

# Attachment

Attachment refers to a relationship bond between a child or young person and their primary caregiver.



\*Important for safety, regulation, stress and resilience

\*Supports social and emotional development, communication, and relationships

\*Builds confidence to explore and learn

\*Helps your baby's brain grow and develop

\*Provides a secure base

\*The foundation of your child's ability to connect with others in a healthy way



# Relationships

Most of what a child learns comes from connecting and engaging with adults. When an adult notices, understands and responds quickly to a child's signals (especially when they are experiencing stress) it helps them to develop their social, emotional and communication skills whilst building their independence. The relationship that has formed this way is known as an 'attachment' and we know that there is a significant amount of research to tell us that a healthy attachment is hugely beneficial for children and their future outcomes.

Through consistent, sensitive and timely responses to children's needs, it helps them to gain basic trust:

- in others as responsive
- in the world as a friendly place
- and in themselves as able to communicate their needs



Understanding and controlling emotions need to be learned. As a parent or carer you can play a vital role in this process, helping a child to recognise and identify their feelings and to learn how to manage them. For example, when a child has a stressful or frightening experience, a caregiver can be there to support the child, name what the child might be feeling, stay with that feeling (even if it is big and uncomfortable) and soothe them through a cuddle or gentle contact.

# Secure attachments

Forming an attachment is something that develops over time for a child, but parents and carers can start to form an emotional bond with their child before they are born.

Children with secure attachments are more likely to develop emotional intelligence, good social skills and robust mental health.

You are the most important person to your baby. Your baby's brain will develop rapidly in the first two years and continue to develop throughout life. Your child's relationship with you is one thing that impacts the way they develop. In a loving, safe relationship with you, your baby experiences important brain activity. Additionally, from these positive early life experiences, your child will have an eagerness to explore, healthy coping skills, and feelings of both trust and empathy for others.



**REMEMBER!**

Of course, no parent is perfect, but a focused effort to meet your baby's needs will have long lasting effects.



# Attachment issues

Children with insecure attachments may:

Young  
Somerset

Attachment issues can occur when a child has been unable to consistently connect with a parent or primary caregiver. If a young child repeatedly feels abandoned, isolated, powerless, or uncared for—whatever the reason—they will learn that they can't depend on others and that the world is a dangerous and frightening place.

Although it is never too late to treat and repair attachment issues, the earlier you spot the symptoms of insecure attachment and take steps to repair them, the better. Caught in infancy before they become more serious problems, attachment issues are often easy to correct with the right help and support.

Avoid people



Show anger, fear and anxiety



Exaggerate distress



Refuse to engage with others



Baby has a need



Baby cries

Need is not met by caregiver

Mistrust develops

Sometimes a parent or carer may have difficulty forming a bond, for example if they are experiencing mental health issues or don't have an effective support network.

If you are experiencing any of this, you are not alone and there are people that can help you. Please follow this link where you can find support;  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/support-and-services/services-and-support-for-parents/>



# Positive experiences

Positive experiences play a huge role in the development of a young child by giving them the freedom, security and resources to develop their skills. This is true across all aspects of learning, for example through resources and activities which help to boost a child's reading or by providing opportunities for a child to learn how to interact with others in a group.

Having a mix of these skills is crucial since together they prepare a child to be ready to learn socially, cognitively and emotionally when they reach school. Children who arrive at primary school with what is termed as having a 'good level of development' are more likely to succeed in secondary school and this knock-on effect then makes them less likely to experience poor health as they move into adulthood.

We as parents, play the most crucial role in childhood happiness. Positive Childhood Experiences include identifiable situations in a child's life that set them up for success such as feeling safe at home, having adults who support them, and being able to talk to the adults in their lives during difficult times. Children thrive when they are provided with clear structure, age-appropriate games and entertainment, security, a kind yet authoritative parenting style, and oodles of love and acceptance. This is the kind of atmosphere in which children thrive, learning the skills they will need to be happy, healthy adults and positive contributors to society.

Follow this link to some simple, fun activities for kids, from newborn to five;  
<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>





# What can I do to help?



Practice being fully present. Give your baby your full attention periodically throughout the day. This may mean being free of distractions such as mobile phones and television.

Practice being self-aware. Notice when you are tired, anxious, angry, or frustrated, and take care of yourself. You are better able to meet your baby's needs when you are aware of your own needs.

Maintain realistic expectations of your baby. Your baby cannot soothe themselves or verbally tell you their needs until they are older than one year. Until then, they will completely rely on you to help them.

Watch and listen to your baby. Try to notice their early cues such as back arching, hand sucking, and grunting so you can quickly meet their needs and avoid excessive crying.

Hold and cuddle your baby. Touch is reassuring to your baby and provides a feeling of safety. Skin to skin helps both parents and baby feel calm and relaxed.

Make eye contact. Gaze into your baby's eyes when feeding, playing, and changing nappies; share facial expressions of joy and excitement.

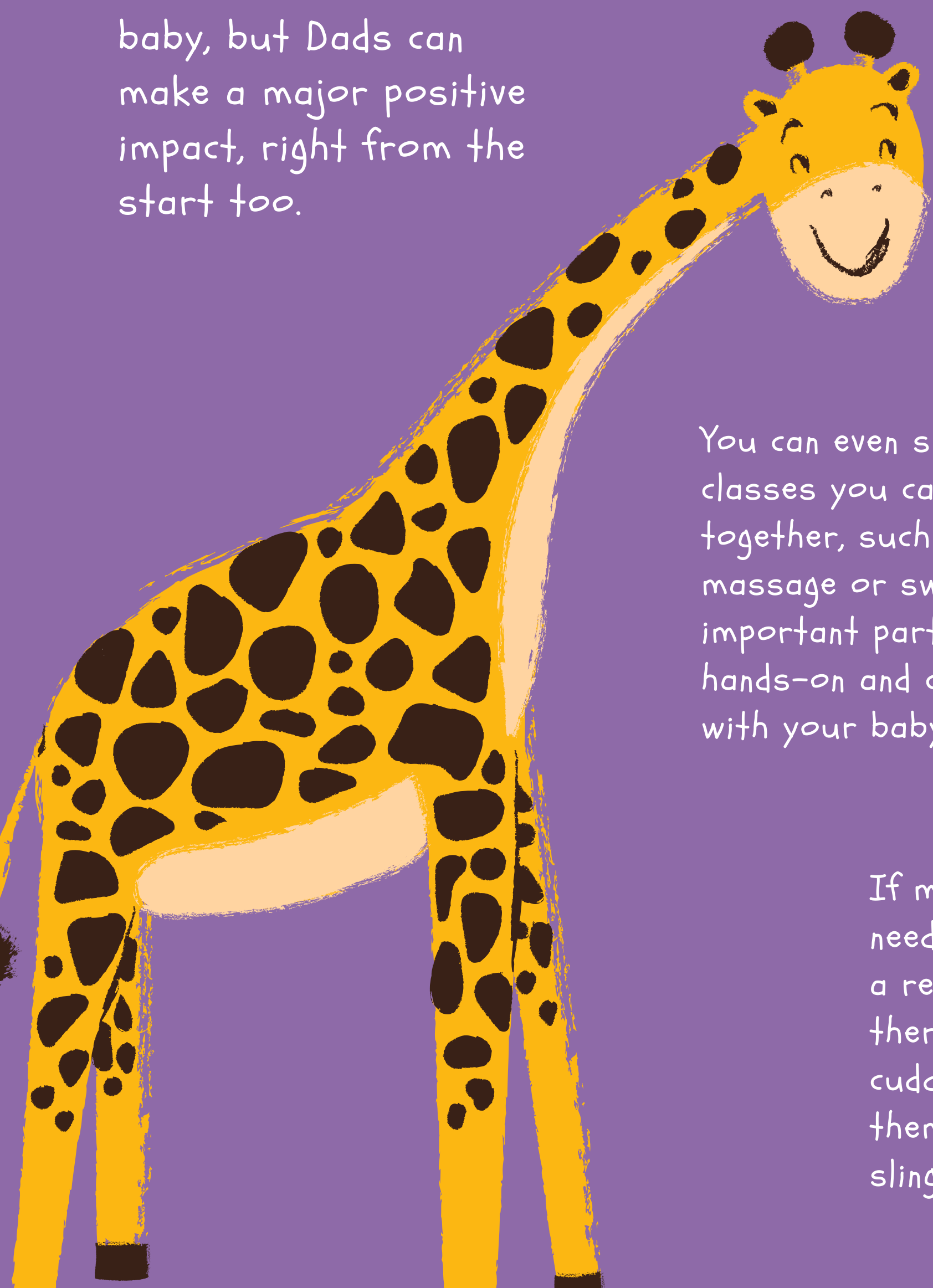
Comfort your baby every time they cry. When your baby cries, it is a signal that they need you for food, comfort, or reassurance.

Speak in a warm, soothing tone of voice. Connect with your baby by smiling, singing, storytelling, or talking in a sweet, comforting voice.



# Attachment with Dad

Some Fathers don't really feel that they know how to interact with their newborn baby, but Dads can make a major positive impact, right from the start too.



Your baby starts to get to know you while they are in the womb, before they are even born! By about 24 weeks, your baby can hear sounds from outside, and that includes your voice. This means that for most of the pregnancy, your baby can hear you, and through that, is getting to know you and start bonding with you. Once your baby is born, when you talk to them, they will recognise and respond to your voice from the times they heard it during pregnancy.

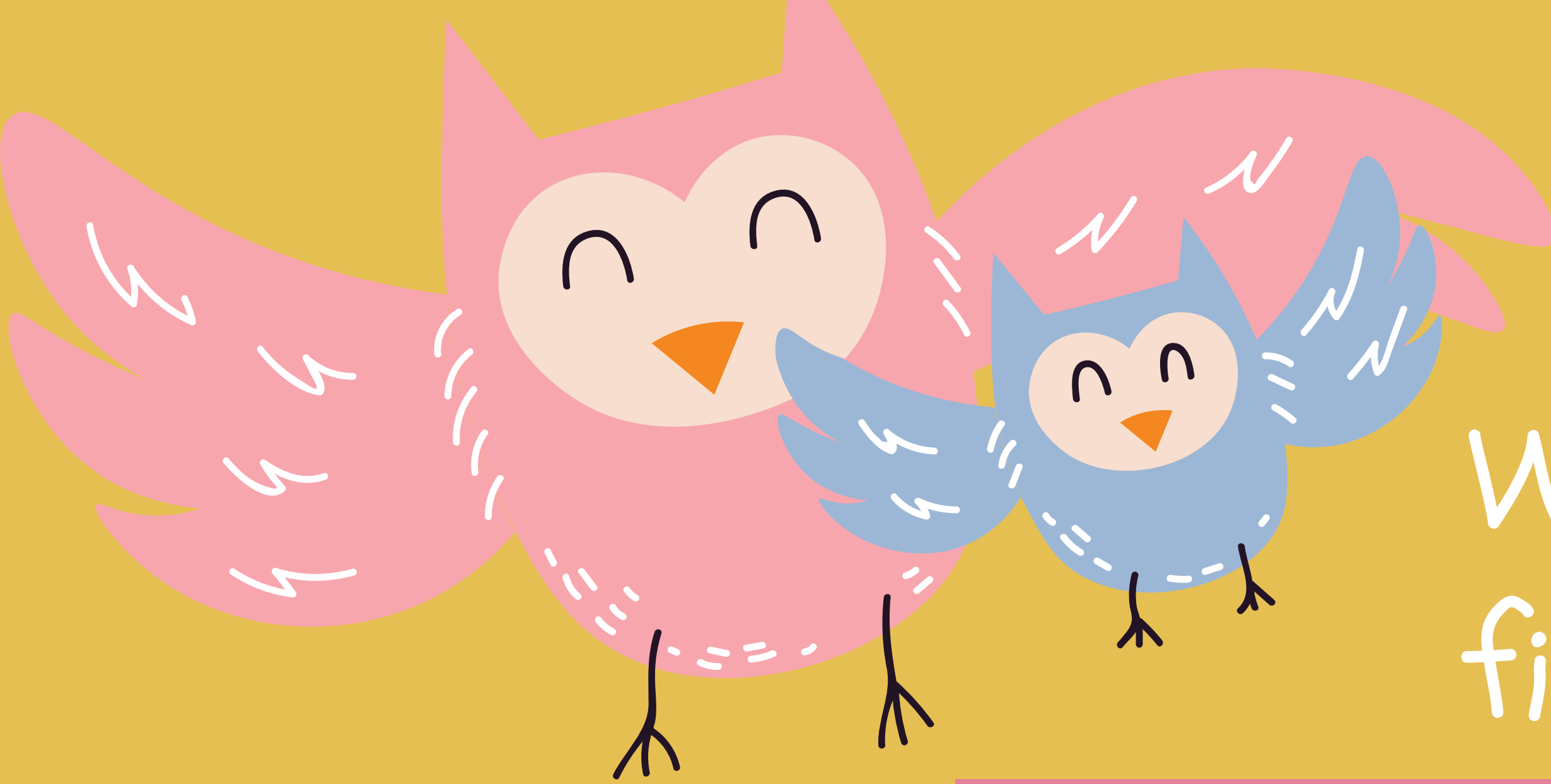
You can even sign up for classes you can enjoy together, such as baby massage or swimming. The important part is to be hands-on and communicating with your baby.

By making sure you are as hands-on as you can be in daily care tasks like nappy changing, winding, bathing – these are all essential care roles which also promote bonding.

If mum is breastfeeding, you don't need to introduce a bottle to build a relationship with your little one, there are plenty of other ways – cuddle them, talk to them, take them for a walk, wear them in a sling, etc.

Substantial Father involvement from at least the first month after birth promotes better language development and better intelligence





Watch below to  
find out more

- Safe
- Seen
- Soothed
- Secure

