

Natural Baby Bonding for Everyone

Some new mothers bond with their babies easily. Others find the process much more difficult. Baby Bonding advocate, Monic Joint, reveals it's never too late to start forming a life-long connection with your child.

I have never forgotten speaking to a mum who had a terrible bonding experience with her first child. Due to complications after delivery, she was separated from her newborn daughter to have surgery and - 16 years later - still felt she had been unable to complete a connection with her teenager. It reminded me that while some parents find bonding with their baby as easy as 1-2-3, it's not always a natural experience for others.

Bonding can be interrupted for a range of reasons. Unexpected or traumatic pregnancy, difficult birth, age of the parents, a crying colicky baby, and even family financial difficulties can all affect bonding. Some parents may have experienced neglect or abuse as a child themselves and worry about their new parental responsibilities. We should also spare a thought for pregnant women who endure domestic violence. The charity, Refuge, estimates that more than one third of violent abuse while women are pregnant either begins or worsens during pregnancy. If you are one of the many parents who have had trouble bonding either pre or post birth, or simply want to learn additional methods of bonding with your child, there are several gentle ways to form that crucial connection, and every effort we put into bonding is a positive step.

While it is generally known that bonding with babies releases feelings of contentedness, the act of bonding has the additional benefit of releasing a hormone called "Oxytocin" within a mother during breastfeeding. According to Wikipedia, the effect of Oxytocin is significant in that it reduces stress, increases trust, lowers blood pressure and reduces anxiety and pain. Let's get started with some steps you can take from today to start forming that wonderful connection with your child.

How to bond with your baby:

Bonding during Pregnancy:

- Mental Bonding: Spend some quiet time every day thinking about your baby while breathing in a relaxed way
- Physical Bonding: Massage your abdomen lightly with a plain organic cream or oil

Bonding after the birth of your child:

- Mental Bonding: Spend much time looking at your infant and thinking about the positives of parenthood. Feel proud of each milestone that you reach together, and remember that you are a more experienced family each day.
- Physical Bonding: Skin to skin contact with your newborn is an excellent way to bond with your child and breastfeeding soon after the birth provides many positive benefits to both the new mother and infant; bathing with your baby can be fun (use a non-slip bath mat for safety or get your partner to help you)
- Keep a journal of "letters" to your children letting them know how they are developing, what you feel about them and your dreams for them.

Any parent with a sincere desire to bond with their child will find their own unique ways to do so; following your natural instincts is the best way to get started. Finally, it's worth remembering that it's never too late to start spending quality time with your child. Your time is free and all time spent with your children will pay dividends throughout the cycle of your life - and especially your child's.

In addition to being a Baby Bonding advocate, mother of two small children and former nanny, Monic Joint is a qualified baby massage instructor. Monic is also the founder of Koala Comforts-Soothing Products for Parents and Babies™ and does occasional volunteer work for the U.K. Birth Trauma Association charity. You can contact her at: contactus@mummymusthave.co.uk