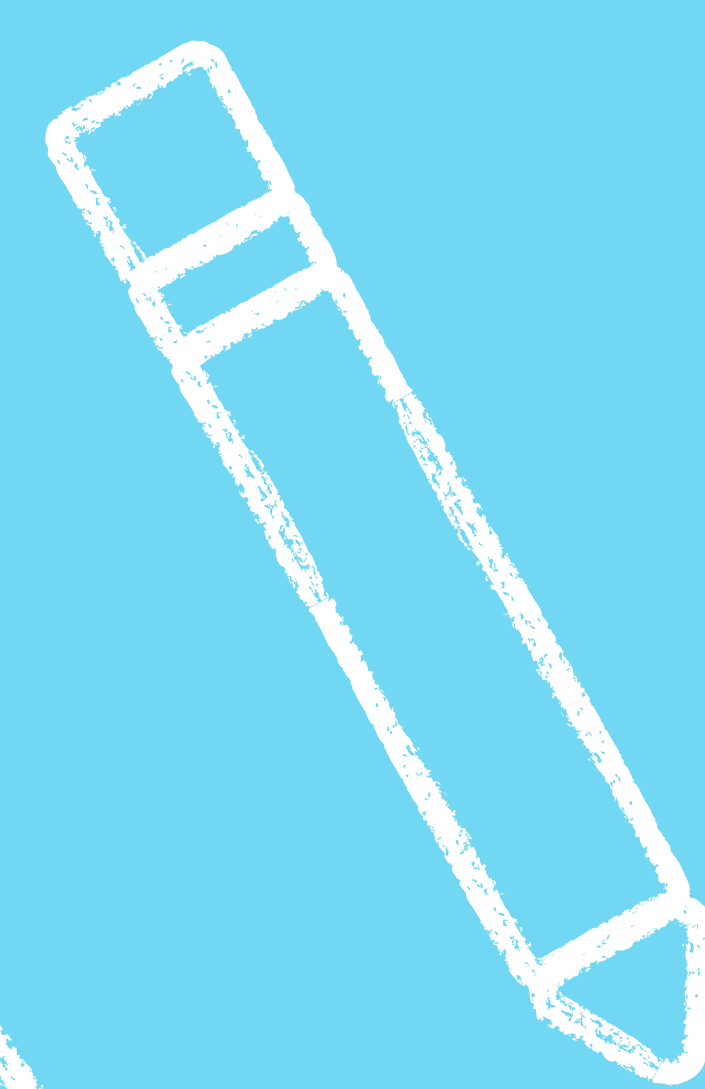


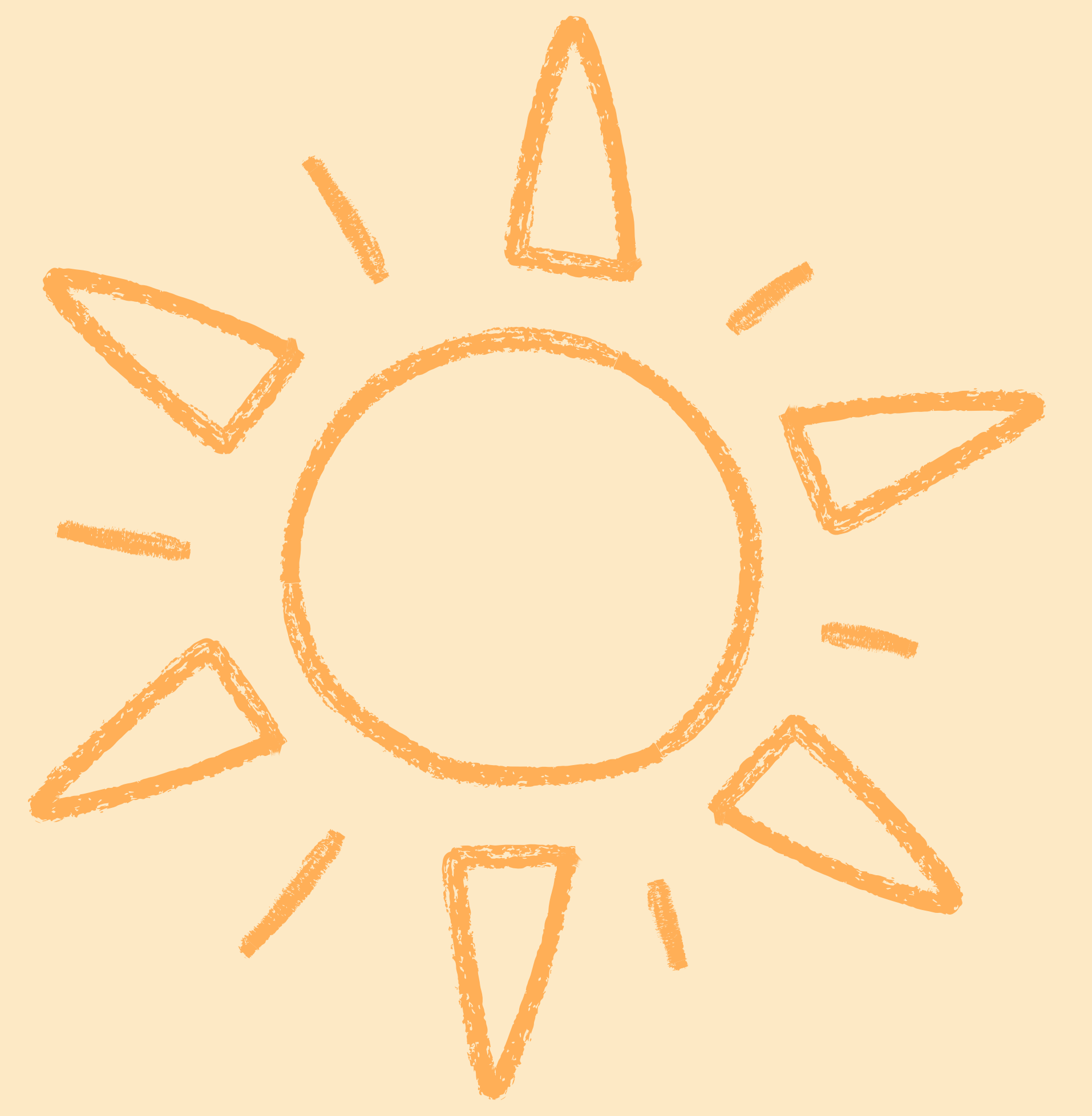
Developmental Milestones from Birth to 10

**An in-depth exploration of
children's development.**



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Written by Elle Walsh, Child Psychotherapist
With contributions by Allison Henry, Head of Schools, Moshi



Overview of Child Development



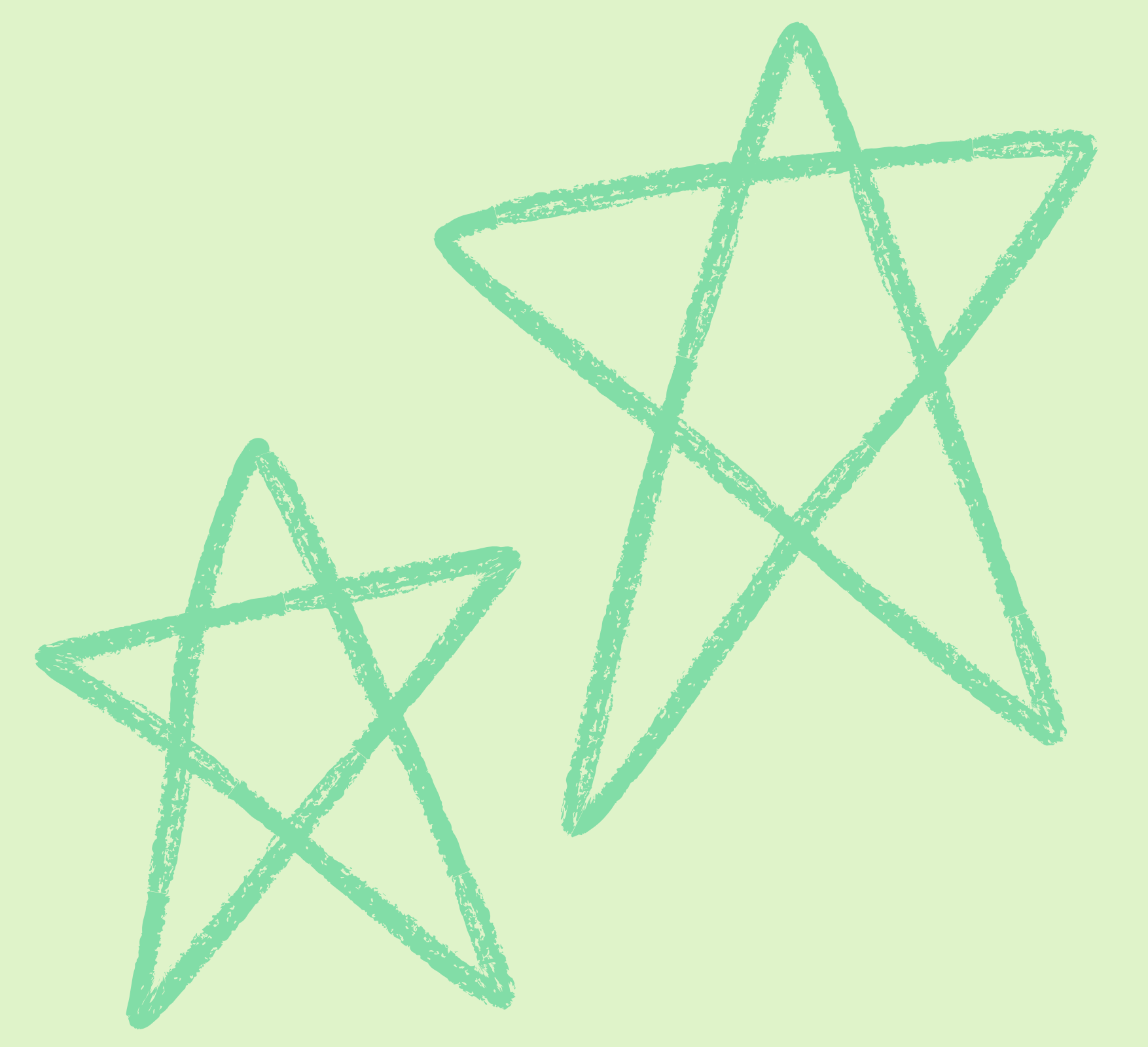
The following overview incorporates thinking from Erik Erikson’s theory of psychosocial stages of development (Erikson, 1950), attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) and thinking from my own experience (Elle Walsh, MEd, MBACP, Child Psychotherapist).

Erikson’s theory offers us a firm foundation to the study of child development that has influenced several fields of study, including personality development and life cycle development (Knight, 2017).

The premise of his model is that success in each developmental stage results in a healthy personality and the acquisition of basic virtues which, accordingly, are strengths used to resolve subsequent crises. It is essential that parents and primary caregivers are aware of their role during each of these developmental stages as they have significant power in supporting healthy development.

According to Erikson, depending on the nurturing children receive and the security of their attachments, at each stage they can either gain psychological strength or be left “stuck” in that stage with unresolved issues.

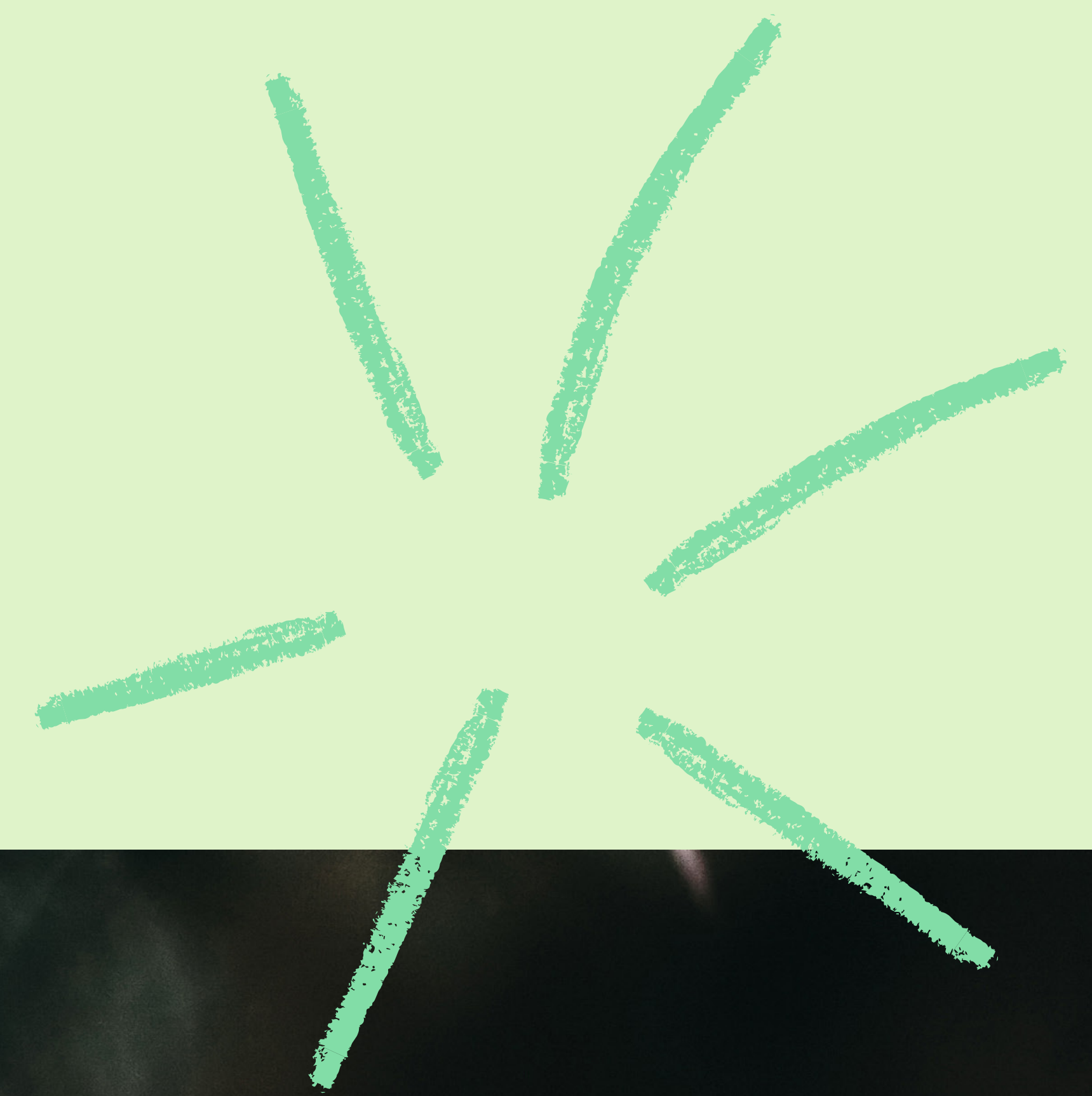
This timeline demonstrates key developmental stages, important events during each stage, and possible challenges and psychological thinking around supporting a secure attachment. The timeline assumes that the child is getting enough sleep and eating a varied diet appropriate for their age. It also assumes that the child is developing a secure attachment with the same attachment figures from birth through to ten years of age.



Infancy

0–18 Months

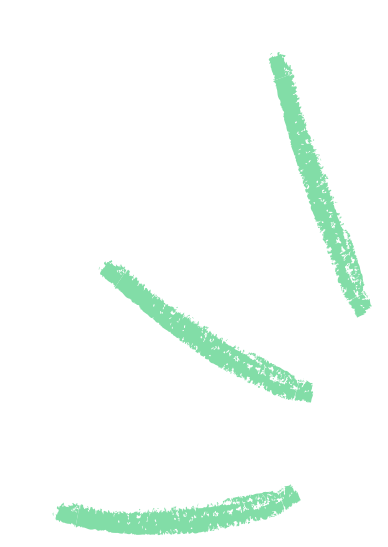
Trust vs. Mistrust



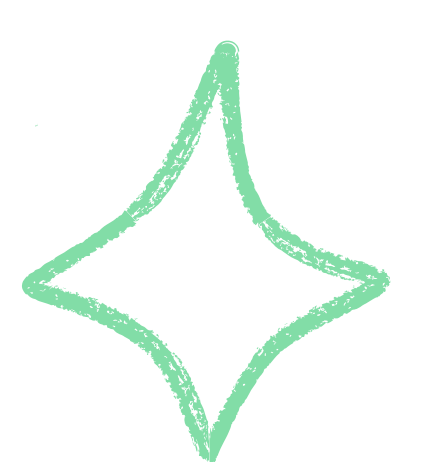
This stage is the most important period of a child’s life, as it shapes their view of the world as well as their overall personality (Erikson, 1950).

The basic virtue in this stage is hope. Successfully developing early patterns of trust are imperative for a child’s social and emotional development and they will feel safe and secure in the world due to the security of the relationship with their primary attachment figure. By being responsive, empathetic, and attuned, you develop a positive attachment with your child, setting the stage for future positive relationships.

- 1 Feeding** – Child develops a sense of trust and comfort with primary caregiver. A child’s primary source of interaction is through the mouth.
- 2 Weaning** – Child becomes less dependent on primary caregiver.
- 3 Trusting that the world is safe** – Babies communicate nonverbally at this stage. By mirroring and responding, you encourage trust and help them learn that you are safe, building secure attachment.
- 4 Knowing that needs will be met** – Crying communicates the need for affection, comfort, and food. Responding sensitively, quickly, and appropriately helps build a foundation of trust and a secure attachment.



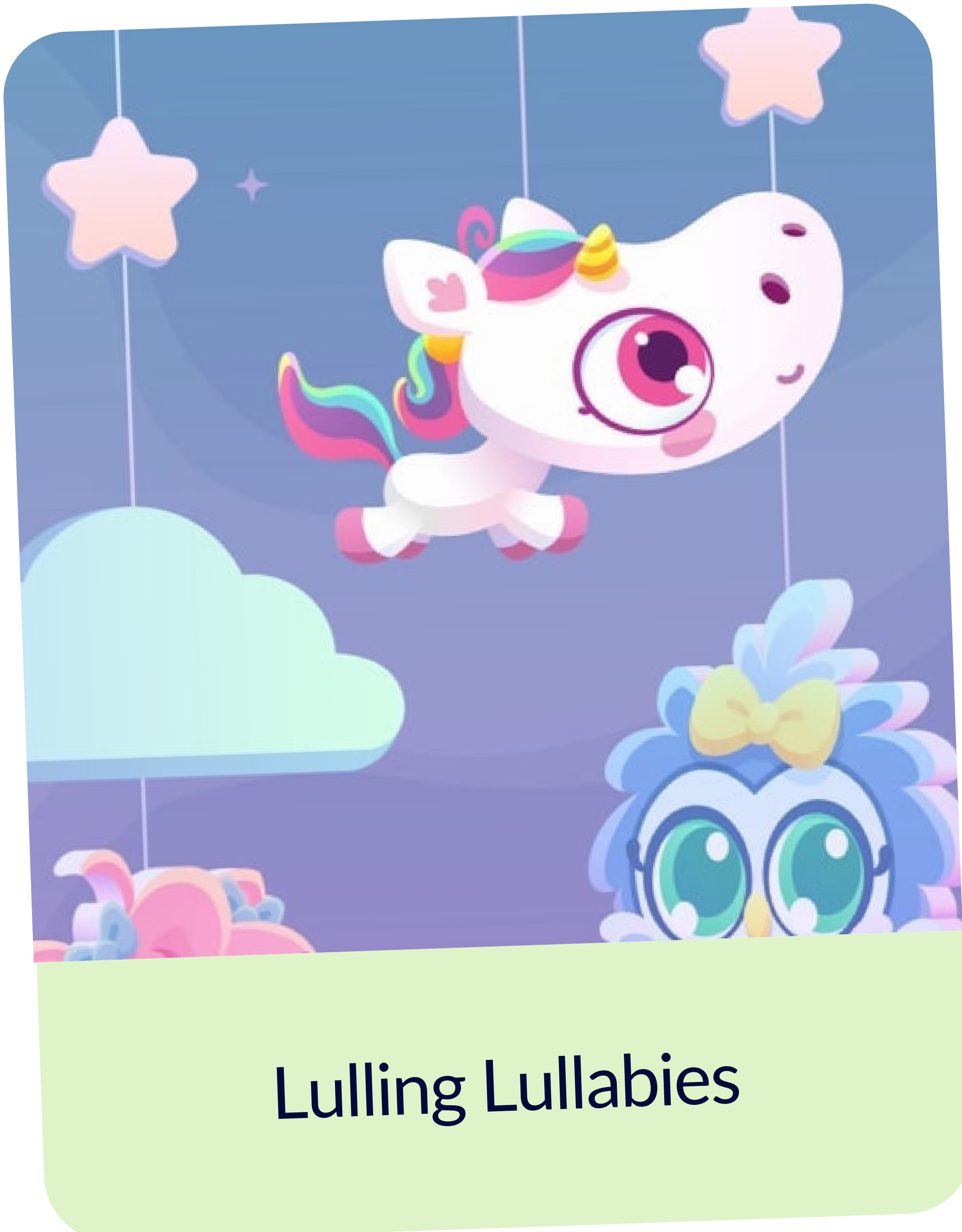
Outcomes at this stage can have effects that influence the rest of an individual’s life. It is crucial for parents to be responsive and dependable. The inability of a parent to be responsive and predictable can lead to an insecure attachment.



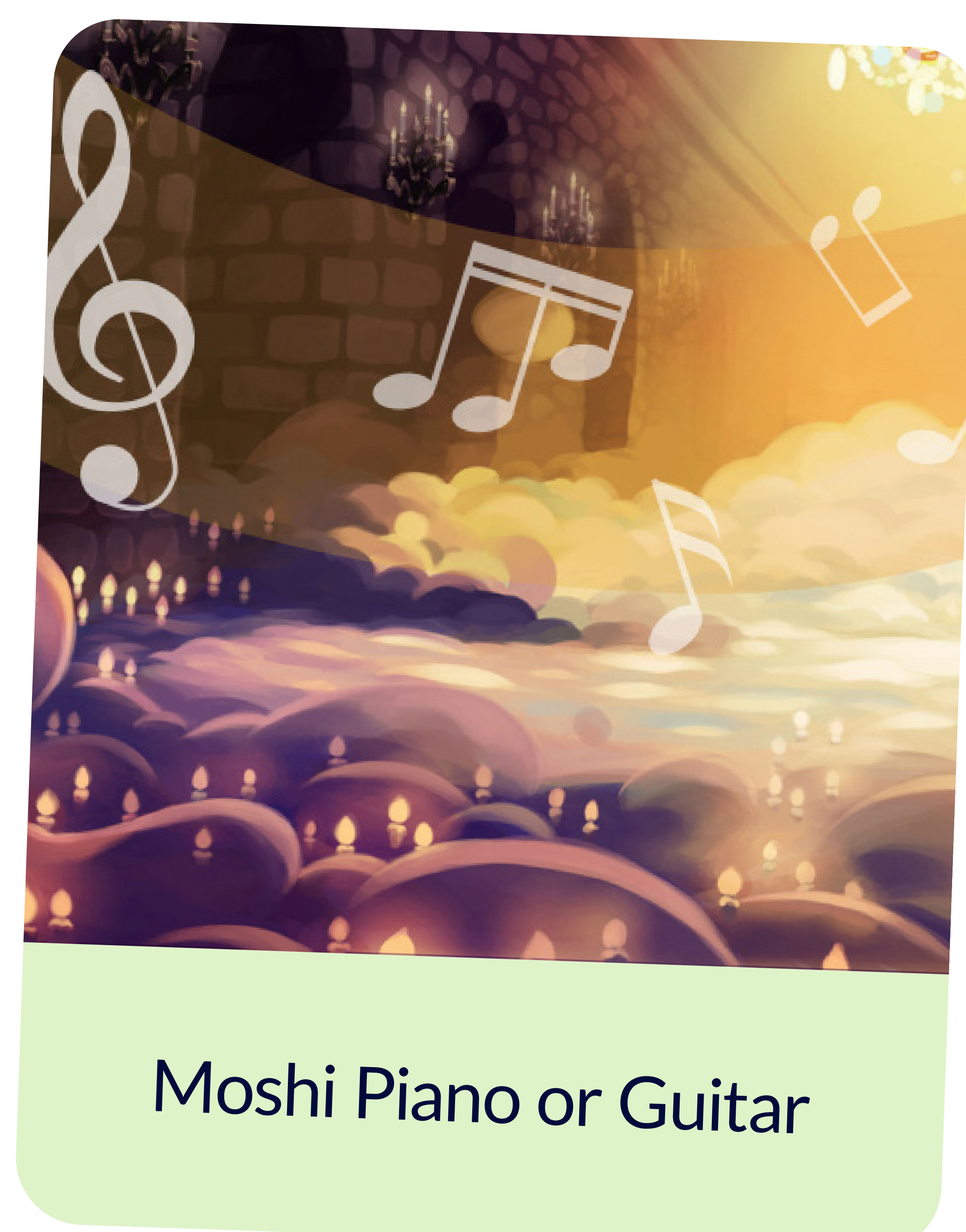
- 5 **Establishing a routine and sense of predictability** – Babies naturally crave predictability and consistency in when you do certain things, for example, changing their diaper or their night-time routine. This helps them with transitional moments.
- 6 **Movement** – Children learn to move, crawl, and walk at this stage, furthering their ability to be independent and put the attachment relationship to the test. During this crucial developmental stage a child learns to be separate from their primary caregiver. They also learn that a caregiver can leave but will return, which enables them to become secure in environments without a caregiver. By preparing the environment for their developmental needs, you are meeting them where they are and, through observation, leading with their abilities and interests in mind.
- 7 **Communication development** – Mirroring your child at this early stage will encourage your attunement with them that will not only benefit your relationship but also their language development.
- 8 **Visual and sensory development** – Key learning during this stage is nonverbal. Your baby is watching you and the environment around you intensely. They explore initially with their mouths, making sensory play and learning a massive influence during this stage.



Playlists for Sleep



Playlists for Play and Transitions



Early Childhood 2-3 Years

Autonomy vs. Shame and Guilt



During this stage a child develops a greater sense of personal control.

This is where many parents experience what I call “the battle of the will.” With more independence can come frustration, particularly if the child has not been properly set up for the task at hand. I believe transitions are key during this stage, and creating appropriate building blocks to the tasks that offer independence can facilitate wholesome development.

Erikson believed that toilet training was a vital part of this process. Learning to control bodily functions leads to a feeling of control and sense of independence, as does making choices about clothing, play, and food. Allowing children to develop a sense of personal control over physical skills and make simple decisions will play an important role in encouraging this sense of autonomy. Children who are shamed for mistakes in these tasks that offer greater independence and personal control, such as toilet training, may develop feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, whereas those who successfully complete this stage feel secure, confident, and encouraged.



- 1 **Toilet training** – Developing control over bodily sensations leads to a sense of accomplishment and independence. Parents who utilize praise and rewards encourage positive outcomes and help children feel capable and productive (Freud, 1923).
- 2 **Alternative childcare** – By offering a gradual approach to transitioning into this new and unfamiliar situation, a child is more likely to adjust positively.
- 3 **Parental projection** – Parental upbringing, personal beliefs, and norms and values may come into play during this challenging time. The experience during this stage can test the emotions of parents beyond what they understood and knew of themselves. Parents who have the ability to be self-reflective, open, and observant may experience this stage differently and mindfully.



4

Communication – e.g., nonverbal and acquiring language.

Communication is a huge developmental shift at this age, and many frustrations that come with it can be observed in behavior. Allowing children a sense of autonomy over their choices, explaining to them why sometimes certain things are not okay to do, and supporting them when their frustrations become too big for them, particularly communicating in a way they developmentally recognize, can help toddlers feel some control over what they experience in their mind and body, then their expression. Erikson believed that achieving a balance between autonomy and shame and doubt would lead to will: that children can act with intention, within reason and limits. Erikson states it is critical that parents allow children to explore the limits of their abilities within an encouraging and secure environment that is tolerant of failure.

5

Independence and sense of self – Children who are given opportunities to master tasks resulting in a sense of independence will also experience positive self-worth. The aim is for “self-control without a loss of self-esteem” (Gross, 1992). This will encourage their sense of self, separate from the attachment figure yet very much in their presence. The caregiver is promoting self-sufficiency while maintaining a secure environment.



Moshi During Early Childhood

Reinforce bedtime routines with these Moshi Stories:



Controlled Breathing

Introduce the concept of controlled breathing by using Moshi Breathing, teaching your little one to breath in, hold, and breath out.



Preschool 3-4 Years

Initiative vs. Guilt



During this stage, the child asserts themselves more frequently through directing play and social interaction.

Play provides children with opportunities to explore their interpersonal skills by initiating activities. These are years of rapid development in a child's life, and of great curiosity and energy. If parents encourage, support, and guide their child's initiatives and interests, they will develop a sense of initiative and feel secure in their ability to lead and make decisions. However, if this initiative is put down through control or criticism, children may develop an unhealthy sense of guilt, which can hinder the child's interaction with peers and restrict their creativity and restrict their initiatives.

Encouraging a healthy balance between initiative and a healthy conscience is essential as success in this stage will lead to the virtue of purpose (Erikson, 1950).



- 1 **Curiosity and creativity** – These are abundant during this stage as a child's thirst for knowledge grows. If their questions are ignored, made fun of, or seen as trivial, this can lead to children having feelings of guilt.
- 2 **Education** – Children typically attend preschool or another childcare establishment, which is a source to channel and develop a child's curiosity and creativity.
- 3 **Physical development** – Children have more energy than ever at this stage and are learning new and exciting skills. Allowing children to explore safely and put skills into practice is important. Being mindful of our own projections as parents is important too.
- 4 **Testing of boundaries** – The dialogue at this stage tends to center around behavior and discipline, and depending on the approach of the parent, the goal is the same. The aim here is to encourage resilience, safety, a sense of feeling understood and heard, and being present in their big feelings. It is important to set boundaries but it is also important to welcome any feeling that comes as a result.



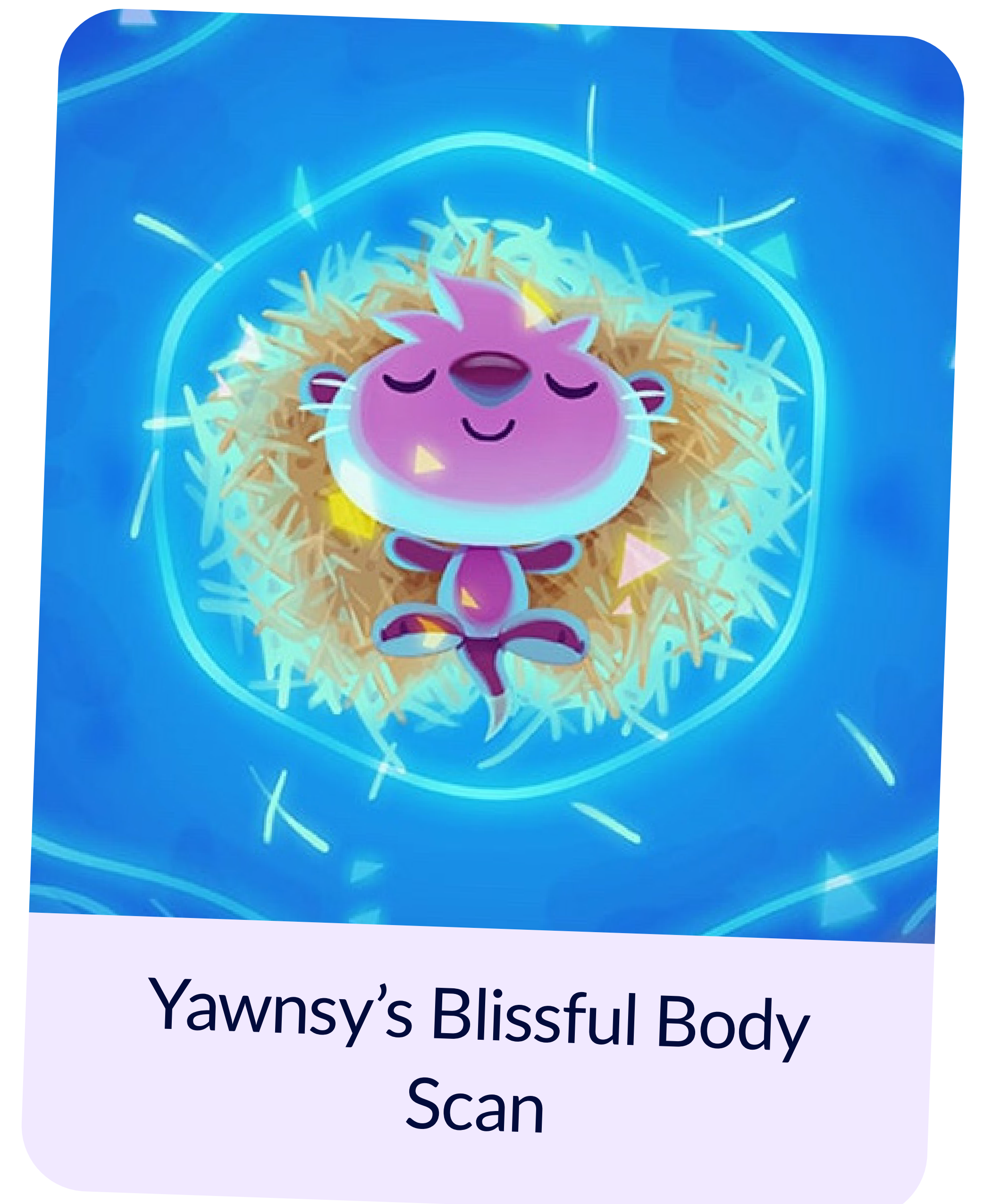
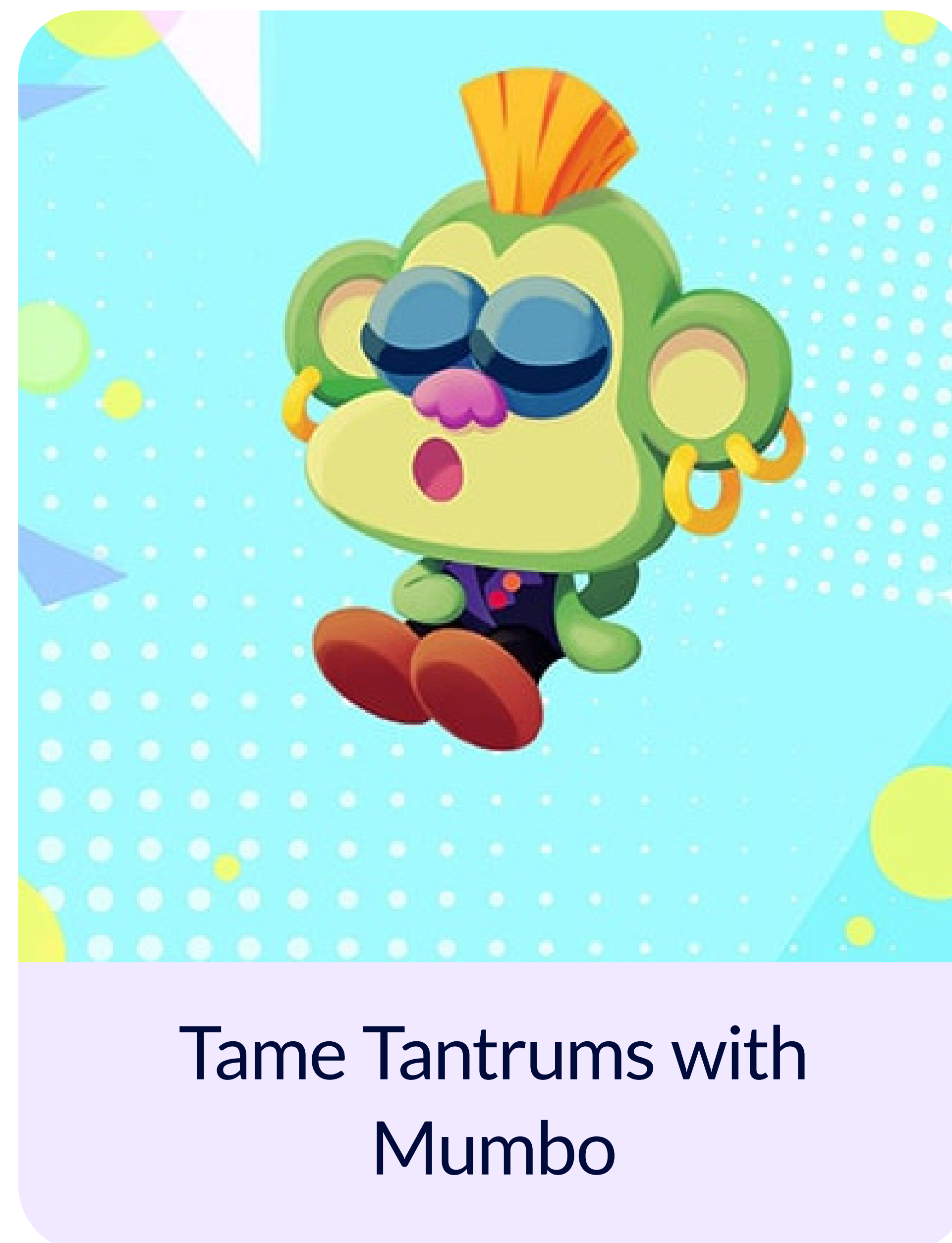


5 Emotions – Children are unable to regulate themselves and understand the physical sensations their emotions can create. Offering your calm self in their dysregulation enables children to co-regulate through you; children need to borrow your calm in order to find their own. Emotional regulation and being able to make sense of emotions are skills that need to be taught to our children. Through empathetic and calm narration, we can help children express their needs. Perhaps taking some space, counting, or deep breathing might help. These moments are so tough for our children and can be difficult for us as parents to navigate. It is important to give yourself and your child compassion in this learning, as they are seeking connection and co-regulation.

6 Imagination is in overdrive – It is developmentally healthy for children to become interested and involved in fantasy and pretend play. However, children can also start to develop unrealistic fears and it is important that these fears are heard, understood, and made sense of.

Moshi During Preschool Years

Introduce mindfulness strategies for challenging times using these Moshi Moments:



The Moshi App

Harness your preschoolers natural curiosity by exploring the Moshi app together. Take time to notice what the characters look like and the background images and practice making choices of what to listen to. Read more about exploring the app here:



School Age 4-10 Years Industry vs. Inferiority



During this stage a child's peer group gains greater significance and becomes a major source of their self-esteem.

Their attachment figures begin to broaden as they begin to develop important relationships with peers and teachers. Children at primary age are coping with new learning and social demands and if they are encouraged for their initiative, they will begin to feel industrious, and confident in their ability to achieve goals.

Erikson found that success in this stage leads to a sense of competence. However, if this initiative is restricted, discouraged, or dismissed by any attachment figure, it can lead a child to doubt their abilities and feel inferior. Some failure, however, is necessary to develop modesty. So again, a balance is essential. Through reasonable expectations at school and at home and with praise for their accomplishments, children can begin to develop this sense of competence.

I have split Erikson's above developmental grouping into several age categories, as I believe in practice, a primary aged child will be experiencing an array of developmental change throughout this time and it is important to focus in on them in more detail to unpack what is happening for them.



- 1 **Education** – As children get older and start school, it is important to remember that play is still so fundamental to them. It is how they are learning and developing their social, emotional, and thinking skills. Their teachers begin to take an important role in your child's life.
- 2 **Friendship groups** – Friendship groups will gain greater significance and children will begin to develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments.
- 3 **Independence** – Offer your child a sense of responsibility in the home, teaching cooperation and self-sufficiency. It is important to remember that although children love being independent, they still need love and attention. Connection is the most important thing.
- 4 **Physical coordination** – Children are likely to be more involved with team-playing activities and gaining great life skills: learning rules, taking turns, etc..
- 5 **Socialization and social play** – Complex play, filled with fantasy and drama and adult-like conversations.
- 6 **Development of empathy** – With this learning comes tricky emotions. Children are beginning to express themselves but will need help and time to identify and talk about more difficult emotions, like anger and jealousy.
- 7 **Language and knowledge development as their curiosity is nurtured** – This greater depth of understanding of the world may lead to some fears, for example of the supernatural or of failure. Fears can often stem from incorrect information and a child's imagination can run wild, so it is important to keep an open flow of communication with them. By being present and available, offering guidance and support, our children will continue to make sense of the world around them in a healthy way.

Moshi During School Age Years

Foster confidence and positive self-esteem by using these Moshi Moments:



Mindfulness Strategies

Teach mindfulness strategies that they can use anytime, anywhere, such as grounding techniques with Peekaboo's Relaxing Roots and guided imagery with Growing a Flower Garden with Shishi.



4–6 Years

- 1 **Development of self** – Children begin to understand more about themselves and their place in the world.

Children are constructing a self-concept and this involves the integration of self-perception with other people's perceptions. As self-perception is dynamic, aspects of it can change in response to individual and social forces, highlighting how integral parental guidance and explanation is when children are faced with difficult situations.

- 2 **Confidence** – This is a critical time when children begin to develop confidence in all areas of life: through friendships, schoolwork, and extracurricular activities. As parents, it is crucial to recognize our child's accomplishments. Focus praise on what they do, rather than on traits they cannot change.

- 3 **Experience of different relationships** – Children will be exposed to a variety of different people, with religions, cultures and norms, and abilities that are different from their own. Teachers become and remain positive role models and children become easily influenced by the relationships and environment around them.



- 4 **Experience of negative situations** – A child may experience their first confrontation, whether it's in school or during team sports. They will look to us as parents to help them navigate through it. Bullying is prevalent during this age, as children begin to put language to differences and their sense of understanding is still immature. Talk with your child about differences and respecting others, and help them navigate any tricky questions they may have. Encourage them to think about the possible consequences before acting, as this can help them develop their empathy. Using discipline to guide and protect children rather than punishment will help them understand what to do instead of focusing on what not to do.

6–8 Years (Middle Childhood)

- 1 **Identifying good skills** – Group games and social activities become more prominent at this age. It is likely that a child will find something that they are good at as their repertoire of concepts and skills continues to grow at a rapid rate. The variety of intellectual, social, artistic, and athletic skills provides new domains for self-definition.
- 2 **Independence** – Having independence from the family becomes more important. By this time, children are able to carry out a number of day-to-day tasks on their own and have more and more responsibilities.
- 3 **Friendships** – This is a consistent theme during these school-age years. Children want to be liked and accepted by their friends and they become less egocentric and better able to understand another's perspective.

Children focus more on their friendships and teamwork. It is through these relationships that children have more concern for others and less focus on themselves.

- 4 **Feelings and experience of strong emotions** – Emotions, of course, continue to be a significant part of development. Although children are likely to have more points of contact for support in their feelings, they ultimately will rely on their parents for support and guidance through them.
- 5 **Self-regulation** – As children mature and are socialized, their own needs, desires, goals, knowledge, skills, and expectations overlap with societal expectations.

Children begin to learn that their own needs can often be met by regulating behavior according to the demands of the larger social system. This is important for parents to understand, as sometimes such demands can be negative and children will look to us to help navigate what is right from wrong.



8–10 Years (Middle Childhood)

- 1 Identity of self** – A child's perception of themselves is present now more than ever. Children who feel good about themselves are likely to resist negative peer pressure and make better choices for themselves.

You are your child's biggest supporter, so you have the primary role in encouraging this positive outlook. Body image is significant around this stage.

- 2 Managing emotions** – Children's emotions can change quickly and can often become dramatic and quite sensitive. It is important to remember that children at this age may not be able to articulate the big feelings growing inside of them. You will always be their primary attachment figure, their security and safe space. As parents, we need to be available to them, listen, and help them make sense of each feeling—the how and why.





- 3 Friendships** – Children begin to form stronger and more complex friendships. Children will begin to experience more peer pressure and will face more challenges within their friendship groups. Children will become sensitive to what others think of them and will naturally seek adult approval.
- 4 School and education** – Children will also experience more academic challenges at school. During this time children may begin to take more risks as they grow in confidence at solving problems. They are developing competitiveness, enthusiasm, sportsmanship, and competence in the skills they are good at. They are beginning to show a capacity for self-evaluation and they learn the skills through their attachment figures and role models.
- 5 Academic skills and physical skills** – Children are learning what they are good at and broadening their knowledge, driven by curiosity and wonder. The opportunity to develop skills intellectually, socially, artistically, and athletically becomes greater.

Summary of Key Learnings

- Babies need empathetic, responsive, and attuned caregivers who are able to model, mirror, and show.
- Children need present and available caregivers to champion them in their successes and guide them in their failures.
- Listening is imperative during the primary ages: aim to wonder and guide rather than lead and direct.
- Address your child's big feelings from the outset.
- Championing choice, equipping children with wholesome and correct knowledge, ensuring they are always being heard, and supporting them in navigating incorrect perceptions will help address some of the common challenges that children face and help you raise emotionally healthy children (Healy, 2018).

Moshi Activities to Support Healthy Development

Cleo's Pyramid Breathing: Take deep, controlled breaths (in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4)

Take a Brightside Break: Practice optimism and saying positive things about you

ShiShi's Rainbow Flower Garden: Imagine a place where you feel happy and safe

Peekaboo's Relaxing Roots: Plant your feet firmly on the ground and imagine filling with positive energy

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Child Development Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment>

Child Development: Milestones, Ages and Stages - Children's Health
Orange County

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/development/development-tracker>

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