

Stage of Attachment: Birth to 18 months

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Newborns give their parents a gift--the opportunity to give unconditionally. This experience is transforming, and we are able to put aside our own needs for the sake of our child. We can grow beyond our own self-involvement and self-centeredness. Babies come packaged in a way to invite us to protect and nurture them. They are in the process of self-creation and parents have the opportunity to be co-creators and partners with them as they develop their brain, senses and discover the world.

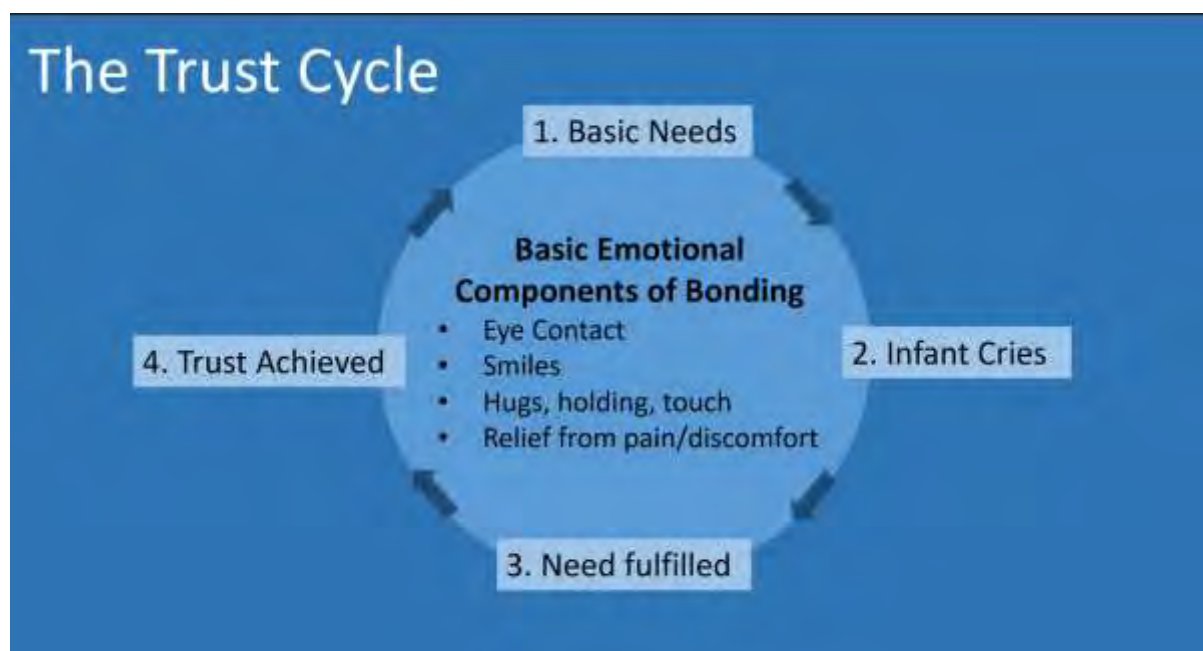
During this one and one-half years, **the most important thing that the parent can do for their child is to be reliably available and embracing.** This means to meet their physical needs--keeping them warm, dry, fed and safe. It also means to meet

the emotional needs of the child. The parent speaks in a soft, comforting voice, smiles a lot and communicates to the child that they do not need to be afraid--they are in the presence of a safe, nurturing person.

What parents need to know about the attachment stage:

- Their child is totally dependent on them, the parents or caregivers.
- They need parents who are reliably available, present and loving.
- Their survival depends on parent to provide safety and support.
- Parents need to structure the environment, so it is safe and teach their young child what is unsafe (knives, fire, the street, etc.) as well as that others in the environment deserve respect (parent, sibling, pet.)

It is during these important first stage of attachment that the trust cycle is established (see the diagram below.) The child expresses a basic need by crying or fussing. The need of being feed, changed, burped or held is fulfilled by the parent. When this happens consistently, over and over again, trust is established.



When we understand the significance that this process of attachment and the establishment of trust has on who the child will become, we are awakened to

being conscious parents. We can be profoundly moved by our role in this. It can also feel overwhelming, causing us to feel inadequate at times. It is important to have the support of family members and friends and ask for their help.

If you find yourself reacting strongly to your child's dependence on you, you may have been wounded yourself at this stage--not receiving the support and care that you needed. **All parents are challenged with their children at the stages in parenting when they were wounded themselves.** Instead of being overcome with stress or frustration, we can see this as another gift our child has given us--the chance to be awakened to the need of our own healing.

If you would like some support in your parenting, check out the next parenting small group online that I will be offering on Thursday evenings beginning March

2: www.coachmyrna.org/7gifts.html

To purchase my book on
Amazon: www.amazon.com/gp/product/B09L7KS5VH

If you would like to know more about what I offer as a coach, please visit my website: www.coachmyrna.org/ Find out more about Safe Conversations www.coachmyrna.org/safe-conversations.html.