

Safe Sleep

While many parents believe sleeping with their baby will help them bond, **it is dangerous.**

Research shows that sharing a bed with a baby is dangerous. Consider these facts before you decide where your baby will sleep:

- Suffocation and strangulation in an adult bed is the **leading cause of accidental infant death** in the state of Florida.
- The risk of sleep-related infant death is **40 times higher** for babies who sleep in adult beds compared to babies who sleep in their own cribs.

Babies under 1 year old sleep best

Alone, on their
Backs, in an empty
Crib.



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For more information on creating a safe environment for your baby, please visit our website,
www.PreventChildAbuseFL.org



Creating a Loving Bond

A guide to bonding with your baby



2023





Bonding Basics



The bond between a parent and child is among the strongest in nature. Whether you're biologically related or not, it's important for your child to form a strong bond with you. Luckily, children are already wired to bond with their caregivers.

Making your baby feel **safe and loved** is one of the most important building blocks to bonding with your child. Developing a trusting relationship with your baby is an important first step. Your baby will learn to trust you as you respond to their needs. **A daily routine** for feeding, naps, and bedtime will help your baby learn what to expect from their environment, which will also build trust.

Bonding doesn't always happen within hours or days. Bonding is delayed in about 30% of mothers for a variety of reasons. Maybe your baby, or the birth process, wasn't what you expected. Maybe you are disappointed, under a lot of stress, or simply exhausted.

Most parents will develop a strong attachment to their babies as they care for their babies' needs over the first few months. Once parents get to know their babies, and adjust to this new addition, their feelings usually deepen. If you don't feel that you're bonding by the time you take your baby to their first doctor's appointment, talk to the doctor about your concerns.

Dad Tip

Bonding with your baby is not just limited to moms and women. Dads, your baby needs time with you to grow familiar with your scent, voice, and face.

Try using the same consistent **laundry detergent** or **cologne** so baby can get used to and be comforted by that smell. Your baby will also grow accustomed to your face and facial hair, so try to keep your look consistent, too.

If you find that Mom has spent more time with baby, especially during feedings, using something with her scent, such as a t-shirt or shampoo, can help soothe baby when they are upset.



There are plenty of great ways to safely bond with your baby. Try some of these ideas with your little one:

- **A parent's loving touch comforts a baby and makes them feel loved and safe.**
 - Give your baby a gentle massage. It is great for bonding and also relaxes your baby and promotes good sleep habits.
 - Cradle your baby and gently stroke their skin in different patterns.
- **Skin-to-skin contact is very soothing for your baby.**
 - Try resting your baby on your chest while you relax.
- **Eyes can be a window to the soul, especially for someone who can't talk yet!**
 - Making eye contact with your baby is a great way for the two of you to connect.
- **Your voice is one of your baby's favorite sounds.**
 - Talk to your baby and respond to noises they make.
 - Tell your baby about your day.
 - Read or sing to your baby every day.
 - This will help your baby connect with you and learn important language skills.
- **Babies like you to acknowledge their efforts.**
 - Try mirroring your baby's movements or mimicking your baby's cooing.
- **Playing simple games like peek-a-boo or "this little piggy" provides your baby with needed brain stimulation and deepens your bond.**