

Mind

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Attachment and Your Child's Feelings

- **Connect with your child.** A child's ability to love, trust, feel, and learn starts with the deep emotional tie that he forms with the people who take care of him. This emotional connection starts before birth. It is called attachment.
- **Respond to your child's needs.** Secure attachment develops when you respond to your child's needs. She needs you to be warm, loving, and dependable. Comfort your child when she is upset, frightened, sick, or hurt. Cuddle your baby and give lots of hugs. Speak and sing softly to her.
- **Teach your child about feelings.** Your baby cries to tell you when she needs you to look after her. It is best to go to your baby when she cries. When your child is older, talk to her about her feelings. Use words that name feelings such as happy, sad, angry, or nervous.
- **Your child's attachment to you makes a difference.** A baby's attachment to her parents influences how her brain develops. When she feels safe, she is open to learning.
- **Pay close attention to your baby.** Notice what he is trying to tell you. Notice what he likes and does not like. Follow his lead. Smile back when he smiles. Talk to him when he makes little sounds.



i The strong attachment you build when your child is young will last a lifetime.

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Fun & Easy Activities

Peek-a-Boo and Hide-and-Seek

- Babies and young children are sometimes scared when their parents go away. You can play games that teach your child that even when you go away, you always come back.
- You can start when your baby is only 4 or 5 months old. Put your baby in a baby seat and sit facing him. Sit so that your face is quite close to his face. When he is looking at you, hide your face behind a cloth. Say, "Where am I?" When he starts to move his feet and hands, take the cloth away and say gently "Peek-a-boo!" Smile at him. Wait till he smiles back then hide again. Go slowly. Stop if your child seems not interested any more.
- When your child is older, he can put the cloth in front of his own face to play the game. In the game of hide-and-seek, take turns with your older child. Sometimes he will hide where you can see him. Pretend you cannot see him and say, "Where are you?" He will get excited. Look a few places before you finally say, "I found you!" Then you hide and wait till he finds you.

Feelings in Pictures

- You can make a homemade book about feelings. Cut pictures of children out of magazines and newspapers. Look for pictures of children with different expressions that show feelings. Glue or tape the pictures onto pieces of cardboard. Make two holes on one edge of each page. Put string through the holes to tie the pieces of cardboard together into a book.
- If you have a camera, you can use photos of your child to make your book. Take pictures of her pretending to be sad, happy, frustrated, angry, bored, and so on. Your child will enjoy looking at photos of herself. Let her turn the pages and tell you how she feels.



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Surround Your Child with Chances to Learn

- **You can help build your child's brain by talking to him.** Talk to your baby right from the beginning. Talk about what you are doing and what he is doing. Describe the things he sees and hears around him. When your child begins to speak, listen to what he says. Encourage your child to talk about things that happen to him. Take turns talking and listening.
- **Read and tell stories every day.** You can look at picture books with your baby and talk about what you see. Children can learn about things from books that they do not see in their daily life. Tell your toddler stories about what you did during the day.
- **Share your stories, songs and rhymes.** Talk about your culture, beliefs, traditions, and values.
- **Give your child a variety of materials to play with.** Children's toys do not need to be expensive. You have lots of things in the house that are fun to play with. Here are some ideas: empty plastic containers and bottles, plastic measuring cups and bowls, cardboard tubes and empty boxes.
- You can make different colours of play dough for your child. In the winter, bring some snow inside in a dish pan. Check everything you give your child to make sure it is clean and safe.
- **Play outdoors.** Children can do things outdoors that they cannot do in your home. Your child will enjoy outdoor play in any weather. Play in the sandbox at the park. Play in the snow. Splash in puddles when it is raining. Take your child to a wading pool or to a beach.

i **Your child's brain is growing. You can help by talking to him, playing with him, and reading to him.**



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Fun & Easy Activities

Play Dough

Play dough encourages children to be creative. They can create whatever shape they want. They can push different tools into it to make different patterns and textures. They develop control of their fingers and hand muscles. When they get older, they can make little people and animals to play with. Some children find that playing with play dough helps calm them down.

You can give play dough to your child as soon as she stops wanting to eat it. For some children, this is around 12 months. For other children, it might not be till age 2 ½. Your child will enjoy playing with play dough for many years.

Here is a recipe for homemade play dough. Look for cream of tartar in the spice section in a grocery store or bulk food store.

1. Mix together in a pot:
 - 1 cup flour (250 ml)
 - 1/4 cup salt (60 ml)
 - 2 tablespoons cream of tartar (30 ml)
2. Add to the mixed ingredients in the pot:
 - 1 cup water (250 ml)
 - a few drops of food colouring
 - 1 tablespoon oil (15 ml)
3. Stir everything together and cook over medium heat for a few minutes.
4. When the mixture is warm and makes a lump in the pot, scrape it out onto a flour-covered counter and knead until smooth.
5. Store in a plastic container in the fridge.

Sidewalk Drawings

Sidewalk chalk is not expensive and can give your child hours of fun. Some children as young as 1 year old can hold chalk and make marks. However most children this young just want to put the chalk in their mouth. Just in case, look for chalk that is non-toxic.

By the time they are around 2 years old, most children are able to draw with chalk on the sidewalk. They can make lots of drawings and never run out of space!



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Play Is the Way Your Child Learns

- **Children learn when they play.** When she is playing, your child is learning about the world and her place in it. She learns how to do new things. She finds out how to get along with other people. Playing helps her show her feelings and become more sure of herself.
- **Children need to explore.** Let your child try to do things for himself. He will learn more by doing than by hearing you explain things. Give him time to explore and discover on his own. Make sure his surroundings are safe to explore. Keep him away from danger, both indoors and outside.
- **Limit screen time.** Children learn most when they play actively with other people and with real objects. Your child does not learn as much sitting in front of a screen. This includes activities like watching TV, using a computer, playing with a cell phone and playing video games. These screen based activities are not recommended for children under 2 years of age.
- **Give your child new experiences.** Stimulate your child's learning by adding new things to play with. Introduce your child to new people and new situations. Make time every day for play both indoors and outdoors. Take your child to parks and playgrounds.

i Play is how your child learns. Play changes as your child grows. Your child needs to play right from birth.



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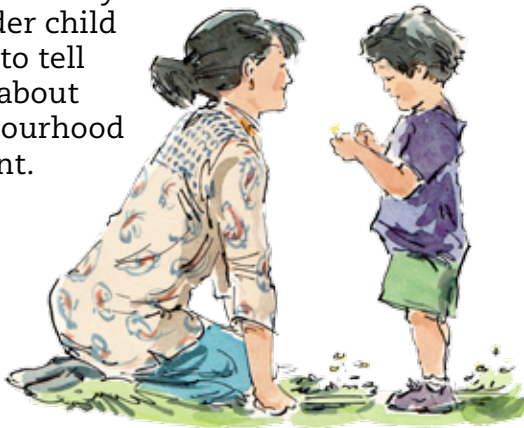
Fun & Easy Activities

Going on a Treasure Hunt

Before taking a walk in your neighbourhood, make a list of things that you might find on the way. If your child is very young, three or four things will be enough. For example, you can look for a tree leaf, a white flower, a twig and a grey rock.

If your child is older, make the list longer and more specific. Talk about what is on your list before you go out. Make sure that the things on your list are in season and can be found in your neighbourhood.

Take a bag with you when you leave. When you find each object, put it in the bag and check it off your list. When you get home, put your treasures on a tray. Talk to your child about where you found them and what other things you saw on your walk. An older child will be able to tell you a story about your neighbourhood treasure hunt.



Exploration Bags

You can play guessing games with your child using a bag and some objects you find around the house. For each game, tell your child to close his eyes or tie a scarf over his eyes. Now he has to use his ears, his nose or his fingers to guess what you put in the bag. Take turns guessing.

- **Listening** – Put things in the bag that you can use to make noise. For example, keys you can jingle, paper you can crumple, a pen you can click. Take each object out of the bag and make a noise. Can he guess what is making the noise?
- **Smelling** – Collect some small bottles, like pill bottles. Put something that smells strongly in each one. If it is liquid, put some on a cotton ball and put it in the bottle. Here are some ideas: peanut butter, banana, vinegar, onions and cinnamon. When your child pulls a bottle out of the bag, open it. Let him smell the bottle without looking. Can he guess what is making the smell?
- **Touching** – Put things in the bag that have different textures. For example: a pot scrubber, a sponge, and tissue paper. Name one of the items in the bag and ask your child to pull it out without looking. Give your child the name for each texture: scratchy, soft, bumpy, stiff. You could also name the texture first. Can your child find something smooth in the bag?