

Global Practices that Increase Attachment

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Parenting practices Dr. Peterson has observed the world over, which help to create a close Secure Attachment

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SPOIL AN INFANT WITH TOO MUCH ATTENTION!!

Limit setting - beginning about 18 months of age is much easier with a closely attached toddler.

Skin to Skin Contact: Especially in the first 90 minutes after birth – stimulates falling “in-love”

- Mothers later engage in more affectional behaviors – holding, hugging, kissing, fondling, vocalizing, eye-to-eye contact, and smiling.
- During infancy cradle naked baby [or with a diaper] on your bare chest, while singing or dancing, massaging, taking baths together

Breastfeeding: Best if initiated during first 90 minutes after birth

- Stimulates Prolactin that promotes patience, protection, nurturing behavior, and attachment
- This is a time to be close and eye-gaze if baby initiates it
- After nursing is well established, it is much healthier, easier, and cheaper than bottle feeding
- Significantly reduces the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Much healthier for mother – reduces risk of ovarian & breast cancer, anemia, and osteoporosis

Wearing babies: Wear in front pack or sling as much as possible

- Being born so helpless, infants have a deep need for this closeness and movement similar to womb
- Continuous bodily contact promotes healthy mental and emotional development

Co-Sleeping: Room-sharing and Bed-sharing

- Most babies in the world bed-share with their mothers
- Risk of SIDS reduced in half when co-sleeping – AAP recommends room-sharing for first 6 months
- When bed-sharing follow safe sleeping recommendations [The Mindful Parent - p. 49-50]

Affection: All humans crave this kind of attention

- Gentle words, hugs, kisses, cuddles, and stroking back, arms, legs & hair builds brain connections that increase the child’s ability to self-calm when older
- Receiving affection & kindness provides comfort & contentment – reduces crying

Listening: Always hear a baby’s cries as asking for help – infants are completely dependent on others

- Letting baby “cry it out” creates increased anxiety & lack of trust in relationships
- Knowing we are being listened to helps calm people of any age

Responding: Respond as soon as possible

- Babies who are comforted whenever they get stressed will develop ability to self-calm as toddlers
- If unable to immediately pick baby up at least let baby know you are coming as soon as you can

Talking, Singing, & Playing: Essential for healthy brain development

- Music & play are used in every culture to create closeness, change moods & lift spirits

Close Proximity: Babies need to be kept in close proximity, particularly the first 9 months

- Keep baby in same room and as close to you as possible
- Increases feelings of connection and greatly reduces the risk of SIDS