

Table 3: Perceived Barriers and Facilitators to Behaviors Associated with Strong Early Relational Health

	THEME	EXEMPLAR QUOTE(S)
PREDISPOSING FACTORS	Parents learn how to build relationships with their babies born preterm from professionals with developmental expertise.	<p>“They [Early Intervention] used to say, engage, try to be-- give her more love, more attention because She will need that, that's what I do. That's all.” [Parent of infant born at 28wks now 22mos, corrected to 19mos]</p> <p>“[Early intervention told me to] observe her eyes, her interaction, like for example does she look at me in the face, does she recognize my voice if I talk to her and then if she left by herself, can she tell if she's by herself or she's around people? So I have been told to observe those things and then communication if she is hungry, how does she communicate? All these things have been told to me and I've been observant with them.” [Parent of infant born at 31wks now 3mos, corrected to 1mo]</p>
	Parents recognize ways that preterm birth can affect their relationship with their child.	<p>“In sum, I feel like she needs me a lot, because she was born a preemie. She needs extra attention...I don't know how to explain it, but I feel like she needs me more than would have been full term. I need to pay attention to everything so that I don't miss it.” [Parent of infant born at 26wks now 25mos]</p>
	Prior parenting experience affects parents' confidence and knowledge of how to build relationships with their children born preterm.	<p>“I don't think they're (twins born preterm) more challenging because that's all I have been used to. If I had had prior experience, like I had children before them, then I would have something for me to compare them to, but because it's all that I have been used to understand and it just seems like a regular part and stuff I need to do.” [Parent of twins born at 24wks now 22mos, corrected to 18mos]</p>
	Parents use their values and prior knowledge when confronted with conflicting advice from friends/family members and/or media resources	<p>“I pay attention to my friends. They can tell me whatever, but I, as his mom, I study certain things. So I'll go off of what I know about him.” [Parent of infant born at 31 weeks now 28 mos]</p> <p>“It's hard to understand [a] baby. And I'd be watching these little YouTube videos that they be doing, talking about, you know, this cry means this, this cry means that. And I don't think that's correct. But [I have] kind of been paying attention to her cries and [I] know kind of sort of like when she cries, what is it that she wants.” [Parent of infant born at 30wks now 9mos, corrected to 7mos]</p>
ENABLING FACTORS	Parents feel accomplishment and satisfaction when they build relationships with their children.	<p>“It feels amazing because it lets me know he's listening to what I tell him. He'll literally copy what I tell him...One day he noticed I was crying and he asked me, ‘Mama, are you okay? Are you sad? We need to be happy.’ I know that he understands that it's normal, that he wants to be happy...He knows that's how he wants to be because that's how most of the time we are, or we try to be.” [Parent of infant born at 26wks now 35 mos]</p> <p>“It's soothing for the both of us, again, it's just trying to play catch up when I get home from work and, you know when I see my kid, he's always happy to see me and I'm happy to see him, so it's a mutual love there.” [Parent of infant born at 30wks now 20mos, corrected to 18mos]</p>
	Parents are influenced by others who support their goals for building nurturing relationships	<p>“I feel like I'm bonding with her [my baby] and I definitely want to build trust, relationship with myself and my daughter. And so there's a lot of communication with my husband and me. She's our first child. And so we want to be on the same page in building that nurturing environment. And so reading to her, singing to her, all of these things, we feel like it's contributing to that.” [Parent of infant born at 31wks now 6mos, corrected to 4mos]</p>

REINFORCING FACTORS	Competing responsibilities including employment and caring for other children impact parent-child relationships.	<p>“If you have to go to work and you have to drop her to the babysitter. She hates that. She would scream and scream and scream and I would feel terrible. I would feel terrible leaving her, but what do you do? You better go to work. I stayed with [her] for so long she became so attached to me. The only person she knows is me and her sister. So, it was challenging when I would leave her to go to work and I leave her to a babysitter. [Parent of infant born at 26wks now 25mos]</p> <p>“It’s tough because they actually also have a baby brother now too. So just trying to do whatever we can to build special relationships individually. I’ll be sure to, if any of them want to come sit on my lap or have a cuddle or hug or try to stop whatever I’m doing.” [Parent of twins born at 28wks now 25 mos]</p>
	Resources for parents such as tangible and emotional supports from friends and family members foster parent-child relationships through providing relief.	<p>“[My sister] advises me on how to fully take care of [my baby]. Then when she comes and gives relief, she's like, okay, let me stay with [her], if you want to go grab or do some of the errands or do you want to go have some time by yourself, something like that, gives me support. And sometimes this is a challenge if the baby has been crying all through. So you get mad sometimes, you feel oh my God, this is too much for me. So sometimes when she comes around I feel, oh what a relief.” [Parent of infant born at 31wks now 3mos, corrected to 1mo]</p> <p>“If you have someone to talk to, someone that really, really understands you like a family member it's like it takes off some anxiety. The anxiety that I had, but no doubt my relationship with [my child] was solid. I love her to death that couldn't change anything whether she came out how or what I had already established a good relationship with her the minute she came out. So, just talking to a couple of family members helped me go through the anxiety period.” [Parent of infant born at 26wks now 25mos]</p>

Wks indicates weeks, Mos indicates months

Corrected age represents chronologic age corrected for prematurity (only for children <24mos)