

1-2 Months

“When our son was born, I was there for the moment of birth. He came into the world in a calm manner, and I was able to hold him and talk to him shortly after birth. I was totally engaged by his intense gaze and his soft red skin. When the nurse came to take him down the hall to do the routine exam, I didn’t want to give him up. The nurse seemed annoyed that I was getting in the way of “her work,” but he was “my baby” and I wanted to stay with him. I persisted and was allowed to carry him around and observe his first exam.”

Attachment

New fathers often experience a fascination and wonderment about their new babies. They enjoy watching them and are amazed at their capabilities and the miracle of life that is part of them. Experts call this feeling engrossment. Fathers say things like “I just stared at him in my arms and was struck by his perfect tiny fingers and toes. I didn’t want to put him down.”

This fascination with babies can be a starting place for the process of attachment as fathers learn to know and understand their babies and as babies grow in their trust and affection for their fathers.

Many dads feel an instant bond and strong sense of attraction and affection for their babies from the instant they hold them after birth. This instant bond feels like “super glue”— it does not take long to feel the strength and permanence of their new relationship. Other fathers may not feel this strong sense of attraction and may feel more reluctant and unsure about their new baby and how their lives fit together.

Regardless of your first experience and feelings, it is important to invest yourself in building a secure sense of attachment with your baby during this first year. All parents experience some of the ups and downs of attachment – sometimes feeling very close and loving and other times more distant. This section on attachment outlines the importance of attachment for both babies and parents.

Both mothers and fathers can develop a secure sense of attachment with their baby, but they may take different paths to building this sense of closeness and trust. As a new father you must build this relationship through caring for your baby's needs in a consistent manner, showing affection – touching, stroking and cuddling your baby, learning what your baby's non-verbal cues mean, and playing with your baby in a fun, stimulating and safe manner.

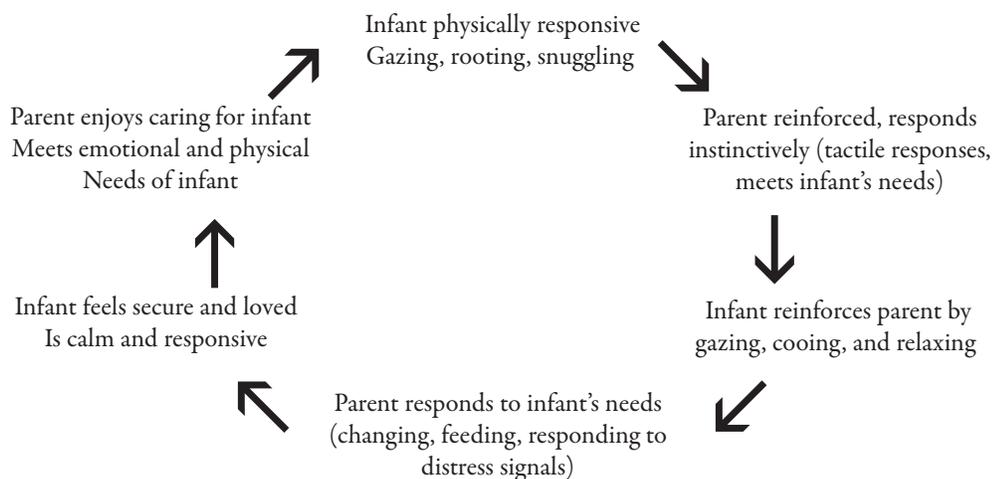
You may not feel or experience the same type of connection as your partner does. Mothers have a different bond based on their own imitate connection and sharing rhythms of their bodies with babies through nine months of pregnancy. Your attachment to your baby will be different and will provide your baby with his or her first experiences of male caring and affection.

Your baby's earliest need is for people. To survive, he will need to get your attention and make sure that you take care of his basic needs. However, attachment goes far beyond feeding, changing diapers, and bathing. Attachment is a mutual relationship in which the child is an active partner and develops through interactions between the child and the parent.

Research shows that what helps a child succeed through all stages of development is a positive relationship with caring, supportive adult. Attachment between parent and child is important for good brain development, positive self-esteem, forming positive relationships with others, and success in school. A secure attachment forms a child's view of the world and helps him develop trust in his parents. That trust provides a "home base" as the child gets older and begins to try things on his own.

The following illustration shows how infant and parent interactions create a sense of secure attachment.

Attachment Cycle between Infant and Parent
(M. Erickson, Family Information Service, 1977)



When a father can spend time with his baby, he offers unique and interesting interactions that the baby longs for. A father can build his own fatherly relationship with his child. Instead of competing with the mother's special mother-baby relationship, fathers can create their own special relationship and secure their baby's affections. (Leach 1978).

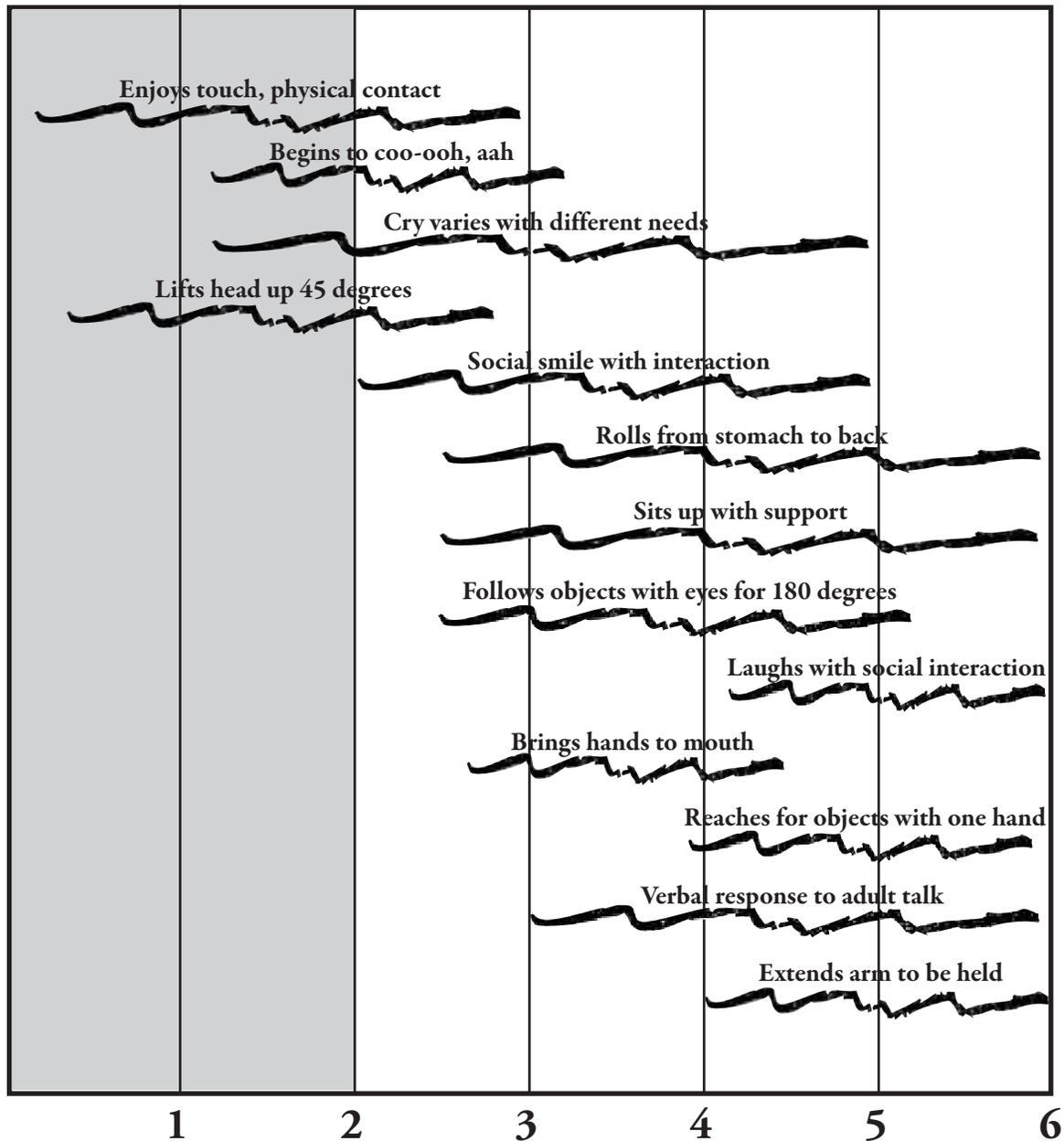
To build a secure attachment between you and your baby,

- **Learn your child's cues and signals.** Listen to the sounds she makes, and observe the way she moves, her different facial expressions, and the way she makes eye contact.
- **Respond to your child quickly, consistently, and predictably.** Lots of attention does not spoil babies. Their cries are an important way to communicate. Learn their different cries and what they mean.
- **Touch, cuddle and show affection.** Touch stimulates the brain to release hormones necessary for growth. Find out how your baby likes to be held.
- **Play with your child.** Simple games can be fun for both babies and dads. Watch to see which games your baby likes and when he is ready to stop playing.
- **Talk, read, and sing with your child.** Babies begin to learn about language from your tone of voice and the sounds you are making even if they don't yet understand what the words mean.

Developmental Milestones

1-2 Months

The developmental milestones charts introduce the typical range of some common emerging infant capabilities in 6-month age ranges to illustrate the ongoing process of development. Observe and enjoy your baby's unique rate and patterns of interacting and learning during the first year of life.



If you have any concerns about your baby's rate of development in any area, consult your health care provider.

What can baby do?

1 Month

Daily Cycle

Your baby spends most of the day moving in and out of sleep and is not yet ready for much stimulation. A newborn's daily cycle has several states:

- 1) actively alert (ready for play and interaction),
- 2) quiet alert (content to look around),
- 3) deep sleep (little movement),
- 4) active sleep (moves around, wakes up if disturbed), and
- 5) drowsiness (transition between sleep and wakefulness, does not respond).

What are signs that your baby is ready to play? ...ready to go to sleep?

Comfort and Cuddling

During the first few weeks of your baby's life, the best way to communicate with him is through physical closeness. When he is awake, your baby requires comfort and cuddling. Gently stroking your baby's body, holding him close, and cuddling him helps your baby trust his environment and respond to those who care for him.

When your baby cries, what are the best ways to comfort him?

How does he respond to cuddling? . . . stroking? . . . calm talking?

What can baby do?

2 Months

Hearing

Your baby is beginning to connect her listening with her looking. At first your baby listens to your voice without looking at you. Eventually she begins to search for the source of your voice.

Experiment with looking at and talking to your baby from different distances – five feet to six inches. When is she most comfortable and tuned in to you?

How can you tell?

Facial Expression

Your baby's facial expression can tell you a lot about what he likes and dislikes.

As you play and talk to you baby, can you tell from his face how he feels?

What are the signs of distress?

What are the signs of delight?

What are the signs of fear or wariness?

Reflections on being a new dad.

1-2 Months

How did you prepare for becoming a new father during pregnancy?
What was most helpful?

What was your biggest fear about becoming a dad?

Birth Story – Dad’s Version — Where were you during your child’s birth?
Describe the birth – your involvement, circumstances, and feelings.

What were the most striking features of your child when you first held him/her?
...the most surprising feature or characteristic?

What changes or arrangements have you made to your home to accommodate
a new baby?

What have been the major changes in your daily routine since your baby was born?

What has been the most rewarding part of being a new dad?

What has been the most challenging part of being a new dad?

Other thoughts about being a new dad...

New Game

1-2 Months

Follow My Face

During your baby's first month, she will enjoy looking at you. Sometime in the second month, she will follow your face as you move within her field of vision. If you talk to her and make silly noises while she is watching you, she will soon learn to recognize your voice as well as your face.

Dance with Baby

Slow, rhythmical movements will be familiar to your baby. Listen to music as you hold and slowly dance with your baby. She will enjoy the rhythm that will someday help her learn to talk, walk, run and gallop.

Make a Toy

1-2 Months

Mobile

One of the first toys you can make for a newborn is a mobile. Your baby will look at what you put on the mobile and perhaps follow its movement. Your child's interest in the mobile will be maintained if you change the position of the objects or replace one of the objects every few days.

Materials: 3' - 4' length of 1" plastic pipe
string
bright card stock

1. In the middle of a 3' - 4' length of 1" plastic pipe, drill holes for objects to hang from. On each end of the pipe, drill holes to tie the pipe to the crib rails.
2. Lay the pipe across the crib. Securely tie the ends of the pipe to the bed's side rails.
3. Hang one or two objects from the pipe. Tie them securely. Position the objects so that your infant sees the most attractive and interesting part of the object. Infants can only focus on objects that are no more than eight to ten inches away. Change the objects from time to time.
4. Be creative in what you choose to hang on the mobile:
 - Infants like to look at faces. On a small paper plate, draw a simple face or glue a photo of yourself or your family.
 - Hang objects or pictures that represent your interests or hobbies — airplanes, dogs, fishing, stars, cars, cooking...
 - Use objects that have sentimental value — a toy from your childhood, a sibling's favorite stuffed animal...
 - Use objects from around your house — feathers, bows, an aluminum foil pie pan, spirals cut from colorful paper, shiny spoons...
5. Safety precautions:
 - Be sure the objects you hang are out of reach of your child.
 - Securely tie the rod and the objects.
 - Keep the strings as short as possible.
 - Remove the mobile when you are not close by.
 - Do not use the mobile once your child can reach out and grab it.

Safety

1-2 Months

Car Seats

To provide full protection for your baby, infant car seats (specifically designed for infants up to 20 pounds) need to be installed and used correctly.

- Use only federally approved car seats.
- To install the car seat correctly, follow the car seat instructions and the directions in the car owner's manual carefully.
- Be sure the car's seat belt is routed through the correct slots so that the car seat does not move sideways or from front to back.
- Keep the car seat harness snug, with no more than 1" of slack.
- Infants up to 20 pounds must face the rear of the vehicle in a semi-upright position. The middle of the back seat is the safest place for your infant's car seat.
- Put your baby in a car seat every time you put him in the car.

Shaken Infant Syndrome

Infants' neck muscles are not strong enough to support their heads. If they are shaken, their heads wobble back and forth, which may cause brain damage, blindness, spinal injury, paralysis, seizures, impaired motor skills, and broken bones. Some play activities can damage the head and neck of a baby.

- repeatedly tossing a small child into the air
- jogging while carrying an infant on your shoulders or back
- bouncing a child on your knee or swinging him on your foot
- swinging a child while holding her by her hands or feet
- spinning a child around

Secondary Smoke

Secondary smoke increases the frequency and severity of a baby's respiratory infections, increases the chances of having ear infections, agitates a baby's cough, and may increase an infant's risk for SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

Loud Noises

Loud, intense sounds and long exposure to less intense noise can not only damage a baby's hearing but also interfere with language development and learning.

Reduce the Risk SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)

- Put your baby to sleep on his back.
- Use a firm mattress; avoid soft pillows, comforters
- Avoid snuggling blankets and clothing up around baby's mouth and nose.
- Keep the bedroom cool; avoid overdressing.
- Provide a smoke-free environment.

To Keep Your Baby Safe:

- Always stay beside your baby when she is on any high surface such as a bed, chair, or changing table.
- Do not use a long cord to tie toys to your baby's crib or a pacifier around his neck.
- Check the temperature of bath water. Turn down the temperature of your water heater to 120o to prevent burns.
- Keep small objects out of reach of your baby.
- Do not leave plastic bags where your baby can reach them.
- Never leave your baby alone in the house, car, or yard.
- When carrying your baby in an infant seat, be sure she is securely strapped in.

Issues & New Development

1-2 Months

Soothing a Crying Baby

Babies cry for a reason. Your goal is not just to stop the crying but to identify the baby's needs and satisfy them. A baby will develop a sense of predictability and security when she knows that someone will respond to her and that her needs will be met. Whatever strategy you choose, give it enough time to work before giving up on it and trying something else.

Causes and cures of crying:

“I'M HUNGRY!”

Hunger is the most common cause of crying. If your baby has not been fed in the last two hours, try feeding him.

“I'M WET!”

Some babies are very sensitive to wet or dirty diapers. Does your baby's diaper need to be changed?

“I'M IN PAIN.”

Pain — too hot of a bath, a bump, or a pinched finger — is very certain to cause a strong cry.

“I'VE HAD ENOUGH.”

Overstimulation — too much noise, too cold of hands, too much tickling or bouncing, too bright of lights — can overwhelm your baby. Give him a break so he can comfort himself.

“I'M TIRED.”

Your one month old baby has probably not settled into routine sleeping patterns. She will sleep fourteen to eighteen hours in a day and may be awake for only thirty minutes in a four hour period. A two-month-old baby may be awake as many as ten hours throughout the day and has two to four long sleep periods.

“I NEED YOU.”

It is natural for a baby to be content when she is being held. When you cannot hold your baby, carry her in a front pack or wrap her in a blanket as a way to give her the feeling of being held.

“I'M IRRITABLE”

What a baby can tolerate will depend on how he feels at the moment. What he likes when he is happy and well rested may not be tolerable when he is tired or hungry. A baby who cannot relax or fall asleep because he is irritable or tense might be soothed by a constant rhythmical stimulation — the hum of a fan, soft music, or rocking.

“I NEED A PACIFIER.”

Sucking can usually calm a crying baby except when she is hungry. Use a pacifier as a last resort; always attempt to identify what it is that is causing your baby to cry.

If you feel stressed by your baby's crying, give yourself a break. If possible, let someone else try to quite your baby or put her in her crib for a few minutes. If your baby has not calmed herself, try EVERYTHING again.