

## Keeping the baby in mind

Babies are born with almost all the brain cells (neurons) that they will ever have, but with almost no connections between those cells.

The parts of the brain that keep the baby breathing, and his or her heart beating, and blood circulating are all connected up, but the rest of the brain wires up almost entirely as a result of the experiences the baby has in the first two years of life.

A new-born baby cannot keep his or herself warm, fed, clean or even alive without a carer but is born ready to join the social world.

A new born baby recognises:

- the sound of his mother's voice, and other sounds he has heard in the womb
- the smell of his mother
- images which are like a human face, with two eyes

A baby does not know what he or she feels, or how to solve a problem if he or she is too hot, too cold, hungry, tired or wanting stimulation. When someone is regularly available to make things right, speak in a soft voice responding sensitively, the baby learns that this is a safe world and people can be trusted to help.

By a few months of age the baby recognises the small number of people who are regularly there and make him or her feel OK and will make a secure relationship with them. These relationships become a "blue print" for relationships in the future and good emotional and developmental growth.

