



New Dads

The role of father is probably very different now than it was for your father. A generation ago, fathers waited nervously in the waiting room; now they're in the delivery room cutting the umbilical cord. Dad's involvement plays an important role in a child's self-esteem and academic success. The bond that mother and baby shared in the womb is different from the one a baby shares with his father, because their bonding begins after birth.



Bonding

Nursing mothers get credit for bonding with their babies, but fathers can bond with their babies by:

- diapering. It's a great chance to make eye contact and touch the baby.
- burping and rocking the baby between feedings.
- using any excuse to spend time alone with the new baby.
- staying at home with the baby while Mom goes out.

Involvement

Make sure Dad has some baby duties for which he's always responsible. Almost anything Mom can do, Dad can do as well. It will help the mother to have someone around who takes equal responsibility for the care of the baby and it will make Dad feel more involved. Baby benefits from it, too. She'll grow up knowing she has two loving parents who are equally involved in her care.

Dad Can:

- support the new mother in taking care of the baby.
- go to as many doctor's appointments as he can. Sometimes they can be scheduled late in the day or on Saturdays.
- take time to learn about baby's development. Ask questions.
- be involved in the day-to-day care of the baby. This helps your child learn tolerance of different nurturing styles, making him more resilient.
- include his child in his everyday life.
- take her on simple errands.
- let her watch him work around the house.
- spend time with her reading, raking leaves or watching sports.
- maintain a regular presence in his child's life, even if she doesn't live with him.
- have some contact with his child every day.

Communication

- The father should never feel afraid to say "I want to take care of my baby."
- He should never have to put up with criticism of his nurturing style.