

DEVELOPING YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR NEW BABY

Getting to know your baby is a journey of discovery from the first moment. In learning to be a parent, there will be exciting and delightful times as well as challenging periods. Try to avoid pressuring yourself in the early months – no-one is a perfect parent and no baby is perfect all the time.

Birth to 3 months

Your baby will start to form a trusting and secure relationship with you during this time. Taking time to understand and delight in your baby in these early months is beneficial to both you and your baby. All infants like to be touched; gentle touches share tenderness. Talk with your baby often as your voice will soothe and reassure them.

Your baby will sometimes cry to tell you what they need – they need feeding, they need to sleep, they need to be changed, they are unwell or something hurts, they feel too hot or too cold or they need to feel safe and secure in your arms. However, get to know your limitations, for example if the crying gets too much, know that you can place your baby in a safe place and walk away. Seek help if you are unsure of what to do.

Adapted from the work of Cooper, Hoffman, Marvin, & Powell (2000) *Circle of Security: Building attachment for your baby.*

Suggested resources:

www.raisingchildren.net.au
www.cyh.com
www.mychild.gov.au

3 months to 6 months

Routine care such as bathing, feeding or nappy changing provides numerous opportunities to develop a warm and engaging relationship with your baby. Whether breastfeeding or bottle feeding, always nurse your baby closely. Talking and playing with your baby following each feed helps your relationship grow. Your baby learns from your constant responsiveness and sensitivity that someone will be there for them and is secure in the relationship.

6 months to 12 months

As your baby becomes mobile they will need your support to go out and explore the world around them. Your role is to encourage safe exploration through play and other interaction. Demonstrating joy and delight in each achievement, actively engaging in talking and singing with your baby and setting safe boundaries for exploration, are all part of your daily activities. Being there if your baby hurts themselves, providing comfort through soothing words and touch and then encouragement to venture out again is all part of your parenting role.

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An initiative of the Centre for Community Child Health, The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne

For further information contact the Centre for Community Child Health, The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne. Phone 03 9345 6150 or Fax 03 9345 5900 www.rch.org.au/ccch

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The **Royal Children's Hospital** Melbourne



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