

The Roots Wheel

Ages 0–3 — A Parent’s Guide



An environmental design guide for the earliest years

Based on the Wheel of Harmony — Integral Harmony System

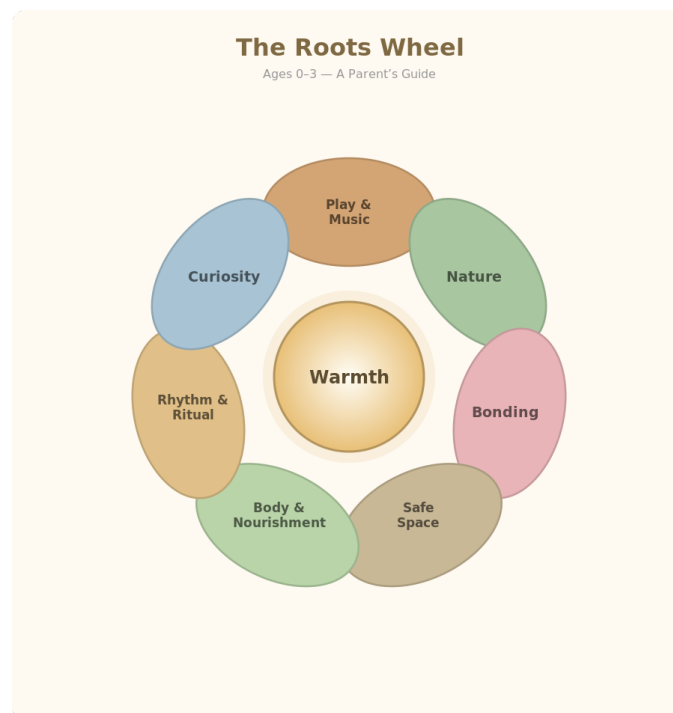
Why the Wheel Begins at Birth

The Integral Harmony System holds that the child arrives as a multidimensional being — not a blank slate but a consciousness already possessing physical, emotional, relational, communicative, perceptual, and intuitive capacities. The 0–3 window is the period of greatest neuroplasticity in the entire human lifespan.

To start the Wheel at three would concede that the framework only activates once the child can conceptualize. But the child between zero and three is not pre-Wheel. They are living every domain through the body, the senses, and the relational field. What they lack is not engagement with reality but the capacity to name it. That capacity belongs to you.

The Roots Wheel is therefore not a version of the Wheel for children. It is the Wheel as an environmental design tool for parents — a diagnostic for whether the world you are building around your infant and toddler is whole.

The Seven Domains



Warmth — The Center

The center is not Presence (the child already has Presence — it is their default state) but Warmth: the quality of the relational field the parent provides. Warmth is Presence expressed through touch, tone, gaze, and rhythm. A warm environment is one where the child's nervous system can regulate through co-regulation with the caregiver. Everything else depends on this center.

Body & Nourishment

Sleep. The infant's primary activity. Protect it ruthlessly: dark rooms, consistent rhythms, minimal disruption. Sleep architecture in the first three years shapes neurological development,

emotional regulation, and growth hormone cycling.

Nutrition. Breastfeeding is the gold standard. Introduction of solids follows the child's readiness: whole foods, no processed sugar, no seed oils. The gut biome established in the first two years shapes immune function for life.

Touch & Movement. Skin-to-skin contact. Being carried, held, rocked. Floor time. Crawling. Walking. Minimize containers (bouncers, walkers). Let the body do what it was designed to do.

Safe Space

A calm, uncluttered environment reduces sensory overwhelm and supports focus. Natural materials over plastic. The fewer toys, the deeper the engagement. Zero screen exposure before 18 months — the developing nervous system needs real sensory input, not compressed digital simulation. Non-toxic materials, clean air, minimal EMF in the sleep space.

Rhythm & Ritual

Wake, feed, play, rest — the same sequence, roughly the same times, day after day. Rhythm is the infant's substitute for comprehension. They cannot understand *why* things happen but they feel *when*. Predictability builds the neurological foundation for self-regulation. Bedtime sequences, mealtime patterns, songs that mark transitions — these are the earliest architecture of Presence, experienced as structure before awareness.

From twelve months: the toddler participates in household activity. Carrying objects, wiping surfaces, watering plants. This is genuine contribution at the scale available to them.

Bonding

The quality of the primary bond shapes everything that follows. Secure attachment is the relational infrastructure on which all later relationships are built. Be present. Be consistent. Be warm. Respond to the child's signals. The repair of rupture matters more than perfection.

The extended field — grandparents, siblings, family — provides relational ecology, not monoculture. Talk to the infant in real language, real sentences. Sing. Read aloud. Bilingual environments are neurologically beneficial, not confusing.

Curiosity

The infant is not being taught. The infant is discovering. Your job is to protect the curiosity that is already there. Varied textures, sounds, smells, visual contrasts. Real objects over plastic representations. Let the child investigate — resist the impulse to show them how things work. A toddler turning a block for four minutes is engaged in deeper learning than a child walked through a flash-card sequence.

Nature

Daily outdoor time. Not a park with rubber surfaces — actual ground, trees, sky. Morning light exposure regulates circadian rhythm from the earliest weeks. Sunlight on skin supports vitamin D synthesis. Let the toddler touch water, dig in soil, observe animals. These are developmental necessities, not recreation.

Play & Music

Play is not a reward for developmental milestones. Play is the mode of development itself. Unstructured, child-directed, open-ended. Blocks, fabric, water, containers. The simpler the material, the richer the play.

Sing to the child. Play instruments. Expose them to real music — not compressed digital children's songs but instruments played, voices singing, rhythmic variety. Music activates physical, emotional, relational, communicative, and perceptual dimensions simultaneously. It is the closest thing to a single-domain integral intervention that exists.

How to Use the Roots Wheel

Domain	The Question to Ask
Warmth	Am I present, regulated, and warm? Is the household calm?
Body & Nourishment	Is sleep protected? Nutrition whole? Enough touch and movement?
Safe Space	Is the environment ordered, non-toxic, screen-free, sensory-rich?
Rhythm & Ritual	Does the day have a reliable pattern? Are transitions marked?
Bonding	Is the primary attachment secure? Is the relational field wide enough?
Curiosity	Is the child free to explore? Am I protecting their attention?
Nature	Did we get outside today? Real ground, real sky, real living things?

Weekly audit. Once a week, look at the seven domains. Which were rich? Which were thin? A sleep problem may actually be a rhythm disruption or insufficient outdoor time or emotional volatility in the household. The Wheel helps you diagnose across domains, not just within the obvious one.

Seasonal adjustment. In the first six months, Body & Nourishment and Bonding dominate. By twelve months, Curiosity and Nature demand more space. By two, Play & Music and Rhythm & Ritual come into full expression. The proportions change; the architecture stays whole.

The Transitional Phase (18–36 Months)

Around eighteen months, something shifts. The toddler begins naming things, sorting objects, responding to simple categories. Language is emerging but not yet functional for abstract thought. This creates a brief developmental window — too early for the Seedlings Wheel's named petals, but no longer the purely pre-conceptual infant of the first year.

In this phase, the Wheel can begin entering the child's world — not as content or instruction, but as material. The principle is Montessori's sensorial approach: concrete objects that embody a category without requiring the child to conceptualize it.

Seven colored objects. A set of seven items — fabric squares, wooden discs, smooth stones — each in one of the Roots Wheel's domain colors. The child handles them, sorts them, arranges them. You name the domain when the child picks one up: "That's the green one — Nature. We went outside today." No quiz, no expectation of recall. Pure association through repetition and sensory contact.

Songs for transitions. A short song or melody associated with each domain's daily rhythm. A waking song (Body & Nourishment), an outdoor song (Nature), a cleanup song (Rhythm & Ritual), a bedtime lullaby (Warmth). The child absorbs the Wheel's structure as musical pattern before they can articulate it as category.

Naming the world. As language develops, narrate the child's experience in Wheel terms — lightly, without instruction. "You're digging in the soil — that's Nature." "You're sharing your banana with your sister — that's Bonding." The child builds an intuitive map through thousands of small associations. By the time the Seedlings flower arrives at three, the categories feel familiar rather than imposed.

The Transition to Seedlings

Around three, the child begins to conceptualize. Language is functional, abstract categories are emerging, and the child can begin to name their own experience. This is when the Seedlings Wheel becomes appropriate — the flower with seven petals, each named in the child's concrete language. The Roots Wheel does not end; it becomes the invisible infrastructure underneath. You continue to audit the environment; the child begins to participate in naming it.