

Be responsive

0-3 months

When baby smiles, smile back.

When she coos, talk to her.

When baby cries, she is telling you loud and clear that she needs you and you must respond appropriately and quickly.

Responding, especially when she is upset, is your number one job and she will learn that you will be there for her.

4-6 months

When baby is seeking your attention, respond with touch (e.g., picking him up) or with your voice (e.g., letting him know you are there).

When he cries, comfort him.

When he is babbling or cooing, talk to him.

Your baby will engage even more when you are responsive.

7-12 months

When baby cries, looks for you, or wants to play with you, respond and let her know that you're there when she needs you.

13-18 months

When baby seeks your attention, join in and play with him.

Be his play partner and follow his lead.

19-24 months

Although baby is seeking her independence, she is still dependent on you and needs to know you will comfort and help her when she is distressed.

25-36 months

Your independent toddler will still become distressed at times.

Comfort him and reassure him that you are always there.

37-48 months

Help her deal with tantrums by talking to her about what makes her feel better when she is angry or sad.

You still play a crucial role in responding consistently, especially when she is hurt, sick or scared.

49-60 months

This time period often brings big transitions (i.e., school). You may find that she needs additional support during this time and she adjusts to the new demands of her new routine. Be patient and extra supportive during this time to help her feel safe and confident to tackle what lies ahead.

Monitor and put a name to things that may cause her experience to be negative. This will help her experience lower levels of stress and feel your parental support.