

5 Tips

for Creating a
Strong & Healthy Bond

with your *Baby*



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Congratulations!

By downloading this report you are acknowledging the significance and importance of your baby's first relationship (that is, with YOU!) and how the quality of this connection has the power to ensure the healthy emotional, psychological and physical development of your child.

The ability to tune in to your baby, understand and respond in a meaningful way to his unique likes and dislikes and share with him the delight you feel in his existence, will all go towards helping your baby feel safe and secure in this wondrous and complex world he now finds himself in. You will be laying the ground work for a sociable child who can relate well to others and who will grow into a confident person with a positive outlook.

Your curiosity in reading further ensures that you are mindful of creating the best conditions for establishing a strong bond with your new baby, providing a head start now and benefits that will last a lifetime.

I have been privileged to witness this remarkable relationship between parents and babies where the ability to connect comes easily and naturally but also where it needs to be encouraged and nurtured. Becoming a parent is not always 'smooth sailing' (even for those 'natural' mothers) and there are often many issues that get in the way of feeling joy and a deep connection with your baby. The responsibility of a newborn can bring about feelings of overwhelm and exhaustion, a re-opening of wounds from early personal trauma or the flat, disinterested apathy of post-natal depression.

In this report, I offer a few ideas on how to get the connective juices flowing! You will see that by implementing some of the suggestions offered you will be able to enhance your already strong bond or shift into a more connected state. Infant Massage and Baby Dance/Movement both provide age- appropriate platforms for setting up a routine of gentle,

slow-paced activity utilising nurturing touch, eye contact, familiar rhythms, supportive music and interactive play.

With a conscious focus on establishing connection through a willingness to listen to your baby with your heart, relate to your little one with respect, have patience with yourself and your baby and be open to having a whole lot of fun along the way, you will both come to experience the sparkle in each others' eyes.

Please send me your feedback about this report or share with me a special Moonbeam Moment of connection you have had with your little one by email at suzy@moonbeammovement.com.au.

I wish you much laughter, giggles and tickles on your journey of discovery together!

Suzy Wolanski

Tip 1: Understand the Ingredients for ‘Bonding’ and ‘Attachment’

Over the last 40 years, researchers have been studying how human beings develop relationships with others. It appears that these important skills are learned from the beginning of life and that the early emotional ties developed with the baby then are crucial to the development of healthy social interactions. Attachment and Bonding are a matter of reciprocal interaction between an infant and caregiver - a special dance that builds trust and intimacy. It can be seen as the action involved in the connection between two human beings and the quality of that connection.



Some of the ‘elements of bonding’ can be categorised as:

- **Touch** - a language of communication that the baby can immediately understand.
- **Eye contact** - providing powerful immediate engagement.
- **Odor** - providing an infant with the means of identifying ‘mother’ and vice versa.
- **Hearing/speaking** - babies recognise and prefer the sound of their own mother’s voice.
- **Crying** - part of the interactive dialogue where the parent response is significant.
- **Smiling** - smiles are contagious creating powerful feelings of love and belonging.
- **Biorhythmicity** - re-establishing familiar rhythms and synchronicity after birth.

It is through the elements of bonding that your baby learns to be resilient, to bounce back from intense experiences and learns to trust in predictable and reliable relationships and live their lives with an inherent feeling of safety.

Bonding can take place at any stage of life; it's never too late! This is reassuring for adoptive and foster parents and for situations where the bonding process has been disrupted.

What better way to get connected to your little one through gentle touch, quiet words, soothing and rhythmical music and synchronised body language!

Tip 2: Set the Scene With Your Baby

Infant Massage is a wonderful entry for you and your baby to begin the bonding process. You can introduce massage from as early as birth, with the optimum time being about 20 minutes after a feed or after a bath when your baby is calm and alert and receptive to your loving hands.

Before starting to massage your baby ensure that the massage space is warm, that the baby is in a safe place (ideally on the floor) and that YOU are relaxed! It's important for you to be calm and relaxed so that you both develop a positive, enjoyable association with the massage routine - and if you're feeling calm, your baby will be feeling calm! So, try to clear your mind of thoughts and take a few slow, deep breaths, inhaling your baby's beautiful presence and exhaling a delicate veil of softness over you both as you focus your attention onto your baby.



Use an oil that is perfume free, plant based, organic and cold pressed if possible. Natural oils such as sunflower oil or grapeseed oil are ideal as they are light, easily absorbed by the skin and are low in odour. Place the oil, and everything else you will need, within easy reach but out of baby's way. In the colder winter months it might be preferable to warm your hands under hot water first, to avoid an unpleasant startle from cold hands on your baby's warm body.

Remove jewelry and keep nails short so as not to scratch your little one's skin.

Pour a little oil onto your hands and rub them together vigourously, in view of your baby, while asking her permission to begin the massage. Yes, asking her permission! Soon you will see how clever your little one is when she recognises this gesture and gives you a wide toothless grin with both arms waving from excitement!

Start by resting your warm hands on your baby's body for a few seconds. See if you can mimic her breathing pattern by following the rise and fall of her chest.

Tip 3: Start with Small Movements to Build Trust

Check out your baby's body language before beginning. If she is saying 'yes' to massage she will be smiling, making eye contact and appear to be happy with limbs relaxed. If she is saying 'no' she will cry, turn away, display jerky arm and leg movements or fall asleep. Find a quiet space, turn your mobile to silent and let your baby sink back into a womb-like experience where she can once again feel the boundary of her skin against your warm hands.



Once underway, if your baby shows signs of irritation it's best to either change the massage position or stop massaging rather than persevering and increasing her stress levels. Allow 20-30 minutes to perform the massage routine in the beginning. Rushing or trying to fit it in between other activities will be counter-productive and may

unsettle and overstimulate your baby. Introduce a little at a time, gradually increasing the areas and the length of time over the following days and weeks. It's a good idea to massage 3 days consecutively at first so your baby gets used to it. After that, try to massage at least 3-4 times a week. You may find that you will need less time for the massage as you become more familiar with the strokes and your routine becomes established.

The pressure applied should be firm yet gentle and deep with a slow, rhythmic quality to the strokes. Too light a touch can be unpleasant and irritating for some babies, while firm strokes are reassuring and convey a sense of confidence in handling. However, it is always important to watch for your baby's reactions and adjust the pressure accordingly.

A good place to start is with the legs as they are the least intrusive for the baby while providing lots of valuable eye contact between the two of you. Every grown up I know loves to have their feet massaged - and babies are no different. Watch how their body stills as they bliss out!

However, sometimes baby's feet need special attention as they hold on to memories of invasive heel procedures done whilst in hospital. Simply holding your baby's feet while gently rocking them, and whispering 'Relax' or 'Shhh' will start to release the negative memory eventually allowing you to gradually awaken them to a more rigorous foot massage.

Tip 4: Share Playtime with Your Baby

The most important way for your children to learn is through play. During the first half year of life, play sessions consist of experiences of social interaction - a period of time lasting anywhere from a few seconds to many minutes - where both the mother's and the infant's responsiveness to each other provides a means of learning and teaching social behaviours.

Play periods do not require a specified slot in the day's schedule. They are periods that are taken or stolen or usually appear spontaneously in the course of other activities, perhaps after a feed or half way through when the edge is taken off their hunger, or during a bath. It is the focused interpersonal attention that characterises social play, usually starting with the mother and infant catching one another's eye. This is called a moment of mutual gaze. If the gaze is held, the play period will 'take off' usually with the mother making facial signals of eyebrow raising, eyes widening, and mouth opening along with enticing vocalisations. The infant then performs her version of these behaviours and the game begins. If you take a pause after each interaction and allow your baby time to respond to you, you will be rewarded with a delightful conversation! This intimate early communication sets up the building blocks for the development of language.



By four or five months of age your baby will begin practicing relating to the world and to others through play and play objects. As well as the myriad of commercial toys available, household and everyday objects offer just as much interest, novelty and fun. These objects should however be used under parental supervision and cleared away after playtime. Choose a play object for its interesting colour, texture, noise or 'see through' quality. Some examples are soft chiffon scarves, pots and pans with an accompanying spoon, cardboard cylinders (aka empty toilet rolls), bubbles, fly swats, cellophane paper and so on. Just use your imagination to create something out of nothing!

Tip 5: Let's dance

Human communication consists of sound and movement with both these elements being present for the infant from its time in the womb. The prenatal experience is filled with the gushing sound of blood pulsing through veins, the steady, never-ending beat of the mother's heart, a symphony of digestive processes from the bowel and intestines and the 'whirring' sound of worldly objects from 'the other side'. Research has shown that unborn babies move in response to noise and within 3 days of birth, a baby will turn her head when she hears her mother's voice but will not react in the same way to another woman's voice. More startling evidence shows that young babies will move their limbs in time to their mother's speech pattern. Your babies enter this world already having had a feast of your rhythm and sound experiences. You are already so in-tune with one another!

Tapping into these rhythms and familiar voice and speech patterns after birth helps strengthen the connection.



The 1-2-3 beat of a waltz is reminiscent of the mother's heartbeat; the regular 1-2 beat of many children's nursery rhymes and lullabies mimic the swallowing rhythm of a nursing baby and the 'Stop/Go' pattern reflects the earliest process of containment - that of learning to control our bladders. By moving to different rhythms, voicing rhymes, building a

personal movement repertoire and experiencing the joy, freedom and intimacy of dancing together with her baby, a mother's confidence grows as she rediscovers her own primitive language and the continuity between past and present.

One of the most valuable and meaningful activities for a parent to do with their infant is to mirror their behaviour, which lets them know they are being seen, heard and valued. Let your baby take the lead, whether its clapping hands, sticking out the tongue, crawling on hands and knees or shaking her head. Do what she does! Take a few minutes on the floor with your little one to watch in silence, mirror the behaviour, wait and watch again. You may be surprised by what happens in this game! By closely observing your infant in this way and reflecting back to her, through your actions and voice, not only will you be tuning-in, enhancing your communication and developing your intuitive parenting skills, but you will be, most importantly, building her self-esteem and self-confidence right from the start.

And to conclude...

A secure and loving space for growth, where there is healthy early attachment for babies is a gift. The effects of those early years will continue throughout life as the quality of your connection grows and unfolds. Mindful massage and the natural flow of movement and dance have the potential to regulate and inform mother/father and baby communication. It's a vital part of the bonding process and a reassuring extension of the womb environment.

I hope you have found these ideas and tips helpful for finding a way in to your baby's world. Let your little one show you how to re-connect with the little person inside you!

“I believe that babies are aware human beings who deserve respect, tenderness and warmth, and above all, a listening heart. When we listen to our infants with our hearts, we discover whatever it is that we want to know.” - Vimala McLure (founder International Association of Infant Massage)



About the Author

Suzy Wolanski is a certified Dance/Movement Therapist, Infant Massage Instructor and Pre-Natal yoga teacher who is passionate about assisting parents to fully engage with their babies, enhancing the parent/child bond and thus creating a secure base for the infants to develop physically, emotionally and intellectually to their fullest potential.

As well as her studies in movement and infant development, Suzy brings a lifetime of experience in dance, yoga, martial arts and mothering to her teaching, culminating in a rich and diverse approach to helping mothers and fathers better understand their baby's individual and unique qualities and needs. Respect for the infant at all times is of paramount consideration in her work.



Suzy is a member of the Dance Therapy Association of Australia (DTAA) and the International Association of Infant Massage (IAIM). She is a trained instructor of the Circle of Security Parenting Program. Suzy also runs Dance/Movement sessions at Karitane, an infant mental health facility in Sydney's western suburbs, as well as voluntary work with Mum-for-Mum, an organisation offering mothers-in-need weekly emotional support for the first 12 months after the birth of their baby.

Suzy offers courses in Infant Massage and Baby Dance & Movement in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs and in the Inner West. For more information on Suzy's upcoming courses, or to book in, please visit her website at www.moonbeammovement.com.au

If you wish to contact Suzy to discuss your baby and your needs, call 0413 444914. Suzy can also be reached by email at suzy@moonbeammovement.com.au

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