

My baby is really turning into his own person. He can be quite a little character! I've been responding to my baby the best way I know but he seems very clingy. Is that normal?

Building love, trust, and confidence



You have been building a bond with your baby by consistently responding to his needs with love and care. You come when he cries. You feed him when he's hungry. You comfort him when he's cold, tired or lonely. You pay attention to his cues and try to figure out what he needs. Responding in this way won't spoil your baby.

While you've been learning about your baby over the past months, he's been learning that he can count on you to be there when he needs you. This helps your baby to build love, trust, and confidence. It helps him feel secure.

Your baby will show his growing love, trust, and confidence by:

- **Wanting to be close to you.**
At this age, you may find that your baby wants to be close to you all the time.
- **Wanting you to hold and cuddle him.**
Your baby needs as much love and cuddling as ever—maybe even more.
- **Responding to you.**
Smiling when you smile, laughing and squealing when you play.
- **Looking to you for comfort.**
You are the centre of your baby's world! He's beginning to understand that he needs you and can count on you.

Attachment influences the way your baby's brain develops. It affects how your baby will think, learn, feel, and behave for his whole life. As your baby grows, his attachment to you will mean that:

- He'll be more likely to come to you with his problems.
- He'll be better at controlling his feelings. For example, he'll be less likely to shout or hit when angry.
- He'll be more confident.

Babies understand feelings long before they understand words. A gentle voice and gentle handling will let your baby feel your love. Babies are very sensitive to angry voices and rough handling—like pushing, grabbing, or pulling. This can make it more difficult for your baby to form a bond with you.

Your baby can't be too attached to you. A strong attachment gives him the confidence he needs to explore his world. It enables him to develop independence. A strong attachment allows him to let go because he knows you'll always be there when he needs you.



Added info...

Different cultures and ethnic groups have special activities and rituals that offer opportunities for being close and building bonds between parent and baby. These could be things like hair care, massage, songs or stories.

Think about the things that made you feel close to your own parents and culture when you were a child. Make these activities a special part of your baby's life.

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.

Talk to your health care provider if you are concerned about your baby's attachment.

Attachment

Temperament

By the time your baby is 6 months old, you'll have a pretty good idea about what she's like—that is, the kind of temperament she has. You'll know how active she is and how she reacts to new people and events. You'll know whether she usually wakes up smiling or crying.

Parents have temperaments and personalities, too. Are you quiet or talkative? Are you easy-going? Or do you get upset when little things go wrong? Are you out-going or do you make friends slowly?

The kind of person you are can make it easier or more difficult for you to appreciate your baby's special qualities. For example, if you and your baby have the same kind of temperament, you may find it easy to understand her behaviour. If your temperament is different from your baby's, you may have to make more of an effort to understand and appreciate her.

CAUTION!

Don't give your baby a nickname you wouldn't want to have yourself, even if you're only joking.

An unkind nickname like "Piggy" or "Dummy" or "Chubby" might seem funny or cute when your baby is small. But nicknames have a way of sticking and it won't be funny when she's older.

It's also not helpful to give your baby a label—like telling her or others that she's "shy," "difficult," "picky," or "bad." These kinds of labels may make your baby feel bad about herself as she gets older.

You can't change your baby's temperament. But how you respond to her will make a difference in how she sees herself and the kind of person she becomes. If you see your child's qualities as special, she'll see herself that way, too.



Different temperaments

Your baby's temperament is something he was born with. It doesn't change. It's not the same as a mood that can change from day to day.

His temperament affects how your baby reacts to the world and the people around him.

On the next pages, you'll find descriptions of 3 kinds of temperaments.

Most likely, your baby won't be exactly like any one of these three kinds of temperaments. But he may be most like one and the ideas on how to help him be his best may be helpful to you.



Attachment

Temperament 1

If your baby...

- Is happy to sit or play quietly—is not very active
- Eats and sleeps at the same times every day
- Gets used to new people, places and activities easily
- Doesn't get upset often
- Whimpers quietly if wet or hungry
- Doesn't make a fuss when upset
- Doesn't cry often
- Is usually happy and smiles a lot

You can help him be his best by...

- Spending time with him. He needs to be played with and talked to even if he seems happy on his own.
- Paying close attention to his cues. He may be so quiet that you need to look closely to see what he needs.
- Supporting his routines. Have regular mealtimes and bedtimes.
- Letting him enjoy other people. Find friends and relatives to spend time with him.

Temperament 2

If your baby...

- Is active—can sometimes sit quietly, but likes to move, too
- Usually—but not always—wants to eat and sleep at the same times every day
- Takes a while to get used to new people, places, and activities
- Clings to familiar people
- Gets upset if there's too much activity or excitement
- Cries when upset
- Takes some time to warm up before smiling

You can help him be his best by...

- Giving him chances to play quietly and to be active.
- Encouraging his routines. Have regular mealtimes and bedtimes.
- Being patient. Give him time to get used to new things and new people. Don't rush or push him. Stay close so he'll know he's safe.
- Introducing new people slowly. Don't leave him with someone he doesn't know until he's had a chance to get used to them.
- Watching for his cues that he's getting upset or over-excited. Move him to a quieter place.
- Responding when he cries.
- Smiling at him. Give him lots of reasons to smile back.

Temperament 3

If your baby...

- Is very active—twists and squirms. It's hard to keep him still long enough to change a diaper.
- Has a hard time settling into an eating and sleeping routine—wakes up often at night
- Has a very hard time getting used to new people, places, or activities. Does not like moving from one activity to another.
- Gets upset when he doesn't like something and lets everyone know it. Has a hard time calming down when upset.
- Cries loudly when wet, hungry or angry
- Is strong-willed
- Demands attention—will keep pushing to get what he wants

You can help him be his best by...

- Childproofing your home early. Your baby will probably move faster and sooner than others. You need to be ready to keep him safe.
- Developing routines. Have regular mealtimes and bedtimes. Gently help your baby get used to them. Find a quiet bedtime routine that helps him calm down.
- Allowing enough time for him to get used to new people and places. Let him know what's coming next. Give him time to get used to the idea.
- Accepting that your child will react strongly. Respond quickly and help him calm down. Stay calm. By staying calm you're teaching him to be calm.
- Giving your child the love, support, and attention he needs. Be consistent.



Your baby wants you to know...

*You are the centre of my world.
I need to know that you're near.
I worry when I can't see you.*

*I need you to hold me and
respond to me. I need to know
you love me just the way I am.*

Loving Care



6 to 12 Months

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