

Introduction

Even a small amount of super glue can form a bond that is almost unbreakable.

Simply touch two objects together and something awesome occurs! An invisible, chemical reaction takes place that creates an attachment that is strong as steel.

Did you know that people have a similar effect on each other? When we encounter other humans, an invisible link begins to form. Sometimes that connection is very small, shallow, and ends quickly. Other times, that “unseen-Super-glue” becomes deep and lasting.

Natural Bonding

Natural bonding is automatic. You and your baby were designed to connect in a powerful and unique way from the very beginning.

Intentional Bonding

Intentional bonding is when we purposely strengthen that connection by our own actions and habits.

Here’s a couple of tools that will turbo-fuel the parental-bonding experience. And, best of all, they are actually very simple. In fact, you’re probably already thinking about doing most of these things.

1. **Talk to your baby.** That includes singing, reading, humming, or any means of letting your child hear your voice. They already hear you, every time you speak to anyone. They don’t understand what is being said, but they absolutely learn to know your distinct sound. This is a great comfort to your baby in your womb and when they are born. The more time you invest talking to your child, the better.

2. **Touch.** Remember that invisible, chemical reaction that forms when super-glue connects two touching objects? That’s the same process that happens between you and your baby. The little life inside you can already feel your warmth, body fluids, and vibrations that happen naturally. You can enhance the power of touch by gently rubbing your belly. It also feels pretty good for mom.

Bonding automatically begins early inside you but continues after childbirth.

Bonding After Childbirth

Think about the bonding journey much like growing a fruit tree.

Life begins! Strong roots form and grow in the fertile soil for months. The roots supply nutrients and a solid foundation for life. Bonding is already naturally occurring. Then, the tree springs into the sunlight!

Now, it’s up to you to water, feed, nurture, and protect the tree, so it grows up healthy and strong. You must choose actions and behaviors that will create a beautiful, bountiful result!

Our eyes help to express emotions, convey intent, and provide a means of recognizing one another.

Positive Benefits of Bonding

Healthy emotional development assists your child in being more in control of their own thoughts, feelings, and actions. It also promotes better social skills, as they learn to interact with other people. This allows them to understand and manage their own feelings as they get older. Studies confirm that a child who has a strong attachment with their caregiver simply feels safer. The benefits of parental bonding even begin to show when they’re still tiny, as a baby learns to self-soothe, based on this pattern of care and comfort.

Bonding also helps your child's cognitive health. This deals with intelligence, reasoning, language, and memory development. These skills help your child to be able to explore the world around them, verbalize their thoughts, ask questions, and solve problems. And it helps them be mentally resilient, so they're prepared for life's ups and downs. A child with healthy cognitive skills is less likely to be clingy or needy because they feel secure and confident enough to sample their independence. This sets them up for meaningful, healthy relationships throughout their lives.

Negative Results When Bonding is Missing

You've heard the positive effects of bonding. The opposite is also true when bonding doesn't occur. A child who doesn't experience that important parental-link may have trouble with emotional or cognitive development.

¹⁰ Effects may include anxiety, fear, insecurity, and self-doubt. Social skills can be impacted. It may be more challenging to form friendships, to trust people, and withdrawn behaviors may develop. They can also be at risk for attachment disorder - a life-long condition that makes it difficult to form healthy relationships. Some, may even lose the ability to connect with other people in any meaningful way.¹²

So, what if you are already in the parenting process and worry that your child missed out on healthy bonding experiences? It's OK. Help is available. We know bonding is super important and plays a major impact on our children's lives, but there are ways to improve that ultra-important link if you have any concerns. Healthcare providers, counselors, and other experienced parents can be great resources in helping you start building healthy bonds with your child, today! Be INTENTIONAL. Include the bonding tools we discussed into your daily routine. You'll see and feel the positive impact on your relationship, over-time, as healthy attachment grows.

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