

Growing your baby's brain

Information for parents and carers



It starts *before* your baby is born:

- Be aware of movements and **stroke your bump**
- From **15 weeks** they can hear your voice so you can **talk, sing or read** to your baby
- Involve **partners** and **siblings** too
- **Visualise meeting your baby**, this helps both you and your baby to **bond** at birth.



When your baby is *born*:

Babies' brains still have a lot of growing to do when they are born, and you can help.

- **Have uninterrupted skin to skin contact until after the first feed**
- However you choose to feed skin to skin contact helps your baby **adjust to life outside the womb**
- **Skin to skin** gets breastfeeding off to a good start and your baby learns what you smell and feel like
- Skin to skin coats your baby in your **skin flora** and **protects** your baby from other **bacteria**

The *early* days:



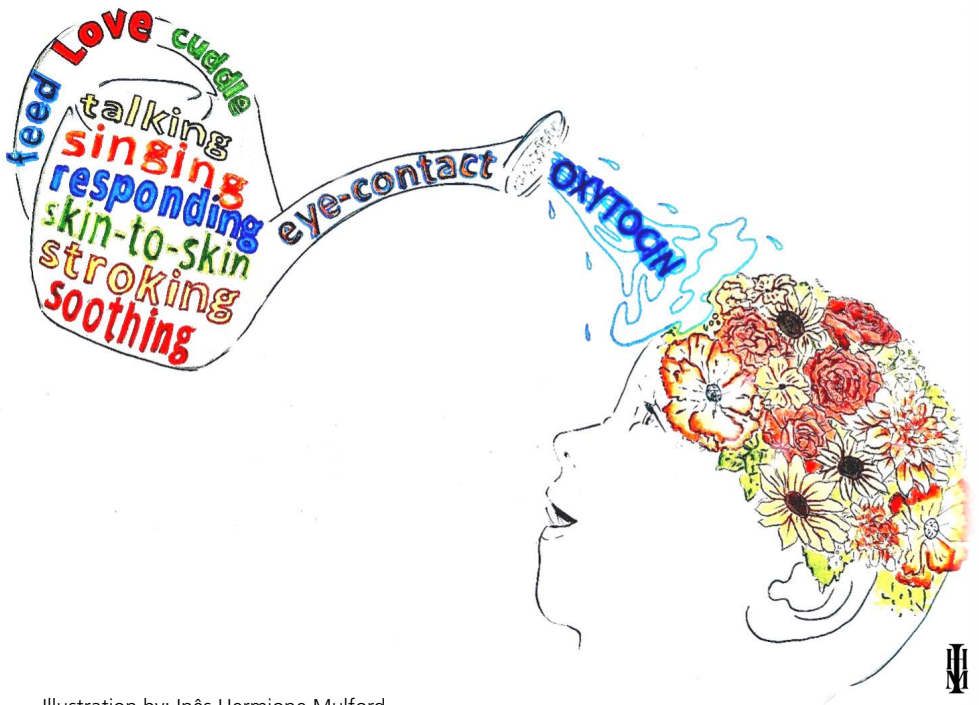
- Keep your baby **close**
- Watch out for your baby's **subtle feeding cues**
- Remember feeding is for **comfort** as well as food
- Your baby will love skin to skin, it will **help calm them** and will also help with feeding and milk production.

Why is this important?

- Babies only feel **safe** when they are **close to you**
- Your baby **cannot self soothe**
- Your baby needs your help to **regulate their emotions**
- Being upset **blocks oxytocin release**

What is happening?

When your baby is close, you both release **Oxytocin**. Oxytocin is a hormone that is good for you and your baby and is a **brain fertiliser**. Oxytocin helps your baby's brain to grow making them happy and confident babies, children and then adults.



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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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
www.ouh.nhs.uk/children



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Making a difference across our hospitals

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