



Dad Central

Facts for Fathers

# Daddy, I Need You

A baby's brain develops at an incredible pace. What babies – and their developing brains – really need is the care and interaction a father can give.

## Fathers can develop a **strong bond** with their children

- Start the connection with your baby as early as you can – even before she is born.
- The most important experiences for a baby's brain are ordinary ones – being carried, fed, bathed, diapered, getting outside, playing peek-a-boo, or hearing loving, caring words.
- Do things together with your baby – take him shopping, go to the park, listen to music, visit some friends.

## The importance of **touch**

- Touch is one way you communicate your feelings to your baby.
- Touch stimulates a baby's brain in ways that help your child deal with stress and strong feelings throughout her life.
- Touch needs to be loving, caring and gentle.
- Being held, carried, stroked, massaged, or even sleeping on your chest are all ways to touch your child.

# Emotional Development

## Comfort your child when he is upset

But be aware that you can't control your child's feelings.

## Allow your child to feel the way she feels

Try not to say things like, "Don't be silly!" to a child who is angry, afraid or sad.

## Use feeling words when your child is emotional

"You're really frustrated, aren't you?"

"I can tell you're really excited about seeing your cousins."

## Be patient

Children learn to handle emotion gradually. At times their emotional responses will seem mature. Other times, they will be immature.

## Model good emotional management

Children learn a lot from the way you handle emotions.

## Building brains through play

- **Play gets the brain working.** It gets children interested in things.
- **Play helps develop language skills.** Reading, rhymes, and tickling games help a baby connect words with sounds.
- **Play can be a way for a child to participate in life.** Babies learn about the world by watching and copying you.
- **Play gives opportunity for problem solving and learning.** By trying new things, babies learn their abilities and limitations.
- **Play is meant to be fun.** Play is one thing that makes childhood enjoyable and interesting.



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### Want to know more?

Dad Central Ontario has booklets and other resources for fathers.

Visit [dadcentral.ca](http://dadcentral.ca)