

I've heard that something called "attachment" is very important for a baby. But what exactly is attachment and how do I make it happen?

Attachment

Attachment is a bond of love and trust between parent and child. You build this bond when you pay attention to your baby and respond to her needs.

Your baby depends on you for everything. She needs to learn that she can trust you to come every time she needs you.

When you respond to your baby with loving care, you aren't spoiling her. You are teaching her that:

- She can trust and depend on you.
- She is important to you.
- She matters.
- Her world is a good and safe place.

You are teaching her what it feels like to be loved. You are building a bond of attachment between you and your baby.



How your baby thinks, feels, and acts for the rest of her life depends on this bond. When the bond between you and your baby is strong, she can love, learn, and grow. She can be healthy and happy. She will be able to give you—and others—the love you have given her. A healthy relationship with you will enable her to have healthy relationships throughout her life.

Attachment doesn't happen all at once. It takes time to develop. As your baby grows, the bond of love and trust between you grows too. This attachment between you and your baby will keep growing and will last a lifetime.

Added info...

You may find it hard to respond to your child with the love and care she needs. There are many reasons for this—for example, you may have had a difficult childhood yourself.

You need to deal with your own feelings so you can build a loving bond with your baby.

If you are worried about this, talk to a health care provider or Family Resource Centre. They can help you to get the support you need (contact information, page 103).

Added info...

It's never too late to begin building bonds between you and your baby.

You may be adopting a baby or may have been separated from your baby for a while and wonder if you've missed your chance for attachment. You have not.

Responding to your baby's needs will build love and trust between you at any age.

Your baby wants you to know...

Respond to me! Teach me to love and to trust by responding to my needs with loving care. This won't spoil me.

Come when I cry. I need to know I can depend on you. When you don't come quickly, I think you might not come at all.

Comfort me. Feed me when I'm hungry. Change me when I'm wet. Warm me when I'm cold. Hold and cuddle me when I'm upset or scared.

Notice me. Pay attention to my cues. Try to figure out what I like and what I don't like. Talk to me when I make little sounds. Smile at me when I smile at you.

Skin-to-skin contact with your baby



Newborn babies love skin-to-skin contact.

Snuggling against their mother's chest right after birth helps babies get used to the outside world after being born. It helps keep their heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, and body temperature normal. Babies who get skin-to-skin contact cry less. It helps them feel safe, warm, and calm.

Snuggling your baby skin-to-skin in the weeks after birth helps you to feel close to your baby. It lets your baby learn how you feel and smell. It's a way of connecting with your baby and building bonds of love and attachment that last a lifetime.

Added info...

To cuddle skin-to-skin, lay your naked baby belly down on your chest and cover her with a blanket.

Dads and partners can snuggle skin-to-skin with their baby, too.

Loving Care



Birth to 6 Months

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