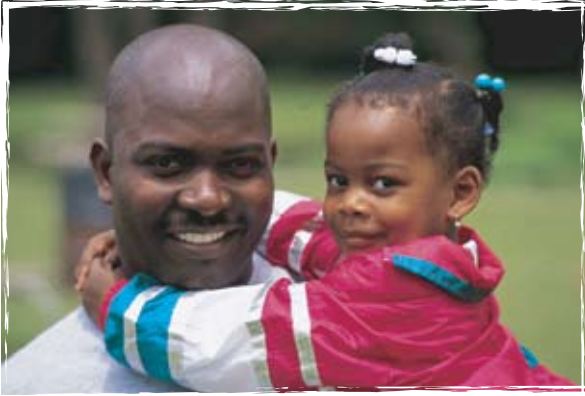


Heart to Heart

Building closeness through responsive parenting



What is the practice?

To build healthy parent-child bonds, parents can increase the quantity (how often) and quality (how parents interact) of interactions with their young children. This is especially important when children are learning that their behavior influences their parents' response.

Moms and dads help their very young children learn that they can count on their parents for comfort and support by the way the parents respond to their little ones.

Research points to three simple things parents can do to adopt a responsive parent-child interaction style:

- ☉ Pay attention to the child to identify her needs.
- ☉ Respond appropriately to her behavior.
- ☉ Respond in ways she finds pleasant and positive.

How do we do it?

Build closeness with your young child by adding quantity and quality to the way you respond to him or her.

- ☉ Respond as often as possible to infant behavior.
- ☉ Be warm, positive, attentive, prompt, understanding, and appropriate in response to infant behavior.



See it happen

Mom takes time to watch her child. She sees the baby's many expressions, sounds, and movements as messages that help her learn to understand and respond in ways that will make her baby feel secure and happy.

Is it working?

You can tell responsive parenting is at work and attachment is growing when:

- ☉ The parent becomes more responsive to the child's need for comfort and encouragement.
- ☉ The parent effectively meets the child's needs.
- ☉ The parent easily soothes the child.
- ☉ The child starts interactions with the parent.
- ☉ The child seeks out the parent for comfort.

