

Parent-Infant Bonding

Bonding between parents and their newborn promotes a child's healthy social and emotional growth. *Infants need this emotional bond with a parent or primary caregiver. Parents form this crucial bond while caring for their newborn.*

The parent-infant bond creates a strong positive, sensitive feeling between a parent and child. Together, they develop a sensitive form of communication that helps them interact with each other.

What is the result of an infant under the age of three not bonding with a parent? Researchers tell parents that the child is more likely to have behavior and learning problems. Lack of bonding affects basic skills like coping and problem solving. These problems and lack of skills put the preschooler at-risk when he starts school. These negative effects follow the child throughout life.

How do you create this positive, loving bond? Starting at birth, **daily care tasks** build this *strong bond*. Babies have a need to:

- **Be nurtured and loved.** Lovingly hold your baby. Make eye contact. Smile. Sing. Cuddle. Provide loving touches.

- **Feel secure.** Meet your baby's needs. Comfort her when she cries. Is she hungry? Does she have a soiled diaper? She might have a tummy ache. Maybe she just needs a hug when she feels stress.
- **Have positive interaction with a parent.** During daily chores, tell him what you are doing. "Mommy is putting your books away." "Daddy put his coat on. Next, he will put your coat on." Return your baby's smiles. Make a frown if your baby cries. Laugh when your baby laughs.

Bonding positively affects both babies and parents. Babies build trust that their needs will be met. Watching their parents, they learn the skills to manage their own feelings and behaviors. Parents begin to enjoy sensitive feelings toward their baby. They develop confidence as they learn how to meet their babies' needs.

All parents have the ability to form loving, secure attachments with their child. Ask family and friends for help. You may choose a parenting style that differs from your parents. Call the Parent Help Line or your baby's doctor, the hospital or local health department about support and classes.



Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital to help keep kids safe, healthy and happy.



Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889
10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week
www.parenthelpline.org

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 **Children's**
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