

# The Parent - Child Bond


It is crucial for babies to form a bonding attachment with their parents. The bond between a parent and child is a strong relationship that will last a lifetime. It is unique to every parent and child. While it may change as your child grows, it will remain important, forever.

Bonding, however, does not always happen right away. In fact, 30% of mothers do not bond with their baby at birth. Many moms are stressed and uncertain about how to care for a baby. Some new moms are scared. For many other reasons, moms may feel disappointed after their baby is born.

There is no magic formula for bonding. You cannot force it. Doctors tell us that bonding is a process that takes place **over time**. As parents care for their baby daily, love develops. As they become more confident in meeting the needs of their baby, bonding develops.

Sometimes, babies and moms are separated right after birth. Mom might be ill. The baby may need the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). You can still develop a bond with your baby.

Bonding is easier for you if you are rested and feel well. Get help with everyday chores from family and friends. The best gift **you** can give your baby is you.

 For more information:

- [childwelfare.gov](http://childwelfare.gov)
- Google "preemies"
- [kidshealth.org](http://kidshealth.org)

## If your baby must stay in the NICU:

- Visit him as often as possible. It may seem scary at first. Soon you will feel at ease at his bedside.
- Hold your baby skin-to-skin. This is called Kangaroo Care. This method of holding your baby may help her condition improve. Your baby will learn to recognize your smell.
- Talk, sing or read to him. He will learn to recognize your voice.
- Learn to provide some daily care for her. Do not be afraid. Her nurse will help you.
- Breastfeed or provide breast milk for him. It is easy to digest and full of good nutrients.



*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](http://www.parenthelpline.org)

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