



Bonding with your baby

Patient information

Bonding with your baby is important not just for your wellbeing, but your baby's wellbeing too. Taking the time to understand what your baby is trying to communicate and responding to them helps to build your relationship. This is called parental sensitivity.

It takes time and some guesswork to develop, and you might not always get it right, but being 'good enough' is enough for you and your baby to have the best start in life.

Bonding with your baby can start in pregnancy, by talking and singing to bub, or even just thinking about how you will continue to build that relationship when baby arrives. When your baby is here, there will be signals (cues) which will provide you with the opportunities for connection.

These cues can include your baby looking at you or turning their body towards you. This can happen while changing your baby's nappy, feeding them, walking in the pram, or putting them in their car seat.

Life can be busy with a new baby, try to take a few minutes during these everyday activities to really focus on them, their facial expressions, body language and how they are feeling. Remember as well that it is about the quality of your time together, not the quantity.

Talk to your baby. Have a yarn, read them a book or tell them about your day. It may seem silly to attempt a one-sided conversation, but your baby will recognise your voice from pregnancy and be comforted hearing it. You will also be developing their language and communication skills when you do this.

Cuddling your baby, breastfeeding, or any **skin-to-skin** contact helps your baby to regulate their heart rate, body temperature and promote stable breathing. It also increases parenting confidence, promotes the release of oxytocin (love hormone), and can reduce anxiety, which all build that connection and bond between a parent or caregiver and their baby.

Baby massage can be an easy and wonderful way to connect with your baby and relax them at the end of a day.





Try singing, humming, or playing music

for your baby. Music can help calm you and your baby. Use music to change the atmosphere or enhance mood.

Try to find a few moments each day to put your phone down and make eye contact with your baby, offering a smile or **copying their expression**.

Adapting to parenthood, recovering from birth, and coping with sleep deprivation can be really hard. If you find yourself getting frustrated, it's ok to put your baby down in a safe place like their cot and leave the room. When you come back to your baby, you can reconnect by speaking to them calmly and having a cuddle; they will feel safe, secure and reassured once more.



It's just as important to look after yourself, take small moments of self-care whenever you can. Having time away, getting enough sleep, asking others for help around the house, or even learning to let go of those tasks that can wait for another time.

If you're at all worried about your relationship with your baby, or your own mental wellbeing, you can find further support and information here:

[Connecting with your baby | PANDA](#)

[Bonding with your baby - COPE](#)

Speak to your GP, midwife, Aboriginal liaison officer or child health nurse if you have any concerns about your wellbeing or your baby's wellbeing.



Women and Newborn Health Service

King Edward Memorial Hospital

📍 374 Bagot Road, Subiaco WA 6008

☎️ (08) 6458 2222

🌐 kemh.health.wa.gov.au

Resource developed by Statewide Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Program (SPIMHP), in consultation with KEMH Mental Health Services.



We are proud to be a smoke-free site. Thank you for not smoking or vaping in any buildings or on our grounds.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.