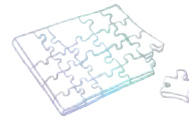


To build healthy parent-child bonds, parents should increase the quantity (how often) and quality (how parents interact) of interactions with their young children. This is especially important when children are learning that their behavior influences their parents' response.

The early childhood practice described in this brochure is based on findings presented in a practice-based research synthesis conducted at the Research and Training Center on Early Childhood Development by D. Z. Kassow and C. J. Dunst (2004). Relationship Between Parental Contingent-Responsiveness and Attachment Outcomes. *Bridges*, 2(4). To read or download the complete research synthesis and/or a user-friendly, illustrated summary, *Bottomlines* 2(4) visit www.researchtopractice.info. Printed copies can be obtained from Winterberry Press (www.wbpress.com). All opinions expressed are those of the Research and Training Center on Early Childhood Development and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Research to Practice Division, funder of the work of the RTC (H324K010005).



Evidence-Based Practice Guides

Additional practice guides are available from the RTC for this and other important early childhood topics.

Related materials also are available as part of *Solutions* evidence-based tool kits.

Please see descriptions of these resources and information for ordering under "Products" at

www.researchtopractice.info

Research and Training Center on Early Childhood Development
Center for Evidence-Based Practices

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Cornerpiece

**Heart
to
Heart**

*Building closeness
through
responsive
parenting*

**An
Evidence-Based
Early Childhood
Practice**

Heart to Heart

Building closeness through responsive parenting

What is the practice?



By the way parents **respond** to their very young children, moms and dads help little ones learn they can count on them for comfort and support.

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.

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



Take a look!



Mom takes time to watch her child. She sees the baby's different 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.