

## **Baby Bonding through Daily Rhythms**

Mother and child will bond naturally. Creating ritual/routine will also build trust in the relationship. You can set up a daily rhythm to help your baby know what to expect. Babies find comfort in routine and it can help you and your baby feel supported and centered. You will come up with your own rhythm. Other caregivers in your support team can practice this rhythm as well. The following is an example:

Rhythms of early life:

Eating  
Play time  
Walks  
Bath time  
Sleeping

\*Add music to each routine, and use the same or similar music each time. Your baby will start to associate the music with the activity and automatically know what is expected.

\*\*Mild relaxing scents can be used in the room if safe for you and the baby - chamomile, lavender, orange. Similar to music, using the same smells during specific activities will signal to your baby what activity is coming up.

\*\*\*Adding signs -sign language throughout the day to help baby communicate with you. There are many books on this topic, available for free at the library.

Eat - as requested, a natural rhythm will form.

Play time - Listen to music, sing, dance with baby in carrier, read stories, animal recognition and acknowledgement, sign language, building materials (soft blocks) in the toddler stage.

Together time - this can be a daily time set aside where the entire family is together. It could be for a meal, or a special activity, but it is always done as a family, even if that is just you and your baby.

Baby Carrier - Babies prefer to be held close to the body instead of in a carriage/stroller.

Dance - Babies love music and dancing in Mama's arms. Put on your favorite mild music, with baby in a carrier, do gentle rocking and dancing.

Take a daily walk - after the second week if you feel well enough, take a short walk- 20 minutes or less. Use a baby carrier or a stroller. Both you and baby will love getting some fresh air. After eating is ideal.

Bath time - Once baby is old enough - once baby's umbilical cord has dropped off and the naval has healed, create a soothing bathing experience with soft lighting, unscented candle in the room, a pouch of chamomile & lavender herbs put into the warm bath water (if not allergic), and some soothing music - without words is best. Choose the same time each day, have warm clean diaper and clothes ready so the baby doesn't catch a chill. (Note: shampoos should not be used on baby's hair until six to eight weeks after birth)

Baby massage - This is something that can be done routinely after a bath or other time of day, such as right before nap time or bed time. Warm oil or specialty baby lotion can be used to enhance the experience. This can also be accompanied with a special song that you sing to your baby - it could be made up, or a favorite traditional lullaby. Recorded music can also be used. Here are some baby massage books, or check out numerous youtube videos and the PDF I've attached.

*Loving Hands: The Traditional Art of Baby Massage*, by Frederick Leboyer

*Baby Massage for Beginners*, by Nicholas Rhea

*Developmental Baby Massage, Baby Massage: Parent- Child Bonding Through Touching*, by Amelia D Auckett

*Infant Massage from Head to Toe: A Basic Guide to Infant Massage,*  
by Alicia Jackson

Bed Time - Make it special. Consider using the same soft lullaby nightly, a drop of lavender on Mama, not the baby, to help relax, and dim lighting. As the baby gets older add a bedtime story, whether made up or from a book. Bath and massage can be incorporated into a bedtime routine as well. The first 6 months they will mostly be sleeping. Only do this ritual once a day, and the end of the day, after the sun has gone down.

\* Do not put essential oils directly on baby's skin.