

Fourth Trimester Podcast

Episode 39: An Introduction To RIE Infant Parenting by Lee Fernandez

Sarah Trott: [00:00:05] My name is Sarah Trott. I'm a new mama to a baby girl and this podcast is all about postpartum care for the few months following birth, the time period also known as the Fourth Trimester. My postpartum doula, Esther Gallagher, is my co-host. She's a mother, grandmother, perinatal educator, birth and postpartum care provider. I've benefited hugely from her support. All parents can benefit from the wisdom and support that a postpartum Doula provides. Fourth trimester care is about the practical, emotional and social support parents and baby require, and importantly, helps set the tone for the lifelong journey of parenting.

When I first became pregnant, I had never heard of postpartum Doulas, let alone knew what they did. So much of the training and preparation that expecting parents do is focused on the birth and newborn care. Once a baby is born, often the first interaction parents have with medical or child professionals, other than the first pediatrician visits, is the six-week checkup with the OB/GYN. *What about caring for mama and family between the birth and the six week doctor visit? What are the strategies for taking care of the partner and the rest of the family while looking after your newborn?*

Our podcasts contain expert interviews with specialists from many fields to cover topics including postpartum doula practices, prenatal care, prenatal and postnatal yoga, parenting, breastfeeding, physical recovery from birth, nutrition, newborn care, midwifery, negotiating family visitation, and many more.

First-hand experience is shared through lots of stories from both new and seasoned parents. Hear what other parents are asking and what they have done in their own lives.

We reference other podcasts, internet resources and real-life experts who can help you on your own parenting journey. Visit us at <http://fourthtrimesterpodcast.com>

Sarah Trott: [00:00:44] Hi, this is Sarah Trott. Welcome back to the Fourth Trimester Podcast. I'm here today with a special guest, Lee Fernandez. She is someone who's been offering RIE infant guidance classes since 1991 here in California, and she became a RIE associate in 1987. She's been leading classes here in San Francisco and the wider Bay Area, so anyone local can look her up directly. Or if you are elsewhere in the world, please do check out her website, which is <https://www.discoveryourbaby.org/>. There's a lot of great information there.

Sarah Trott: [00:01:19] And before we kick off and get started with Lee, I wanted to remind our listeners that we have a website, <https://fourthtrimesterpodcast.com/>, where you can sign up for our newsletter. I encourage you to do that if you have not done so yet. And we also have a sponsorship page where you can go and even donate as little as \$1 an episode, which you know would be so, so helpful for us. We are a small operation and we value all of our sponsors, so please do that and we thank you very kindly. So let's kick it over to Lee. Lee Hi, how are you?

Lee Fernandez: [00:01:51] Hello Sarah. Thank you so much for having me on today. I really appreciate the opportunity to share RIE resources for infant Educators with your audience. So about myself, Lee Fernandez, so I do have a master's degree in human development with a specialty in infants and toddlers. I'm also a RIE certified as a RIE associate, and I'm Montessori certified. I used to have my own Montessori school many years ago. I started out just as a big sister who took care of my sibs, three sibs.

Lee Fernandez: [00:02:27] And then when I began to have my own family, I was needing to do something more. And so I started as a family child care provider back in Mobile, Alabama, where I was living at the time. Then from there, I got interested in Montessori because I was helping out at my kid's Montessori school. So I got Montessori certified and then I started my own small preschool in daycare, also in Alabama.

Lee Fernandez: [00:02:52] And then when I came back to the Bay Area, I came back to run all the childcare programs at Moffett Field, first for the Navy and then for the Air Force. Those were big programs. I had about 100 employees and many, many, many

families 0 to 18. So lots of different activities as well as family, child care, child care and centers and family activities. I retired in 2008 from the Air Force as a civil servant, and now I am offering classes again, which I really didn't have much time for in the past. And, you know, I'm a retiree, so I need that extra income. But it's also really about what my passion is. I really enjoy being with families. It keeps me young. And I'm 73 and I have three children who are all adults of course.

Sarah Trott: [00:03:45] I would love to know a little bit more about RIE.

Lee Fernandez: [00:03:47] Just what I want to talk about now. RIE stands for Resources for Infant Educators. So way back in the 20s and 30s, there was a pediatrician in Hungary, Dr. Emmi Pikler, and Magda Gerber, who's the founder of RIE, was a parent, and she took her child who was ill, to see Dr. Pikler because her own regular pediatrician was out of town. And this is kind of the legend, but it's also the story that Magda told. And so she took her child in to see Dr. Pikler, or rather, it was a home visit. Dr. Pikler came to them. Imagine that - those days are gone.

Lee Fernandez: [00:04:29] So Dr. Pikler came in and Magda was quite surprised because Dr. Pikler did not turn to Magda the mother and say, What's wrong? Instead, she turned to the child who was about 5 or 6 and could speak and explain how she felt. So Dr. Pikler was asking the child, What's happening? How do you feel? Does it hurt somewhere? And so on. And Magda really loved how she connected, how Dr. Pikler connected with her child. So she switched pediatricians and then she started to work with Dr. Pikler.

Lee Fernandez: [00:05:01] And in the 40s, Dr. Pikler was given the task by the government of Hungary to found a nursery for babies and toddlers and preschool children who were orphaned by World War Two. There were many orphans, and there have been many stories about some of the orphanages around Europe and research done because many of them were quite harmful to children. But Dr. Pikler's nursery was a wonderful place where the children grew up to be normal adults. No problems.

Lee Fernandez: [00:05:33] So, her methods were something that Magda learned and brought to the US when she came from Hungary in the 50s. And when Magda first came over, she really saw how beautiful it was here. This is after post-war Europe. She saw here homes are clean. They look like magazine covers. There's toys. Everything looks delightful. It must be good here. And she started working first as a translator. And then she worked with autistic children.

Lee Fernandez: [00:06:03] But the more she met American families, the more she realized, Oh, parenting is the same. It's the same everywhere. It's hard. It's not easy. And she felt she had something to offer. So she first founded Dip Demonstration Infant Program in Palo Alto with Dr. Tom Forrest, who was on the staff there at Stanford, and she worked through the Palo Alto Health Council and through the Stanford Big Nursery, founded a program, what we call parent infant guidance classes from her, from what she had learned from Dr. Pikler and founding those classes.

Lee Fernandez: [00:06:43] They went on for a couple of years, but Magda was commuting from LA where she lived with her family, and so eventually she just started her own program. Resources for Infant Educators. Educators is kind of an odd word, and it's Magda's effort to combine educating and caring because she felt like we care while we educate, we educate while we care. It's not that they're separate. They're combined. They work together. So Resources for Infant Educators. And we go by our acronym, RIE. She founded RIE in 1978. So we've been going on since then.

Sarah Trott: [00:07:20] A lot of our listeners are pregnant or soon-to-be parents where they have possibly have infants at home. When's the right time to start learning about RIE and what should parents for this early stage understand?

Lee Fernandez: [00:07:34] I'm coming from the RIE point of view so what I want to stress with parents is that you do what works for you and your family, but I'm giving you suggestions and thoughts and I'm always giving you why do I say this? So I have, as I've told you, a background in child development. And when I was a montessori teacher, I went to a conference, NAEYC, National Association for the Education of Young Children in New Orleans, and I went to a workshop with Magda Gerber. That was when

I first met her in 1984, and I was just overwhelmed by how well her thoughts and her philosophy and her ideas about parenting dovetailed with the Montessori philosophy. And Maria Montessori did not work with infants. She worked with children who were mostly preschoolers. There were a few toddlers in her early group and so I felt this was that missing piece, that early piece.

Lee Fernandez: [00:08:34] And I do want to talk about those first three months of being in the world. So RIE offers a class for expectant parents called Before Baby. It is something for parents who are expecting to become parents or who are thinking about becoming parents or who are adopting.

Lee Fernandez: [00:08:56] But RIE itself, our parent infant guidance classes usually start at about 2 to 3 months. So what I'm going to do now is talk about that early period like we would talk about it in our Before Baby class because our classes for older infants and then for toddlers are quite different.

Lee Fernandez: [00:09:14] First, I want to talk about parents. And one of the most important things is to get help at home. So you need to think about providing yourself assistance at home, because when you come home with your baby, you really want your family to be focused around the child and your own feelings and healing and getting to know who this baby is. And there are many day to day chores which you will probably press upon you and you're going to feel like you need to get them done. But if you can have some help in the home, that's going to relieve you of that concern or stress.

Sarah Trott: [00:09:51] And what does that mean in practical terms? Do you mean someone to help clean your bathroom, clean your kitchen?

Lee Fernandez: [00:09:57] It could be that. Or it could be a doula who comes to actually even help you with the baby. So either way, it could even be a relative. And of course, these days, it's a little harder to find relatives. When I had my children, I was living in Mobile, Alabama, and all my family was in California. So I didn't have that. And I

sure wish I had. Sometimes family is helpful, sometimes not so helpful. So that's an issue that is personal.

Lee Fernandez: [00:10:25] But I do suggest that you have someone to help you at home. Sometimes you may just need to sleep, especially if you're a nursing mom. And nowadays we have the programs, especially in San Francisco, where dads get paternity leave. That's a fabulous thing. But one thing to think about is doing less, slowing down. Slowing down because the baby's pace is slower than ours. They take in information more slowly than we do, and you need to take your time and give yourself as much rest as you can. Listening to your baby, getting to know who your baby is, and then also allowing yourself some time to take a break and have some fun. So time to get out with a partner or spouse or whoever or your friends so that you can have a little time when you're not having to be responsible for the baby.

Sarah Trott: [00:11:21] Can I just ask, when you say slow down ... So here's a little person who's been gestating for nine months inside, is suddenly outside in the big world. I'm sure that they're taking in a lot of information that's just so new. So for an adult, we'll feel like we're going at a snail's pace. But for them, it's probably a lightning pace.

Lee Fernandez: [00:11:44] That's absolutely true. And your baby needs a quiet routine, you know, trying to set up your household so that you have a place where you can feed your baby that's comfortable for you, maybe more than one place, but usual places where things go on. So there's predictability in this infant's life so this baby can get to know this world because, for one thing, they have no muscle tone whatsoever. They've been floating. They have no muscles. And all the little movements that they make early on are just reflexes. And then gradually they start to build muscle and they start to build this brain body connection. And this happens over time. And it's our responsibility, I feel, to create the space where that can happen.

Lee Fernandez: [00:12:32] And also the emotional environment where your baby needs you to be close. Your baby needs you sometimes to be holding them while they're sleeping. It's wonderful sometimes to have the baby just laying on you and sleeping and

then other times babies do need some time away from adults where they're just quiet beings. Taking in all that sensation. So by slowing down, what I'm talking about is we have hectic lives. We often have more than one job. We have so many things going on. Traffic noises inside, outside. There's a lot of stimulation. So try to think about those first few weeks, can we just slow down? Can we slow down and pay more attention to the baby? And Magda used to say the best four letter word is Wait.

Lee Fernandez: [00:13:25] So slow down and wait for that next thing to happen. My own little mantra is 'let it happen' instead of trying to 'make it happen'. And I'm talking about those first few years of life. So one of the things that we can do to connect with our child would be to observe, to spend time just watching the baby and listening to the baby and being close and letting that baby start to feel the trust. That has to go two ways because it's us trusting this baby to be an explorer, a human being, a self learner, and it's the baby trusting us to be predictable, to provide the things that they need. So the trust is going two ways.

Lee Fernandez: [00:14:10] And then the respect. So we're respecting this baby to be exactly who they are and letting them be. Not insisting that they have to do that next thing that we think is going to happen. One of the ways we can slow down is just not to worry about the so-called milestones and to just let our baby be exactly who they are and know that development progresses, but it progresses in this unique way for each baby. It's not the same with your second child if you have one. Think about how the tiny infant is feeling, your hands, the way you're touching them. That's so, so important. How gentle we are, whether we're rough, whether we're nervous or stressed. All of that communicates to this baby about what this world is like.

Lee Fernandez: [00:14:58] So think about how, how do I hold my baby? How do I pick up my baby? How gentle am I? How supportive am I? One of the things that we talk about in RIE is how to pick up a baby and how to put down a baby. We want to fully support the spine and the back of the neck. All of that connection to the brain and the body is going through the spinal cord. And sometimes, as you notice, as you pick up your baby, maybe you pick them up under the shoulders and the head flops. And that's not a comfortable thing and it's not something we want to have happen. We want to

protect the neck. The spine goes all the way up into the head, back of the head. So we want to slide our arm underneath that baby and fully support them.

Lee Fernandez: [00:15:41] And then again, that gentle touch, you know, that comforting and calm, gentle touch. Remember that you are how your baby finds out about the world. You are their connection. Then another thing that RIE wants you to do is to talk to your baby, too. We call it sportscasting, but with these younger babies, I wouldn't really call it that. I would just say we're talking to our baby about our own feelings and about what's happening. So the baby is beginning to experience the world, the world and your touch, but also all these different things that go on. You might say, Oh, I heard that, too, if you see your baby startled from a sound.

Lee Fernandez: [00:16:22] Know that your baby's senses are very, very acute. Especially the sense of smell. And their focal point for vision is really about 12 to 18in early on. Just like if you're holding them in your arms and you're nursing or feeding. So think about how sense of smell. That's one way they connect with you, their vision. They're seeing your face, they're fascinated by your face. They want to look at your mouth and your eyes. They want to do that baby gaze, which is just heartwarming. But talking to your baby. So you're connecting with them. Babies want communication. They want to be communicated with and they want to communicate back. Their way of communicating is crying or making little sounds, and baby cries can be upsetting. So think about how my baby is letting me know how they feel. And it's not intended to upset you, but it is intended to get your attention. So pay attention to those baby cries and start to notice the differences because some of the cries are hunger cries and some of the cries are my tummy feels bad cries and some of the cries are I'm so tired I can't fall asleep but I'm trying to cry. So try to start noticing how, Is my baby communicating what they feel and then respond and say, I hear you crying. I think you're hungry. So I'm getting ready to feed you now. So you give them a dialogue right from the beginning. You treat them as though they are a sentient human being because they are.

Sarah Trott: [00:18:10] And those cries are not signals to someone that they've done something wrong or they're missing something necessarily. It's just their only way of talking.

Lee Fernandez: [00:18:18] That's right. That's their way of letting us know how they feel. And sometimes the sounds they make with crying are to relieve stress. Right? So we have ways of relieving stress. We do some exercise or we go outside or we talk to somebody about how we're feeling. When baby is feeling stressed, they don't have any real way to communicate that except by these cries. And sometimes all they really need is us to get close and acknowledge. We hear them and hold them, and sometimes we can't figure out what it is. That's the frustrating time. Yeah. And we just have to be patient and wait through it. Sometimes we even have to go out of the room briefly to calm ourselves because baby crying can be very stressful for us. But, thinking about it as though my baby needs to cry at this time, they're relieving something and if I can wait for that, it will eventually go and I will be able to comfort them. Yeah, maybe not at this moment, but soon.

Sarah Trott: [00:19:23] Yeah. And there's sort of a misconception that a good baby is a quiet baby. We've had some people talk about that before. And what would you say to that?

Lee Fernandez: [00:19:34] So I would say that babies are very different and some babies are quiet and some babies are rowdy. So it's really different with each child. But it also has to do with body type. Sometimes some babies need to sleep more than others do. Some babies move and wiggle a lot and some are more passive. But I would not suggest doing things like swaddling where you tightly wrap a baby because we feel that the movement that's happening is part of the way the baby expresses themselves, relieves stress, and also shows you their joy and excitement. And there's this brain and body connection. Movement is stimulating brain cells and repetition of movement means those brain cells, those connections between the brain cells are being strengthened and able then to happen more quickly and easily. So that's something we would like to encourage, right?

Sarah Trott: [00:20:31] And so the crying is really about communication. It doesn't mean it's not good or bad behavior. It's communication the same way we talk. That's all they have. So the goal is not necessarily to have a quiet baby. Absolutely. You want to

encourage that sort of back and forth the same way you're saying, let's talk to the baby and tell them what's going on and how we're feeling. They're doing the same back to us. And that's actually a good thing. We want our little kids and our teenagers and our adult children to talk to us.

Lee Fernandez: [00:21:03] To be willing to talk to us and not feel that they have to clam up and not share.

Lee Fernandez: [00:21:08] So another thing that can happen with this dialogue, even with your very young baby, is you can start to develop a routine of calming words that you say so that your baby begins to anticipate. So what I'm suggesting, for instance, your baby is lying down and you're ready to pick them up and change their diapers. So you come up to them and you look at them and you say to them, I'm going to pick you up now. And then you wait.

And this waiting of a few seconds or longer is all about your baby being able to process that. Somebody came close to me. It's somebody I love. It's somebody who's going to do something. And then they look at you, they make eye contact or they look at your mouth and sometimes they start to lift a little bit because they've heard this before and they're beginning to anticipate I'm going to be picked up and they're getting their body ready for that next thing to happen. So you've said, I'm going to pick you up now. And then the baby looks and you say, Oh, you're looking at me. I think you're ready and you pick them up.

Lee Fernandez: [00:22:15] Or if they start to lift their shoulders or lift up their arms or lift their head, you say, Oh, you're lifting, you're coming closer to me. It's time to pick you up and you pick them up. Or maybe your baby turns their head away and you say, Oh, it looks like you don't want to be picked up yet. And you might say, Oh, I can wait a minute. I'll wait a minute. I'll be right here. Or you might say, I really do have to pick you up now. I can see you're not quite ready, but I'm going to pick you up. So you give a few words.

Lee Fernandez: [00:22:47] But having sort of a routine, a predictable routine of how you approach a baby when you're going to do something with them, this dialoguing that goes on during caregiving is really, really important. So these are connecting times when we're diapering them or we're going to bathe them or we're going to dress them. Those are times to watch your baby and see how they respond to what's happening and to acknowledge to them that you noticed it.

Sarah Trott: [00:23:18] Can we just go back to the swaddling comment for a second? In all of this, it sounds like we're speaking two different ages of babies because, you know, infants aren't necessarily even capable of lifting their head or their shoulders.

Lee Fernandez: [00:23:31] By the end of three months they are.

Sarah Trott: [00:23:33] Right. Okay. So it's yeah, it's definitely closer to that three month mark. Right.

Lee Fernandez: [00:23:37] Our point of view is that the baby needs to be free to move part of the day. So if you. Yes. So if you swaddle your baby and that's working for you and your baby, I say do what works. But I also say that if your baby is resisting swaddling and many do, maybe that's not what your baby needs, even though you may think they need it. Maybe that isn't what they need. So I'm more about connecting with what your baby is comfortable with and also the idea that the baby needs some freedom of movement.

Lee Fernandez: [00:24:10] We talk a lot about how to place a baby down and we talk about placing babies down on their back because they have more freedom of movement. When you place a baby on their tummy. And this is a very young infant, they really can't at first lift their head. And even when they can lift their head. Later, in 2 or 3 months, they can only see what's right down there in front of them. They can't lift their head very far, and they're putting a big strain on the neck and shoulders, especially at the back of the neck. So our preference is that we put a baby down on their back.

Lee Fernandez: [00:24:46] We stay within distance where the baby can see us part of the time. So the baby is not left, but they are with us. And then we watch to see what they are doing. Maybe less clothing if that's possible. If it's warm enough because babies move more easily with less tight or restricting clothing and then when needed, we pick the babies up, do whatever you need to hold them, feed them, whatever they seem to need. But part of the time, if they can be down on their back, you will see how they move. They wiggle their arms and legs. They start to turn their torso. They're developing muscles and. When a baby rolls over on their own, that's when they're ready. That's our point of view.

Sarah Trott: [00:25:34] So, yeah, so just to make it explicit, because we're not taking a strong stance here, it doesn't sound like an anti swaddle or, or pro swaddle. It's more of just finding the right time, making sure there is that freedom of movement. You know, at different parts of the day. And it's about balance is what I'm hearing. Yeah. Okay.

Lee Fernandez: [00:25:54] It's about doing what seems to work for you and your family and for your baby. Yeah. And that observation that I was talking about, where we do sensitive observation, we really pay attention some of the time. Magda used to say 100% attention part of the time is better than partial attention all the time. So the idea being that there are those connecting moments and times and we have them during our day and we want to plan to have them. And how long are they? Whatever works that day.

And with the younger baby, there's more of it. But think of those moments. I really want to be paying attention, seeing what's happening, starting to read my baby's cues, and getting to know who they are. And the same thing is happening for your baby. They're starting to read your cues. They're starting to know who you are. So it's going two ways. And then some of the time we're not paying attention because we're doing something else. We have chores to do or we're sleeping, whatever it is. But some of the time we're paying 100% attention. And that's mindful attention. It's attention. We're really being with our baby.

Lee Fernandez: [00:27:03] We're allowing them to be exactly who they are and not having an expectation that something else has to happen. Thinking about the baby's point of view. So thinking about how this baby, as you were mentioning earlier, comes into this world and suddenly lights, sounds, sensation on their skin, things that have never happened to them before in their life. Breathing never happened before. Food through the mouth never happened before. So this baby has a tremendous amount to take in and start to regulate and start to understand and start to be with.

Lee Fernandez: [00:27:41] And part of our job then is to create an environment where at least some of those things are a little easier. Food on demand, holding and touching and caressing and attention and knowing that it's just a big, big change for this baby. Change for the parent too - your life will never be the same. Some people think as parents that, well, in a couple of months everything will be back to normal. No, it's a new normal and it's not going to be the way it was when you didn't have a child.

Sarah Trott: [00:28:19] True for everything in life, including, I think, women's expectations about their bodies. I think expectations about social lives, expectations about maintaining the household in general, all of everything changes. And it's a good thing.

Lee Fernandez: [00:28:37] That's right. It's a good thing.

Lee Fernandez: [00:28:37] And you know what? Even your brain changes. So this new science epigenetics is really showing us that this attachment that we have with our baby and them to us, this comforting, this getting close, this connection is actually making changes in their brain and our brain. So know that you are able to do things now that you couldn't do before. You are connecting in a way that you never connected before. And that's how it's meant to be if you're becoming a parent.

Lee Fernandez: [00:29:10] So let me think. Let's talk about. Your home environment. And as I mentioned before, before the baby comes, you're setting up a space where you think your baby is going to be sleeping and maybe it's going to be co-sleeping or it's going to be a bassinet or a small baby co-sleeper next to you. And I also want you to

think about where am I going to feed the baby? So maybe it'll be in bed for some time, but then later it's going to be another place. So think about setting up a comfortable place where you can feed your baby, whether you're nursing or feeding with a bottle, either one. And it needs to be a calm kind of area, calm for you. And it's not in front of your TV set because while you're nursing and feeding your baby, I want you to relax and be comfortable and be paying attention.

Lee Fernandez: [00:30:02] That's not the time to be talking on your cell phone. It's really a connecting time. And you will notice your baby making little sounds and you'll notice little facial expressions and you'll see how is your baby suckling and nursing and how what position is more comfortable and switching from side to side. If your bottle feeding do switch from side to side just like you would if you were nursing.

Lee Fernandez: [00:30:30] And then also, where am I going to diaper my baby? So at first the baby's small and light, so it could be perhaps on a bed. But later, when your baby gets heavier, that's going to be bad for your back bending too much. So I think early on, think about where will I be changing my baby? And it might be crib or bassinet or it might be a changing area that you set up. But again, it needs to be an area where you can have everything you need nearby. Hopefully water is not too far away. And that way when you come to diaper your baby, you're not scrounging around for something that's missing. You're able to really be connected with the baby while you're diapering and talking them through it. Be there.

Sarah Trott: [00:31:18] And these things don't require huge investments. It's more of a thought investment, isn't it?

Lee Fernandez: [00:31:24] Absolutely. I used a dresser as a changing table. Use whatever works for you.

Lee Fernandez: [00:31:29] So also think about an area where your baby could be laid down and be comfortable lying on their back. And you could be there, too. We call it the 'Yes space'. And it's really something I talk about more with families who have an older baby. But you could think about it early on. Where is this place? And initially it's just like

a little blanket spread maybe on the floor someplace or on a bed when your baby's not yet moving. But it needs to be a supportive surface. So floor is fine as long as you put a blanket down. And then it needs to be a space that you can be with your baby. It's not the crib. It's a separate space where you can be sitting down next to them, be close.

Sarah Trott: [00:32:12] And that's for that connection time.

Lee Fernandez: [00:32:14] That's for that connection time. Just taking care of yourself is super important for both parents at this time. Magda used to say 'peaceful days lead to peaceful nights'. So her suggestions about sleep are really a lot about having that routine and predictability that helps our baby to be less stressed so more able to sleep. And of course, early on, babies sleep a lot. But that changes over time. And sometimes the changes that happen can be upsetting and concerning for parents. But I say to try to allow your baby at times to fall asleep without being nursed or rocked. So some of the time we're nursing or feeding and the baby falls asleep, but some of the time the baby doesn't fall asleep.

And we can say to them, you're fed, your diapered and now it's time to rest and I'm going to put you and you put them wherever it is that they're sleeping and maybe you're close by or maybe you're not depending if it's nap time or your own nap time or nighttime sleep and how close the baby is sleeping to you.

But to allow your baby to start to understand with their whole body and being that sometimes they can fall asleep not close to you, sometimes they fall asleep with you and sometimes eventually they're going to fall asleep and learn to self-soothe on their own. Little by little. It takes time. So thinking about, as I said, peaceful days leading to peaceful nights. So that's why I'm talking about that slowing down, waiting, de-stressing your life if you can, getting help so that the rhythm of your day can be more calm and that can help your baby to be more calm.

Lee Fernandez: [00:34:03] Magda used to talk about quality time. Back in the 80s there was a lot of talk about quality time, but she talked about it in two different ways. The quality wants nothing time, which is that sensitive observation that I spoke of earlier. So

those are the times when we don't have an agenda. We're not wishing our baby was doing that next thing, but we're just being calmly with them and loving exactly what's going on right now. So it's enjoying what's happening, being with what's happening. Quality wants nothing time.

Lee Fernandez: [00:34:35] And then the quality wants something time. This is the time when we're doing caregiving, we're doing diapering, we're doing feeding. We're moving our baby into the car seat, whatever it might be. So those are times when we have an agenda and we would like to help our baby to anticipate what's going to happen by dialoguing with them, but also knowing that anticipation can help the baby to adjust themselves, to be ready for that next thing. And it's also that opportunity for us to make this real connection back and forth and to eventually get cooperation from the baby. Going into the toddler years, we get anti cooperation. But if we laid the groundwork for cooperation, it's not hard to get back to. So anticipation leading to cooperation.

Sarah Trott: [00:35:24] What's a practical example of anticipation? Like, let's say it's time to get in the car.

Lee Fernandez: [00:35:29] So it's time to get in the car with your baby. And this is the tiny baby. So you're going to come up to them. Maybe they're in their crib or lying on a bassinet and you're going to say, I'm going to pick you up now and go through that routine of making connection and you're going to say, and now it's time for us to go out in the car. We have to go, etc, and then you're going to carry them carefully out and then you're going to put them in their car seat gently. But maybe you've done this inside because we have the car seats now that you carry with you. So you're going to put them there and talk them through it and then gently put them into the car and know that things like car seats, the position the baby is in, doesn't allow them to move. And that's intentional.

Lee Fernandez: [00:36:12] We want them to be controlled and safe, but know that we can't keep babies in those carriers all day long. They really need to be out and moving around part of the day. So if your baby's had plenty of time to move around, it's less difficult for them to spend some time in the carrier.

Lee Fernandez: [00:36:28] And for heaven's sake, if you need to nurse your baby, pull off the road, be safe. If your baby is crying and you just can't concentrate on the driving, pull off the road and just calm down. Everybody de-stress. Let your baby calm down a bit before you start up again. Some babies love to be in the car and some hate it. And there's no way to predict what's going to happen with that. Okay,

Lee Fernandez: [00:36:57] So the method is really all about trusting your baby, and it's about respecting your baby. And it's about knowing that these things go two ways. So we're opening up a dialogue with our baby that's going to last for the rest of your life. Yeah.

Sarah Trott: [00:37:13] Well, the golden rule comes to mind when you talk about these topics. I mean, I would want someone to spend 100% of their attention on me for part of the time versus half ignoring me all the time. Can you imagine being in a relationship with someone, any kind of relationship at work or at home, a partner or someone, and they're just never fully paying attention to you at all? That would not be great. Yeah.

Lee Fernandez: [00:37:38] But you could get used to it. And that's a scary thought. What if your child gets used to never having full attention? Not so good.

Sarah Trott: [00:37:45] Sure. Or if that's what feels like love to them, what will they be seeking later in life? It's an interesting question.

Lee Fernandez: [00:37:52] Yeah, we build habits without realizing it. We think that, Oh, our baby wants this, and sometimes we've actually created that need by the way, that we handle them or treat them or what we do. Yeah. What do we make about that?

Sarah Trott: [00:38:08] I love that when we make the effort to really connect and look in their eyes and communicate that we care about how they're feeling and we love them for who they are now in this moment and where they are and what they want, then that will stay with them and create a stability.

Sarah Trott: [00:38:22] Well, we have learned a great deal from you, and I thank you so much for sharing this information. The main thing to remember is just the connection and the waiting. That sounds really key to the foundations of RIE.

Lee Fernandez: [00:38:34] So if you are registering for one of my classes, you get a free copy of our RIE Manual, which was written by Magda Gerber and has many articles also by researchers. It has sections for parents and other things about toddlers as well. And then you also get a one year subscription to our newsletter, which comes out quarterly. It's called Edu Caring.

Sarah Trott: [00:38:55] Great. Well, thank you so much. Again, please visit our website, which is fourthtrimesterpodcast.com and sign up for our newsletter. And please sponsor us. Even if you've never even considered doing something like that, please consider it for us. We would greatly value that. We hope you have a wonderful time today and we'll see you next time. Thank you so much.

Lee Fernandez: [00:39:17] Thanks again.

Sarah Trott: You can find out more about Esther Gallagher on <http://www.esthergallagher.com/>. You can also subscribe to this podcast in order to hear more from us. [Click here for iTunes](#) and [click here for Spotify](#). Thank you for listening everyone and I hope you'll join us next time on the Fourth Trimester. The theme music on this podcast was created by Sean Trott. Hear more at <https://soundcloud.com/seantrott>. Special thanks to my true loves: my husband Ben, daughter Penelope, and baby girl Evelyn. Don't forget to share the Fourth Trimester Podcast with any new and expecting parents. I'm Sarah Trott. Goodbye for now.