**Bonding for dads**

*This short video shows dads bonding with their newborn babies. It explains how eye contact, cuddling, talking and smiling strengthen the bond with your baby and help baby grow and develop.*

Narrator: Your baby’s brain has a lot of growing to do. You can help your baby’s brain development through bonding; lots of smiles, cuddles and loving words. For some parents, bonding happens right away, while for others, it takes some time. But it’s never too late to bond with your baby.

Narrator: Physical affection makes babies grow. Try cuddling your baby close to the left side of your chest so she can hear your heartbeat. Your baby might find this reassuring. Skin on skin contact, such as baby massage, can make your baby feel secure.

Narrator: Eye contact is especially good for bonding and development. When your baby deliberately catches your eye, you can look right back into her eyes, and keep maintaining that eye contact until she looks away. Babies love to hear you talk. Give a running commentary as you go through the day. Talk about what you were doing and name the things and objects around you. Babies also love sing - song voices, and funny noises. Using facial expressions when you talk helps your baby learn the connection between words and feelings. When your baby starts to babble, you can repeat the sounds he makes and practise taking turns in a conversation.

Narrator: It’s never too early to start reading to your baby. Baby will love looking at the pictures, listening to your voice, and spending time with you. Singing songs is a fun way to develop your baby’s language skills. Try it in the car, in the bath, at bedtime, even if it’s off key. Your baby will love the rhythm and will be soothed by your voice. Smile at your baby. When he sees you smile, it releases chemicals in his body that help his brain grow and also make him feel good.

Narrator: Play simple games with your baby, such as Peek-a-boo, Pat-a-cake, or This Little Piggy Went to Market. Games like these can help your baby’s learning and movement skills. If baby’s gaze is averted, he might not want to play anymore, or might begin to show signs of being tired. Try a change of activity. Put him on the floor to gaze around or into bed for a nap.