

Keep baby close

New babies have a strong need to be close to their parents, as this helps them to feel secure and loved. When babies feel secure they release a hormone called oxytocin, which helps their brains to grow and helps them to be happy babies and more confident children and adults. Holding, smiling and talking to your baby also releases oxytocin in you, which helps you to feel calm and happy.



MYTH

Babies become spoilt and demanding if they are given too much attention.



REALITY

When babies' needs for love and comfort are met, they are calmer and grow up to be more confident.



Early days

Keep your baby close to you so that you start to recognise the signals he makes to tell you he is hungry or wants a cuddle. Responding to these signals will make your baby feel safe. Cuddling your baby next to your skin allows him to smell you and hear your heartbeat, which will comfort and calm him. This will also help you to feel calm and relaxed and will help with breastfeeding.



Breastfed babies cannot be overfed so you can use breastfeeding to soothe your baby and as a way of spending time together, or having a rest whenever you both want.

If you are bottle feeding, hold your baby close during feeds and look into his eyes. Learn to notice his cues that he wants to be fed and when he has had enough. If you and your partner try and give most of the feeds yourselves, this will help build up a close and loving bond with your baby. Continuing skin-to-skin contact can calm and comfort you both at any time.



MYTH

It's important to get babies into a routine as this makes easier.



REALITY

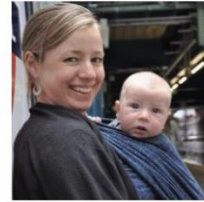
Young babies are not capable of learning a routine. Responding to their cues for feeding and comfort makes babies feel secure, so they cry less, which makes your life easier too.

Acknowledgements: UNICEFUK Baby Friendly Initiative



Finding your rhythm

Having a new baby can be challenging. However, as time goes by you will start to understand what your baby needs. This will help you settle into a rhythm that is right for you both. Responding to your baby's needs for food and comfort will help him feel secure, so he will cry less, which helps make your life easier too. Holding your baby when he is crying helps him to feel loved and secure, even if he doesn't stop crying straight away.



Research shows that babies who are responded to in this way grow into more confident toddlers who are better able to deal with being away from their parents temporarily, rather than becoming clingy and spoilt. This again can help make life less stressful for you.



MYTH

You should leave babies to settle alone so they learn to be independent.



REALITY

When babies are left alone they think they have been abandoned, and so become more clingy and insecure when their parents return.

Finally, it can be reassuring to know that, despite all the pressure to buy expensive equipment and toys for your new baby, you don't really need to spend lots of money. What matters to your baby and his future development is having parents who love and care for him.



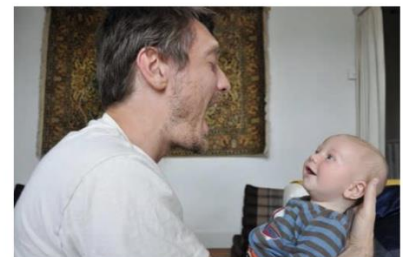
MYTH

Babies benefit from lots of toys to help them learn.



REALITY

Looking at your face is the best way for babies to learn. Talking, listening and smiling triggers oxytocin and helps your baby's brain to grow.



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