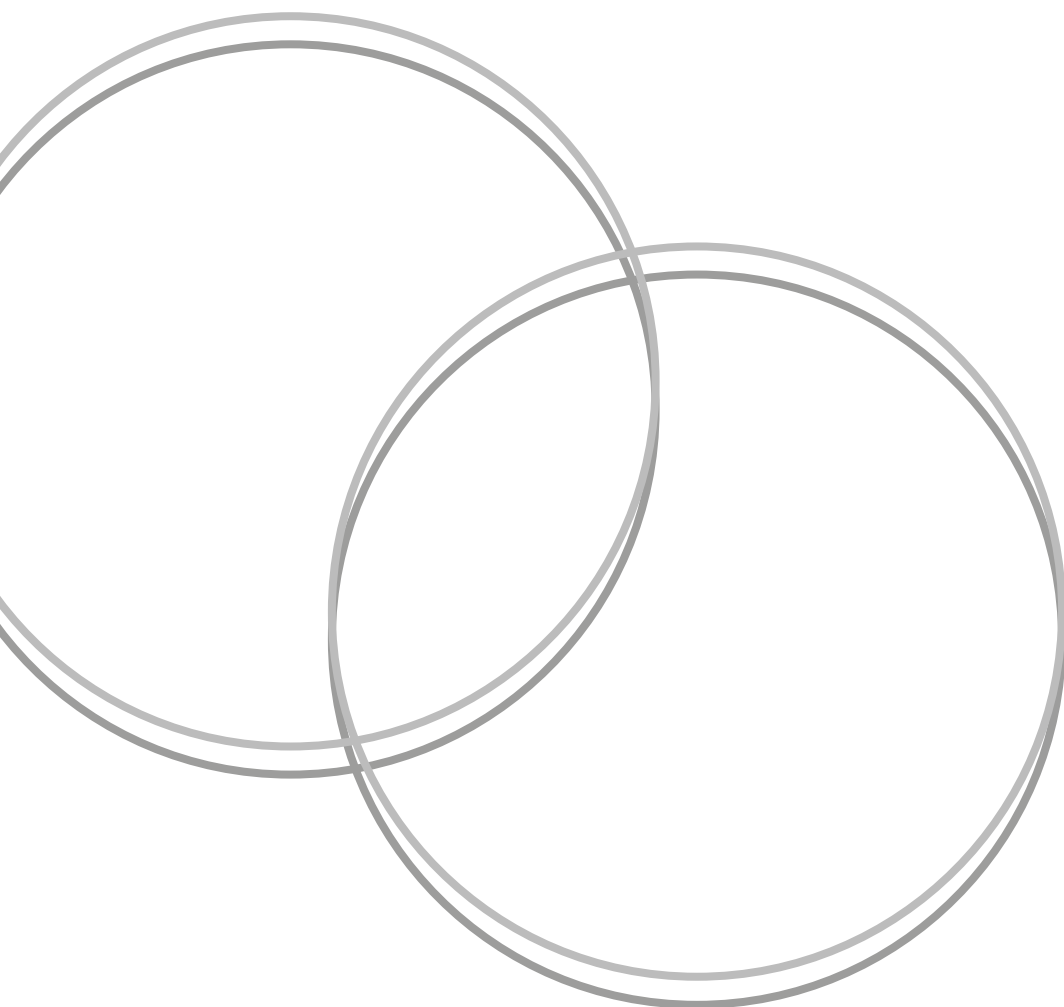


Growing your baby's brain

Information for parents and carers



Brain development starts before your baby is born.

There are many ways you can support this:

- Being aware of your baby's movements and stroking your bump in response to them.
- Talking, singing and reading to your bump, as they can hear your voice from 15 weeks of pregnancy.
- Involving partners and siblings which will help them build a bond with the baby.
- Visualising meeting your baby will help you and your baby bond at birth.



Oxytocin

Oxytocin is known as a **love hormone**. It helps to build trust and encourages social bonding. It helps your **baby's brain to grow**, giving them a happy and confident start in life.

Oxytocin helps your baby's brain to grow!

Oxytocin is good for you and your baby!

feed love cuddle
talking singing
responding skin-to-skin
stroking soothing
eye contact

Following your baby's birth

- **Unhurried and uninterrupted skin to skin contact** also helps to build your **baby's microbiome**, which supports their immune system.
- Skin to skin contact helps your baby adjust to life outside the uterus (womb). Giving the **first feed during skin to skin contact** helps with **bonding**.
- Skin to skin contact also gets **breastfeeding off to a good start** which stimulates your body to release more oxytocin.
- Skin to skin contact helps your baby **learn how you smell and feel**.

The early days

- Keep your baby **close**. When your baby is close to you where they feel secure and loved, you both **release Oxytocin**.
- **Smile and talk** to your baby, **stroke** their skin and **look into their eyes**. This helps to **regulate their emotions**, as they are not able to self soothe.
- Recognise your baby's subtle **feeding cues**.
- **Respond to your baby's needs**. When your baby is upset, oxytocin production stops.
- You will not spoil your baby by cuddling them and meeting their needs.
- Continue with skin to skin whenever you want.



Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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