthy cognitive, physical and social-emotional development of their infants and children

(Hall et al., 2014; Ramachandani et al., 2013; Holborn et al., 2011; Vogel et al., 2002; Campbell et al, 2015)





Ten-minute Documentary link

Magnet Theatre's SCOOP: Kitchen Play For Carers and Babies

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_-vQ5GV55DU&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1o0E70dObXSPdPbfHZSRp5Dm41oqTCkNtoo3PtLL-CuT8YTlt6PutJgwQ&ab_channel=MagnetTheatreZA



“I Know That It’s Something That’s Creating a Bond”: Fathers’ Experiences of Participating in Baby Theater With Their Infants in South Africa

Brenda Cowley^{1*}, Anusha Lachman¹, Elvin Williams² and Astrid Berg^{1,3}

¹ Department of Psychiatry, University of Stellenbosch, Cape Town, South Africa, ² Department of Occupational Therapy, University of Stellenbosch, Cape Town, South Africa, ³ Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa

One father's experience

“I’ll say a lot of daddies—maybe I was also included—the baby will cry, you pick up the baby while the mother is busy and the baby is crying. You pick up the baby and you “shh-shh” the baby to stop the crying and the baby is crying and right there then you get “gatvol”. You just quickly want to pass the child to the mother”

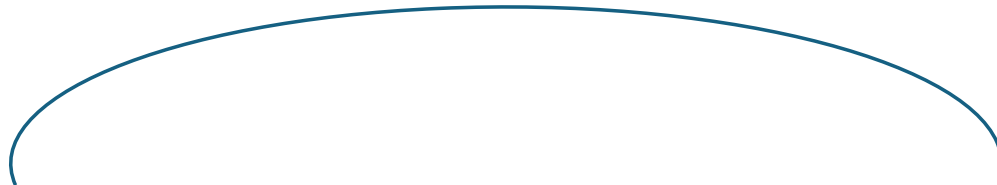
“But now knowing that you can make the baby keep quiet while he looks at you and what you are doing—maybe acting or dancing and singing, you know, you’ve got that potential in you, you know. Rather than just giving the baby away.” YG (cohabiting with baby).

In conclusion

Face to face play – shared pleasure

Vision and eye contact

The Arts as intervention
dance, music, theatre



Using the Arts

1. The Arts are welcoming and not threatening – away from the medical model which is based on treating pathology
2. The Arts are universal and are part of all cultures – it is thus possible to design an intervention to fit in with the local context
3. Projects such as the CHIME project or the SCOOP baby theatre promote shared pleasure - an evidenced based construct that leads to beneficial outcomes
4. Culture, occupies the transitional space, that space in which play occurs and in which shared pleasure is possible
5. Shared pleasure has a positive, growth enhancing and protective effect on the infant and the caregiver.

The precursor of the mirror is the parent's face

Winnicott (1896-1971)

“It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self.”

(p.63) (*Playing and Reality*, 1971)

