



# Dad's Guide to Bonding with Baby

## What is bonding?

A bond is an emotional tie between a parent and child. This makes a baby feel safe and secure because the bond is built on trust and love. A bond is made when a parent responds to the baby's needs. Here are some ways that dad can build a bond with the new baby:

## Hold your baby

- When you hold your baby he learns that the world is a safe place.
- Your baby links your touch with warmth and comfort, which is the start of a lasting bond.
- When the baby is just wearing a diaper, hold him against your bare chest – babies love the feeling of skin-to-skin.

## Take care of your baby

- Give the baby a bath, dress him, and change his diaper.
- These are great times to look your baby in the eyes, make faces at him, sing to him, or talk to him.
- Help mom when she is feeding the baby.

## Read to your baby

- Even when your baby is too young to know what words mean, reading to her will help her brain develop and grow.
- Don't just read the words – make it exciting. Point out pictures and ask questions.
- It's ok if you don't finish the book or if you read out of order. Just have fun!

## Play with your baby

- Babies learn through play – it is how they explore their world.
- Soft knee-bouncing is fun for the baby. Add nursery rhymes or songs.
- Do gentle floor exercises with the baby on a soft blanket.

## Massage your baby

- Your baby will link a gentle massage with feeling happy and having a caring parent.
- While massaging, look into your baby's eyes and talk or sing to him.
- Research shows that babies who are massaged cried less than those who were just rocked.

## Wear your baby

- Carrying your baby in a sling or carrier is a safe way for him to explore his new and unfamiliar world. Be sure to read the instructions on the sling so you are using it safely.
- Babies who are held more cry less.
- Bring the baby along in a carrier while you are in the yard, going for a walk, or watching a game.