5 Ways You Can Help to Support Your Baby’s Social and Emotional Well-Being
Right from the beginning babies want to be social and interact. Babies learn to feel safe, secure and understood through sensitive interactions with parents and carers. Feeling loved and cared about is just as important as food and sleep. Here are five things you can do to help your baby’s social and emotional development.

Play with your baby - Babies learn about themselves, other people and the world around them through play.

Young babies can focus on your face, voice or sounds. Position your baby so that you can see each other's faces. Try saying hello and smiling, sticking your tongue out or making an ‘o’ shape with your mouth, or maybe blowing a raspberry. They might like a game of peek-a-boo where you hide your face with your hands and then let them see your face. From about 2-3 months, babies might enjoy looking at and exploring something together like a book or toy or a mirror. Try to notice the types of things they enjoy doing - do they like certain noises or textures?

Talk to your baby - Talking and listening to your baby will help them feel valued and loved, and help the two of you to form a close bond with each other.

Babies can communicate before they start talking by moving their mouth or limbs, cooing, babbling or smiling. This is your baby’s way of sharing experiences with you. Whenever possible, try to respond by making eye-contact, smiling and talking back. Try naming what they are doing or looking at, or saying what you think they may be thinking or feeling. If you are unsure about how to talk to your baby, watch this helpful video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=27&v=H_DMmAOLdPc&feature=emb_logo

Choose the right time and go at their pace - babies are more likely to interact and play when they are feeling settled and are not hungry or tired. You can learn to spot when they are ready - they will be alert, bright eyed and their body will be still.

Give your baby time to take things in. Let them watch and listen, then wait and respond to what they do. Babies love face to face contact, but it can be intense for them and younger babies might only look for a few moments before they need to take a break and look away. All babies do this, just wait and let them look again in their own time. To find out more, take a look at this video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=83&v=uE6q_5COelA&feature=emb_logo

Get to know your baby by spending time watching them - See the world through your baby's eyes. Babies thrive when their parents accept they have minds of their own, and take the time to try to understand what they might be feeling or thinking.

Although babies can't talk yet, you can still tell a lot about what might be going on for them. Look for things like changes in the movement of their arms and legs, the tone of the sounds they make, facial expressions and the direction of their gaze. Stepping back and learning about your baby’s cues can help you to better understand and meet your baby's needs.

Respond to your baby’s cries - It’s your baby’s way of letting you know they need something (a cuddle, change of position, less noise, food, changing, etc.).

You won’t ‘spoil’ your baby by picking them up when they cry. In fact, research shows that babies who are responded to cry less than those who are left to cry. You might not be able to work out what they need immediately, but your baby will feel safe knowing that you are there trying to make things better.