



Bonding with Baby

Respond to Baby's Needs

The best thing you can do is to respond to the needs of your baby. As you care for the baby, including feeding, changing, and bathing, the baby will recognize you as a care giver. When needs are met, the newborn will feel safe and secure. Feeding is an opportune time to build a relationship. Position yourselves so baby can see your face and make eye contact during feedings.

Bonding with a Mental Health Diagnosis

The bonding process is the same regardless of mental health diagnosis.

Make sure to attend to the baby's needs. While you care for the baby, the relationship will build over time.

Don't feel guilty if you do not experience an immediate connection to your newborn. **For some parents, it takes time and effort to build an emotional connection.**

Some women go out of their way to avoid their baby because they are experiencing random, scary thoughts of harming their baby. These types of frightening thoughts are called 'intrusive thoughts.' They are often a symptom of postpartum anxiety. **Talk to your health care provider about the thoughts you are having.** With appropriate treatment and follow up, you will get better.

Interact Face to Face

Newborns can see clearly about 8-12 inches from their face. That's about an arms distance from parent to baby. A newborn will spend more time focusing on a face than other objects. Look at your baby and make eye contact often. Try making various facial expressions like smiling and sticking your tongue out. You'll learn your baby's cues as baby begins to recognize you.

Communicate with Baby

Being home alone with the baby can feel lonely. Talk to your newborn as much as you can. The more words an infant hears in the first 3 years of life, the better. If this feels awkward to you try narrating your activities, reading a book or the news out loud, or describe the things you see as you see them. Speaking and singing to your child will help them develop language and cognitive skills.

Interaction & Touch

Gentle rubbing can be soothing for both baby and parent. Play with your baby as much as possible. Try tummy time by laying on your back with baby on your stomach. This also allows for eye contact and a chance to talk to your baby. Play games while holding or lifting the baby's arms and legs. Point out body parts to your newborn speaking the label as you touch the corresponding part.

