



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**  
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**  
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**  
Program Topic : **Early Bonding (LOVE)**

#### **Guidelines to the presenter**

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.

#### **Topic:**

Early Bonding

#### **Objectives**

- To develop an understanding of the importance of attachment and bonding
- To ensure the foundations of positive parenting are laid
- To build an understanding of child rights

#### **Introduction**

On this show, we celebrate the fact that you are the most important person in your child' life. You have the power to give your child the best possible start in life and it doesn't have to cost you a cent.

**A child who lacks connection with a caring adult will often fail to develop normally.** Bonding and attachment are essential for child emotional and physical health. Holding your baby close and talking and communicating to your baby are things that many parents do out of love, but do we understand what the positive impact is?...and what the negatives are if we don't? These things come naturally because of the emotion we

feel for our children but it is not an option that is only about love and emotion, it is something that is scientifically necessary for the healthy development of children.

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>Babies are born helpless, needing to be entirely cared for and protected. What is the best way we can do this?</i></p> <p>2. <i>Why is it so important that we build caring attachment to our babies?</i></p>	<p>The first few years of a child’s life set the path for her development and success. During the early years, when the brain is developing at lightning speed, there is a unique window of opportunity for optimum social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. Young children who do not form bonds, who are not nurtured, will likely fail to develop a strong sense of self or be motivated to learn. Early childhood is the most important phase for overall development throughout the lifespan. Having caring, responsive relationships in this time is also essential not only for the child’s social and emotional development, but also for their later brain development.</p> <p><b>A child who lacks connection with a caring adult will often fail to develop normally.</b></p> <p>A small child’s experiences dictate how her brain is wired. Each stimulus – each kiss, each story, each sunset, each smile promotes the development of brain cells (neurons.) Holding and stroking an infant stimulates the brain to release growth hormones. A child who lacks connection with a caring adult will often fail to thrive. Sensitive and emotionally available parenting helps the child to form a secure attachment style which fosters a child's socio-emotional development and well-</p>

<p>3. <i>What happens if children do not have healthy caring relationships from young?</i></p> <p>4. <i>Are there special things we should do with newborns to ensure relationships are made and they are supported to build connection with us?</i></p> <p>5. <i>What happens if I can't or don't breastfeed my child?</i></p> <p>6. <i>So how do we build these caring and responsive relationships?</i></p> <p>7. <i>Why is it so important to pay attention to babies needs and interests?</i></p>	<p>being.</p> <p>Infants have a tendency to seek closeness to another person and feel secure when that person is present. Those who do not get this can suffer maternal deprivation which not only can cause depression in children, but also acute conflict and hostility, decreasing their ability to form healthy relationships in adult life</p> <p>Physical contact is important for newborns, and touch and closeness is important for all small children. Breastfeeding also provides a good opportunity for bonding and connection with your child.</p> <p>Even if you can't breastfeed, you can still use feeding as an opportunity to connect with your child – by holding them close, looking at them in their eyes, talking to them, singing and making use of the time as a special moment to connect.</p> <p>From when a child is one day old, we should talk to and build relationship with a child. “Responsive care” also involves paying close attention to babies and children’s needs and interests, even during the most routine activities of the day.</p> <p>By simply recognizing that even the tiniest child needs human interaction, caregivers help stimulate attachment, growth, curiosity, confidence and a child's sense of how s/he fits in the world.</p>
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<p>8. <i>I have heard that there are special ways that you should talk to your child? Can you explain this?</i></p>	<p>The most important thing it to talk to your child – even before they can talk. Children can listen and respond long before they can talk and you should talk to your child from the first day. Explain to them what they are doing, explain to them what your are doing, ask them questions even if they can't answer and importantly respond to their cues. This is called serve and respond.</p>
<p>9. <i>What is serve and respond?</i></p>	<p>Young children naturally reach out for interaction with others. A caregiver who is sensitive and responsive to a young child's signals provides an environment rich in "serve and return" experiences. Serve and respond interactions between children and their carers have been proven to develop the brain of children. One of the most essential experiences in shaping the architecture of the developing brain is "serve and return" interaction between children and significant adults in their lives. Young children naturally reach out for interaction through babbling, facial expressions, and gestures, and adults respond with the same kind of vocalizing and gesturing back at them. This back-and-forth process is fundamental to the wiring of the brain, especially in the earliest years.</p>
<p>10. <i>Are there things babies learn from this early care and attachment?</i></p>	<p>Primary attachments, usually parents, help kids develop the kind of prosocial skills associated with <a href="#">social courage</a>. (So do secondary attachments like those with our beloved aunts, uncles,</p>

<p>11. <i>What happens when children don't get this love and care in their early years?</i></p> <p>12. <i>What is toxic stress?</i></p>	<p>grandparents, siblings, step-parents, foster parents, teachers, and other loving guides along the journey...more about these relationships in later posts). Social skills including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• self-calming skills</li><li>• being aware of one's own emotions</li><li>• recognizing the feelings of others</li><li>• being compassionate</li><li>• impulse control</li><li>• ability to make eye contact</li><li>• sharing and turn-taking</li></ul> <p>Children who do not get love and care can be a risk of experiencing toxic stress which affects their emotional and brain development</p> <p>Learning how to cope with adversity is an important part of healthy child development. When we are threatened, our bodies prepare us to respond by increasing our heart rate, blood pressure, and stress hormones, such as cortisol. When a young child's stress response systems are activated within an environment of supportive relationships with adults, these physiological effects are buffered and brought back down to baseline. The result is the development of healthy stress response systems. However, if the stress response is extreme and long-lasting, and buffering relationships are unavailable to the child, the result can be damaged, weakened systems and brain architecture, with lifelong repercussions. This is toxic.</p>
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13. *So are there different types of stress?*

It's important to distinguish among three kinds of responses to stress: positive, tolerable, and toxic. As described below, these three terms refer to the stress response systems' effects on the body, not to the stressful event or experience itself:

**Positive stress response** is a normal and essential part of healthy development, characterized by brief increases in heart rate and mild elevations in hormone levels. Some situations that might trigger a positive stress response are the first day with a new caregiver or receiving an injected immunization.

**Tolerable stress response** activates the body's alert systems to a greater degree as a result of more severe, longer-lasting difficulties, such as the loss of a loved one, a natural disaster, or a frightening injury. If the activation is time-limited and buffered by relationships with adults who help the child adapt, the brain and other organs recover from what might otherwise be damaging effects.

**Toxic stress response** can occur when a child experiences strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity—such as physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, exposure to violence, and/or the accumulated burdens of family economic hardship—without adequate adult support. This kind of prolonged activation of the stress response systems can disrupt the development of brain architecture and other organ systems, and increase the risk for stress-related disease and

<p>14. <i>Is all stress damaging?</i></p>	<p>cognitive impairment, well into the adult years.</p> <p>No. The prolonged activation of the body's stress response systems can be damaging, but some stress is a normal part of life. Learning how to cope with stress is an important part of development. We do not need to worry about positive stress, which is short-lived, or tolerable stress, which is more serious but is buffered by supportive relationships. However, the constant activation of the body's stress response systems due to chronic or traumatic experiences in the absence of caring, stable relationships with adults, especially during sensitive periods of early development, can be toxic to brain architecture and other developing organ systems.</p>
<p>15. <i>What kinds of things can create stress for babies?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allowing a child to cry for a long time without parental attention and affection</li><li>• Not feeding the child when hungry</li><li>• Not offering comfort when the child is disturbed or distressed</li><li>• Limiting body contact during feeding, throughout the day, and during stressful parts of the night</li><li>• Low levels of human attention, stimulation, "conversation," and play</li></ul>
<p>16. <i>When should we worry about toxic stress?</i></p>	<p>If at least one parent or caregiver is consistently engaged in a caring, supportive relationship with a young</p>

	<p>child, most stress responses will be positive or tolerable. For example, there is no evidence that, in a secure and stable home, allowing an infant to cry for 20 to 30 minutes while learning to sleep through the night will elicit a toxic stress response. However, there is ample evidence that chaotic or unstable circumstances, such as placing children in a succession of foster homes or displacement due to economic instability or a natural disaster, can result in a sustained, extreme activation of the stress response system. Stable, loving relationships can buffer against harmful effects by restoring stress response systems to “steady state.” When the stressors are severe and long-lasting and adult relationships are unresponsive or inconsistent, it’s important for families, friends, and communities to intervene with support, services, and programs that address the source of the stress and the lack of stabilizing relationships in order to protect the child from their damaging effects.</p>
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**Conclusion**

**As we said earlier, a child who lacks connection with a caring adult will often fail to develop normally, and it is** important to protect your baby from stressful experiences. It can really harm them. It may be difficult to form these bonds as we often go to work when the child is still asleep and the return when the child is about to sleep. However, we still need to ensure in some way that your child has an emotional bond (be it sometimes with the grandparents/caregiver) to lay the ground for healthy emotional and

mental development. Remember serve and respond? The child should be in an environment where enough responses are received and is not ignored. This is the importance of early bonding.

### **Learning outcomes**

After listening to this show the audience should:

- Be aware of the positive impact of developing healthy bonds and attachments with young children
- Understand that talking to babies from when they are born is necessary even though the baby may not understand
- Caregivers understand the importance of serve and respond
- Understand stress and the limiting stressful experiences for children by being caring and responsive of