

Starting Early, Starting Strong

10 things your baby wants you to know

Babies are born ready to bond and connect emotionally with the people who nurture and protect them. A baby will develop the strongest attachment with their main parenting caregiver(s). A baby who feels safe and secure with those first caregivers will grow to build special relationships and form emotional bonds with other people regularly caring for them – from fathers, mothers, grandparents and older siblings to other family members and friends. Providing loving care in early infancy and throughout the early years helps the child feel secure and protected and sets the foundation for their development into self-confident, competent and independent young people.

1. Delight in me.

I was born ready to experience joy. Sharing joy helps my brain to grow. I feel more secure knowing that “life is good, because you enjoy life when you are with me.”

2. I need to be held.

Holding me gives me pleasure, comfort and security. It also helps me learn how to be soothed and feel calm. Gentle touch and soft voices tell me I am safe and loved.

3. Gaze into my eyes.

Lots of eye contact helps me feel connected to you and safe. At about six weeks, I will begin to sense what your eyes are ‘saying’. This helps strengthen my bond to you.

4. Follow my need.

Responding to my need for attention, comfort and exploration helps me know I can count on you. This helps me feel secure as I grow up.

5. You can’t spoil me. I’m a baby!

It is impossible to spoil me in the first few months by responding to my needs, especially my need to be comforted. When I’m really little, I only ask for what I need.

6. Stay with me when I’m upset or restless.

You might not be able to make everything right for me, but by staying with me you teach me I am not alone. Sometimes you might be upset or tired, too. It is okay to ask someone else to stay with me until you feel better.

7. Talk out-loud to me about feelings.

The sound of your calm voice helps me feel safe, and I start to learn language. When I hear you talk about feelings (yours and mine), I start to understand feelings.

8. Perfection is impossible, aim for ‘good enough’.

Parenting takes practice. Give yourself time to enjoy the journey and remember these are only guidelines. We are both learning as we go!

9. Be Bigger, Stronger, Wiser, and Kind®.

The heart of secure attachment is when I know I have a parent or caregiver who can be counted on to lovingly give me tenderness, comfort, guidance and protection every day.

10. Take good care of yourself.

Parenting takes lots of energy and patience. Getting rest, eating well and finding support will help our family be the best we can be.

For more information:

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