

5 ways to support your baby's social and emotional wellbeing

Bury Early Attachment Service



Feeling loved and cared for is just as important as food and sleep. From the beginning, babies want to be social and interact and they learn to feel safe, secure and understood by interacting with you.

Here are five things you can do to help your baby's emotional development.

Play

Play with your baby - Babies learn about themselves, other people and the world around them through play.

Young babies can focus on your face, voice or sounds. Position your baby so that you can see each other's faces. Try saying hello and smiling, sticking your tongue out or making an 'o' shape with your mouth, or maybe blowing a raspberry. They might like a game of peek-a-boo where you hide your face with your hands and then let them see your face. From about 2-3 months, babies might enjoy looking at and exploring something together like a book or toy or a mirror. Try to notice the types of things they enjoy doing - do they like certain noises or textures?



Talk

Talk to your baby - Talking and listening to your baby will help them feel valued and loved, and help the two of you to form a close bond with each other.

Babies can communicate before they start talking by moving their mouth or limbs, cooing, babbling or smiling. This is your baby's way of sharing experiences with you. Whenever possible, try to respond by making eye-contact, smiling and talking back. Try naming what they are doing or looking at, or saying what you think they may be thinking or feeling.

Time

Choose the right time and go at their pace - babies are more likely to interact and play when they are feeling settled (not hungry or tired). You can learn to spot when they are ready, they will be alert, bright eyed and their body will be still.



Give your baby time to take things in. Wait, watch and listen before responding to what they are thinking feeling and doing. Babies love face to face contact, but it can be intense for them and younger babies might only look for a few moments before they need to take a break and look away. All babies do this, just wait and let them look again in their own time.

Watch

Get to know your baby by spending time watching them - See the world through their eyes. Babies thrive when their parents take the time to try and understand what they might be feeling or thinking.



Although babies can't talk yet, you can still tell a lot about what might be going on for them. Look for things like changes in the movement of their arms and legs, the sounds they make, facial expressions and the direction of their gaze. Stepping back and learning about how your baby talks will help you to understand them.

Respond

Respond to your baby's cries - It's your baby's way of letting you know they need something (a cuddle, change of position, less noise, food, changing, etc.).

You won't 'spoil' your baby by picking them up when they cry. In fact, research shows that babies who are responded to cry less than those who are left to cry. You might not be able to work out what they need immediately, but your baby will feel safe knowing that you are there trying to make things better.

Contact Details

If you are interested in finding out more, would like some support or to make a referral, please get in touch:

Bury Early Attachment Service

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