

Prenatal Attachment

You and your baby are already getting to know one another. Back and forth, in sort of a rhythm, you are “tuning in” to each other.

How would you describe your connection with your unborn baby?

Attachment begins before your baby is born

Attachment is the relationship that develops between a parent and baby. The quality of this attachment influences your baby’s social, emotional, and intellectual development.

You can start building attachment as soon as possible in pregnancy. The first step is to picture your unborn child as a real person (although for now, they are a very small one!). They are someone you can communicate with. Talk to them. Tell them about yourself and how you are feeling about becoming their parent.

At first, your baby won’t respond in any way that you can feel. But sometime during the second trimester, when you can feel them move, you can start to “play” with them by pressing gently or stroking your own or your partner’s abdomen. As they grow, your

baby may start to push back when they feel your hands.

Starting around 24 weeks, your baby can hear you talking, singing, and reading aloud. They also respond to calm music. By the time they are born, your baby will recognize your voice and other voices they have often heard.

Why attachment matters

Secure attachment is very important for your child from the beginning of their life. Being touched and loved is essential to their brain development. They need to know they can trust their caregivers to meet their needs.

When your child feels safe and protected, they can better handle life’s stress. You may be surprised to learn that your child feels both safety and stress before they are born! They feel when the parent carrying them is upset,

Siblings, grandparents, and other caregivers can build attachment from the start, too. By talking to your baby, reading them books, and imagining what your baby will be like, they will begin setting a foundation for their future relationship.

excited, or afraid. As new connections develop in their brain, your baby senses security and trust as well.

The chemicals for both stress and pleasure cross the placenta from parent to baby. These chemicals will influence your child's daily functioning now and in the future. By taking the time to relax and deal with fatigue and worry, you can help your child be more resilient, too.

The emotional bond that develops while your child is in the womb is the basis of your lifelong relationship. The earlier you start, the stronger your attachment will be!



Take time to think about yourself.

What can you do to build attachment with your unborn baby?

Who else would you like your unborn baby to begin to build attachments with?