

BONDING WITH YOUR BABY

I Need a Clue!

Bonding. You mean like Super Glue?

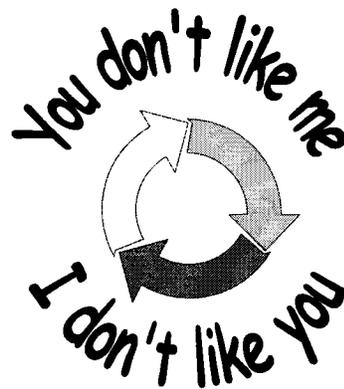
Even better. Bonding is the sense of attachment or closeness that you and your baby feel for each other.

"Does My Baby Love Me?"

For about the first 4 to 6 weeks after your baby is born, he probably won't give you many signs that you're doing a good job as a dad. In fact, he may seem to just sleep, eat, poop, and cry all the time.

This can make you feel like your baby doesn't love you. Then what happens? You could back off and stop showing that you love him.

Something like that can go around and around and keep getting worse. You have to stop it. Bonding will help you.



"How do I go about bonding?"

One of the best ways to bond is to find a private, peaceful time you can spend with your baby. Smile at him, look into his eyes, and talk to him.

The earlier you start being with your baby and doing things with him the more bonded you will both feel.

Learn the things he does that show you what he wants. Does he want to be picked up, played with, or just rocked to sleep?

As time goes by, your baby learns that he can count on you. This makes him feel safe and helps him feel good about himself.

But bonding doesn't happen all at once.

There's nothing wrong with you if you don't seem to hit it off with your baby right away. Don't worry. Pretty soon you will win his heart...

...AND HE WILL WIN YOURS!



Here are some fun ideas you'll be able to use to start bonding with your baby:

*** TRY THE STARING CONTEST**

Stare at your baby. See who will blink first. Think you'll win? Think again. Babies love to stare at people. You've got a battle on your hands!

*** PLAY KANGAROO**

Strap on a front pack baby carrier, pop the baby in, and go on about your business. Rake leaves, wash the car, play with the dog. Your kid will love every minute;

*** READ THE SPORTS PAGE**

Your baby loves to listen to you, but he doesn't have a clue what you're saying. So sometimes read stuff YOU LIKE. He won't mind. Read the sports page, the want ads, the TV listings. To him it's Peter Rabbit;



* TAKE A BATH TOGETHER

Yep, get yourself naked and climb in with him. Babies can be afraid of water. With you there, everything will be fine;

* SHOW HIM HOW YOU FEEL

Let your baby feel your whiskers, your mustache, your hands. They all have different feels to them that he will get a real kick out of. Watch out, though. They love to pull chest hair!

"They won't let me near my kid!"

You might feel like no one is giving you a chance to bond with your baby. Other people seem to be taking care of everything because they think dads don't want to be involved—or don't know how.

Many people think that a dad's job doesn't start until his child is older and in school.

WRONG!

A dad should start bonding when his child is a baby. He can still do it when the kid is older, but it's a lot tougher then.

"What can I do to make this bonding thing happen?"

Lots of things. Try these:

- ▣ Feed your baby;
- ▣ Change his diapers;
- ▣ Cuddle him;
- ▣ Rock him to sleep;
- ▣ Get up in the night with him;
- ▣ Talk to him;
- ▣ Walk him when he cries or is fussy.

These are things you can't overdo. You can't spoil your baby at this age, so stick with it. Show people you can do it. When someone starts to change his diaper, say, *"I'm his dad. He likes me to do it. We have a special poop-thing going!"*

Are there things that could happen or people that might get in the way of bonding with your baby?

What can you do about them?

